

ON ART, LITERATURE
AND PHILOSOPHY

COMPLETE LECTURES

ON
ART, LITERATURE
AND
PHILOSOPHY

By
Lafcadio Hearn

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

WHILE occupying the chair of English Literature in the Imperial University of Tokyo from 1896 (*September*) to 1903 (*March*), Lafcadio Hearn divided his lectures into three main divisions. Five hours a week were devoted to textual readings from poetical works such as those of Tennyson or Rossetti; three hours were allotted to a series of lectures on the history of English Literature, each of which covered three successive academic years; for the remaining four hours a week, he lectured on miscellaneous themes in literature.

It is the whole of the lectures, belonging to this last category, which are contained in the three volumes, of which the first is now offered to the public, and which will be followed in due course by the second and third. Lafcadio Hearn's lectures on English literature compiled by the present editors has already made its appearance in 1927 under the title of "A History of English Literature" (*The Hokuseido Press*).

In 1915 and the two following years, on the advice of Pay Director Mitchell McDonald, U. S. N., Prof. Erskine had published the greater part of Hearn's lectures in four volumes with his own very illuminating prefaces. These lectures were selected from typewritten MSS. based on the notes taken in class by Messrs. M. Otani, R. Tanabé, S. Ibaraki, S. Uchigasaki, M. Kurihara, S. Kobinata, R. Ishikawa, J. Kishi, and T. Ochiai, all of whom were students of Hearn. Some of these typewritten MSS. which were left unused in the possession of the Hearn family, have been entrusted to the Hokuseido Press, and are now for the first time being published in the present volumes, thus making the latter a complete collection.

The lectures in these volumes are not arranged according to the chronological order of their delivery, but grouped

according to the nature of their subject-matter. "The Bible in English Literature" was Hearn's first lecture in the University and "Great Translators" was his last one. "On Reading," "On Composition," and "On the Value of the Supernatural in Literature" belong to the early days. "Shakespeare" is taken from the first cycle of Hearn's lectures on English literature.

It is most important to mention in this connection, that the editors have been extremely fortunate in securing the help and assistance of Prof. Nishizaki of the Toyama Koto Gakko. To him they are deeply indebted for his painstaking revision of the texts quoted, for his reference to those books of which Hearn made use when lecturing, and which are now, together with all the other books Lafcadio Hearn possessed, in the Hearn Library, belonging to the same school. It is as the result of Prof. Nishizaki's labours that the editors feel confidence in the authenticity and exactitude of their compilation. Already so much has been said of the merits of the lectures that any further addition by us, as editors, would be superfluous. One thing, however, deserves special notice and that is that these lectures were Lafcadio Hearn's intimate talks. Had he lived to see their publication, he would certainly have rewritten them many times and never permitted them to see the light of day in their present form.

In dictating Hearn gave the punctuation, and sometimes even the spelling of unfamiliar names, so that we, his students, could take down his lectures word for word. He lectured *extempore*, not from any fully prepared notes. He brought with him a tiny memorandum containing only names and dates, and a few volumes of poetical works or anthologies wrapped in a purple *furoshiki*. Undoing this, and placing the contents carelessly upon his desk before him, he would slowly begin dictating. When quoting any lines or verses, he used to refer to these books, bringing his right eye very close to the pages, and if the line-arrangement of a stanza chanced to be irregular, he would show the irregularity on the black-board. Being exception-

ally skilful at drawing, he used to make sketches on the board, should a description of anything exotic or unfamiliar to us occur in quotations. Sometimes a faint, shy smile would lighten up his face when he seemed satisfied with the effect of his drawing. Apart from this, the lecture went on uninterruptedly. Like the music of running waters the sentences flowed from his lips. We, his students, listened eagerly, busily taking down his words. Gradually the subject under discussion held us enthralled. Lafcadio Hearn took into account the mentality of his students and entered into it himself. His incomparable power of paraphrasing clarified passages difficult for us to understand, revealing often to us hidden conception and unsuspected charms. It often seemed to us as if we were actually leaning out from the bar of Heaven beside the Blessed Damozel, or walking along the corridors of the Palace of Art, till the bell for the fifteen minutes' recess broke the spell.

The memory of those days has been ever present with us in our work of editing these lectures. Now that they are going to be given to the public, we feel how much we owe Mrs. Hearn, whose affectionate devotion gave to our beloved master a haven of rest after his *wanderjahre*, and who, after surviving her husband twenty-eight years, passed away on February 18th of this year. Nor can we forget Pay Director Mitchel McDonald, U.S.N., and Mrs. Wetmore, the latter the biographer of Hearn, both of whom were his life-long and dearest friends and who always encouraged us in doing what we could perpetuate our master's memory.

R. TANABÉ
T. OCHIAI

Tokyo, September, 1932.

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CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

It is no exaggeration to say that the English Bible is, next to Shakespeare, the greatest work in English literature, and that it will have much more influence than even Shakespeare upon the written and spoken language of the English race. For this reason, to study English literature without some general knowledge of the relation of the Bible to that literature would be to leave one's literary education very incomplete. It is not necessary to consider the work from a religious point of view at all; indeed, to so consider it would be rather a hindrance to the understanding of its literary excellence. Some persons have ventured to say that it is only since Englishmen ceased to believe in the Bible that they began to discover how beautiful it was. This is not altogether true; but it is partly true. For it is one thing to consider every word of a book as the word of God or gods, and another thing to consider it simply as the work of men like ourselves. Naturally we should think it our duty to suppose the work of a divine being perfect in itself, and to imagine beauty and truth where neither really exists. The wonder of the English Bible can really be best appreciated by those who, knowing it to be the work of men much less educated and cultivated than the scholars of the nineteenth century, nevertheless perceive that those men were able to do in literature what no man of our own day could possibly do.

Of course in considering the work of the translators, we must remember the magnificence of the original. I should not like to say that the Bible is the greatest of all religious books. From the moral point of view it contains very much that we can not to-day approve of; and what is good in it can be found in the sacred books of other nations. Its

ethics can not even claim to be absolutely original. The ancient Egyptian scriptures contain beauties almost superior in moral exaltation to anything contained in the Old Testament; and the sacred books of other eastern nations, notably the sacred books of India, surpass the Hebrew scriptures in the highest qualities of imagination and of profound thought. It is only of late years that Europe, through the labour of Sanskrit and Pali scholars, has become acquainted with the astonishing beauty of thought and feeling which Indian scholars enshrined in scriptures much more voluminous than the Hebrew Bible; and it is not impossible that this far off literature will some day influence European thought quite as much as the Jewish Bible. Everywhere to-day in Europe and America the study of Buddhist and Sanskrit literature is being pursued not only with eagerness but with enthusiasm — an enthusiasm which sometimes reaches to curious extremes. I might mention, in example, the case of a rich man who recently visited Japan on his way from India. He had in New Zealand a valuable property; he was a man of high culture, and of considerable social influence. One day he happened to read an English translation of the “Bhagavadgītā.” Almost immediately he resolved to devote the rest of his life to religious study in India, in a monastery among the mountains; and he gave up wealth, friends, society, everything that western civilisation could offer him, in order to seek truth in a strange country. Certainly this is not the only instance of the kind; and while such incidents can happen, we may feel sure that the influence of religious literature is not likely to die for centuries to come.

But every great scripture, whether Hebrew, Indian, Persian, or Chinese, apart from its religious value will be found to have some rare and special beauty of its own; and in this respect the original Bible stands very high as a monument of sublime poetry and of artistic prose. If it is not the greatest of religious books as a literary creation, it is at all events one of the greatest; and the proof is to be found in

the inspiration which millions and hundreds of millions, dead and living, have obtained from its utterances. The Semitic races have always possessed in a very high degree the genius of poetry, especially poetry in which imagination plays a great part; and the Bible is the monument of Semitic genius in this regard. Something in the serious, stern, and reverential spirit of the genius referred to made a particular appeal to western races having certain characteristics of the same kind. Themselves uncultivated in the time that the Bible was first made known to them, they found in it almost everything that they thought and felt, expressed in a much better way than they could have expressed it. Accordingly the northern races of Europe found their inspiration in the Bible; and the enthusiasm for it has not yet quite faded away.

But the value of the original, be it observed, did not make the value of the English Bible. Certainly it was an inspiring force; but it was nothing more. The English Bible is perhaps a much greater piece of fine literature, altogether considered, than the Hebrew Bible. It was so for a particular reason which it is very necessary for the student to understand. The English Bible is a product of literary evolution.

In studying English criticisms upon different authors, I think that you must have sometimes felt impatient with the critics who told you, for example, that Tennyson was partly inspired by Wordsworth and partly by Keats and partly by Coleridge; and that Coleridge was partly inspired by Blake and Blake by the Elizabethans, and so on. You may have been tempted to say, as I used very often myself to say, "What does it matter where the man got his ideas from? I care only for the beauty that is in his work, not for a history of his literary education." But to-day the value of the study of such relations appears in quite a new light. Evolutional philosophy, applied to the study of literature as to everything else, has shown us conclusively that man is not a god who can make something out of nothing, and

that every great work of genius must depend even less upon the man of genius himself than upon the labours of those who lived before him. Every great author must draw his thoughts and his knowledge in part from other great authors, and these again from previous authors, and so on back, till we come to that far time in which there was no written literature, but only verses learned by heart and memorised by all the people of some one tribe or place, and taught by them to their children and to their grandchildren. It is only in Greek mythology that the divinity of Wisdom leaps out of a god's head, in full armour. In the world of reality the more beautiful a work of art, the longer, we may be sure, was the time required to make it, and the greater the number of different minds which assisted in its development.

So with the English Bible. No one man could have made the translation of 1511. No one generation of men could have done it. It was not the labour of a single century. It represented the work of hundreds of translators working through hundreds of years, each succeeding generation improving a little upon the work of the previous generation, until in the seventeenth century the best had been done of which the English brain and the English language was capable. In no other way can the surprising beauties of style and expression be explained. No subsequent effort could improve the Bible of King James. Every attempt made since the seventeenth century has only resulted in spoiling and deforming the strength and the beauty of the authorised text.

Now you will understand why, from the purely literary point of view, the English Bible is of the utmost importance for study. Suppose we glance for a moment at the principal events in the history of this evolution.

The first translation of the Bible into a western tongue was that made by Jerome (commonly called Saint Jerome) in the fourth century; he translated directly from the Hebrew and other Arabic languages into Latin, then the language

of the Empire. This translation into Latin was called the Vulgate,—from *vulgāre*, “to make generally known.” The Vulgate is still used in the Roman church. The first English translations which have been preserved to us were made from the Vulgate, not from the original tongues.

First of all, John Wyclif’s Bible may be called the foundation of the seventeenth century Bible. Wyclif’s translation, in which he was helped by many others, was published between 1380 and 1388. So we may say that the foundation of the English Bible dates from the fourteenth century, one thousand years after Jerome’s Latin translation. But Wyclif’s version, excellent as it was, could not serve very long: the English language was changing too quickly. Accordingly, in the time of Henry VIII Tyndale and Coverdale, with many others, made a new translation, this time not from the Vulgate, but from the Greek text of the great scholar Erasmus. This was the most important literary event of the time, for “it coloured the entire complexion of subsequent English prose,”—to use the words of Professor Gosse. This means that all prose in English written since Henry VIII has been influenced, directly or indirectly, by the prose of Tyndale’s Bible, which was completed about 1535. Almost at the same time a number of English divines, under the superintendence of Archbishop Cranmer, gave to the English language a literary treasure scarcely inferior to the Bible itself, and containing wonderful translations from the Scriptures,—the “Book of Common Prayer.” No English surpasses the English of this book, still used by the church; and many translators have since found new inspiration from it.

A revision of this famous Bible was made in 1565, entitled “The Bishops’ Bible.” The cause of the revision was largely doctrinal, and we need not trouble ourselves about this translation farther than to remark that Protestantism was re-shaping the Scriptures to suit the new state religion. Perhaps this edition may have had something to do with the determination of the Roman Catholics to make an English

Bible of their own. The Jesuits began the work in 1582 at Rheims, and by 1610 the Roman Catholic version known as the Douay (or Douai) version — because of its having been made chiefly at the Catholic College of Douai in France — was completed. This version has many merits; next to the wonderful King James version, it is certainly the most poetical; and it has the further advantage of including a number of books which Protestantism has thrown out of the Authorised Version, but which have been used in the Roman church since its foundation. But I am speaking of the book only as a literary English production. It was not made with the help of original sources; its merits are simply those of a melodious translation from the Latin Vulgate.

At last, in 1611, was made, under the auspices of King James, the famous King James version; and this is the great literary monument of the English language. It was the work of many learned men; but the chief worker and supervisor was the Bishop of Winchester, Lancelot Andrews, perhaps the most eloquent English preacher that ever lived. He was a natural-born orator, with an exquisite ear for the cadences of language. To this natural faculty of the Bishop's can be attributed much of the musical charm of the English in which the Bible was written. Still, it must not be supposed that he himself did all the work, or even more than a small proportion of it. What he did was to tone it; he overlooked and corrected all the text submitted to him, and suffered only the best forms to survive. Yet what magnificent material he had to choose from! All the translations of the Bible that had been made before his time were carefully studied with a view to the conservation of the best phrases, both for sound and for form. We must consider the result not merely as a study of literature in itself, but also as a study of eloquence; for every attention was given to those effects to be expected from an oratorical recitation of the text in public.

This marks the end of the literary evolution of the Bible. Everything that has since been done has only been in the

direction of retrogression, of injury to the text. We have now a great many later versions, much more scholarly, so far as correct scholarship is concerned, than the King James version, but none having any claim to literary importance. Unfortunately, exact scholars are very seldom men of literary ability; the two faculties are rarely united. The Bible of 1870, known as the Oxford Bible, and now used in the Anglican state-church, evoked a great protest from the true men of letters, the poets and critics who had found their inspirations in the useful study of the old version. The new version was the work of fourteen years; it was made by the united labour of the greatest scholars in the English-speaking world; and it is far the most exact translation that we have. Nevertheless the literary quality has been injured to such an extent that no one will ever turn to the new revision for poetical study. Even among the churches there was a decided condemnation of this scholarly treatment of the old text; and many of the churches refused to use the book. In this case, conservatism is doing the literary world a service, keeping the old King James version in circulation, and insisting especially upon its use in Sunday schools.

We may now take a few examples of the differences between the Revised Version and the Bible of King James. Professor Saintsbury, in an essay upon English prose, published some years ago, said that the most perfect piece of English prose in the language was that comprised in the sixth and seventh verses of the eighth chapter of the Song of Songs:

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned.

I should not like to say that the Professor is certainly right in calling this the finest prose in the English language;

but he is a very great critic, whose opinion must be respected and considered, and the passage is certainly very fine. But in the Revised Version, how tame the same text has become in the hands of the scholarly translators!

The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of the Lord.

Now as a description of jealousy, not to speak of the literary execution at all, which is the best? What, we may ask, has been gained by calling jealousy "a flame of the Lord" or by substituting the word "flashes" for "coals of fire"? All through the new version are things of this kind. For example, in the same Song of Songs there is a beautiful description of eyes, like "doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set." By substituting "rivers" only for "rivers of waters" the text may have gained in exactness, but it has lost immeasurably, both in poetry and in sound. Far more poetical is the verse as given in the Douai version: "His eyes are as doves upon brooks of waters, which are washed with milk, and sit beside the beautiful streams."

It may even be said without any question that the mistakes of the old translators were often much more beautiful than the original. A splendid example is given in the verse of Job, chapter twenty-six, verse thirteen: "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." By the crooked serpent was supposed to be signified the grand constellation called *Draco*, or the Dragon. And the figure is sublime. It is still more sublime in the Douai translation. "His obstetric hand hath brought forth the winding serpent." This is certainly a grand imagination—the hand of God, like the hand of a midwife, bringing forth a constellation out of the womb of the eternal night. But in the Revised Version, which is exact, we have only "His hand hath pierced the swift serpent"! All the poetry is dead.

There are two methods for the literary study of any book—the first being the study of its thought and emotion;

the second only that of its workmanship. A student of literature should study some of the Bible from both points of view. In attempting the former method he will do well to consider many works of criticism, but for the study of the text as literature, his duty is very plain—the King James version is the only one that ought to form the basis of his study, though he should look at the Douai version occasionally. Also he should have a book of references, such as Cruden's Concordance, by help of which he can collect together in a few moments all the texts upon any particular subject, such as the sea, the wind, the sky, human life, the shadows of evening. The study of the Bible is not one which I should recommend to very young Japanese students, because of the quaintness of the English. Before a good knowledge of English forms is obtained, the archaisms are apt to affect the students' mode of expression. But for the advanced student of literature, I should say that some knowledge of the finest books in the Bible is simply indispensable. The important books to read are not many. But one should read at least the books of Genesis, Exodus, Ruth, Esther, the Song of Songs, Proverbs, —and, above all, Job. Job is certainly the grandest book in the Bible; but all of those which I have named are books that have inspired poets and writers in all departments of English literature to such an extent that you can scarcely read a masterpiece in which there is not some conscious or unconscious reference to them. Another book of philosophical importance is Ecclesiastes, where, in addition to much proverbial wisdom, you will find some admirable world-poetry—that is, poetry which contains universal truth about human life in all times and all ages. Of the historical books and the law books I do not think that it is important to read much; the literary element in these is not so pronounced. It is otherwise with the prophetic books, but here in order to obtain a few jewels of expression, you have to read a great deal that is of little value. Of the New Testament there is very little equal to the Old in literary value; indeed, I should recommend the

reading only of the closing book—the book called the Revelation, or the Apocalypse, from which we have derived a literary adjective “apocalyptic,” to describe something at once very terrible and very grand. Whether one understands the meaning of this mysterious text makes very little difference; the sonority and the beauty of its sentences, together with the tremendous character of its imagery, can not but powerfully influence mind and ear, and thus stimulate literary taste. At least two of the great prose writers of the nineteenth century, Carlyle and Ruskin, have been vividly influenced by the book of the Revelation. Every period of English literature shows some influence of Bible study, even from the old Anglo-Saxon days; and during the present year, the study has so little slackened that one constantly sees announcements of new works upon the literary elements of the Bible. Perhaps one of the best is Professor Moulton’s “Modern Reader’s Bible,” in which the literary side of the subject receives better consideration than in any other work of the kind published for general use.

If this brief lecture has shown the real place of the King James version in English literature, and suggested to you the reason why the book has an all-important value, independently of any religious thought in it, — quite sufficient has been said. It would be of no use whatever to spend the time otherwise utilisable, in pointing out beauties of the text. What beauty there is is of a kind so simple that explanation is quite unnecessary. Where I think that the value of the reading would be greatest for you, is in regard to measure and symmetry and euphony in English construction. But that means a great deal—so much that the best illustration of it is the observation already made, that all English written since the sixteenth century has been coloured by the Bible.

CHAPTER II

SHAKESPEARE

THE humanistic school of English drama was firmly established by a group of university students, headed by the famous Marlowe. Very suddenly after the appreciation of this group comes forward the most colossal figure in English literature,—and perhaps in all modern literature. This was not a student. He was not even a well educated man; he did not belong to the higher classes. He was a professional actor, which means that he had embraced a calling which in that time, and for many generations after, was considered ignoble. Yet this man did what no one else in any other country, since the highest period of Greek civilization, had ever been able to do; and in more ways than one he probably surpassed the Greeks. So immensely superior to his age was this genius that as a genius he could not obtain recognition for hundreds of years after his death. It has well been said that no man can understand Shakespeare until he becomes old; and the English nation could not understand Shakespeare until it became old. In the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries Shakespeare was read and enjoyed only as schoolboys of twelve or fourteen years old now read and enjoy him—that is to say, he was read for the story only, without any suspicion of what an intellectual giant had appeared in the world. Nevertheless the sixteenth century was a great intellectual age, and it understood much more of Shakespeare than later generations proved themselves able to do. In the most degenerate period of English Literature, the period of the Restoration, Shakespeare was so little understood that people imagined they could improve his plays by rewriting them! No greater proof of intellectual degeneracy could have been given. To-day the position of Shakespeare is that of the greatest

figure in all human literature. He has been translated into nearly every civilized language; his plays are acted constantly upon all the stages of Europe; he has been commented upon and studied by the greatest scholars of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Russia; and the volume of literature produced about him has become so great that no man could hope to read it all in a lifetime. Not thousands but tens of thousands of books have been written about his characters, about the meaning of his plays, about the relation of his life to his art, about his subjectivity, about his objectivity, about the chronology of his dramas, about the source of his inspiration, about his verse-endings, about everything imaginable in connection with his work. Shakespeare has become much more than a classic, a world-classic; he is a science. To become a "Shakespearean scholar" in these days is to obtain a very great distinction in the world of letters; and nevertheless one of the greatest of scholars declared only two years ago, when invited to deliver a few lectures upon Shakespeare, that he approached the subject with fear and trembling, because it was too large for him. And like all large subjects, the subject of Shakespeare has its danger. Hundreds of persons pass their whole lives in studying Shakespeare, in theorizing about Shakespeare, in illustrating Shakespeare. Some persons have even become insane through the study of Shakespeare. And the overshadowing intellect that has produced these extraordinary effects—effects which continually increase and multiply instead of diminishing with time—was enclosed in the skull of a poor uneducated actor, who began life under the most unfavourable and unhappy conditions.

The first thing which I should like to be able to impress upon the mind of the student is that Shakespeare must be regarded, not as a common man or author, but as a phenomenon, as something in literature corresponding to the more modern phenomenon of Napoleon as a political, military and economic force. Because, if the student can not do this, he can never hope to understand anything at all about

Shakespeare. You must remember that Shakespeare is not only the greatest, but also the most difficult of authors to understand. This does not mean that his language is difficult, or that his thoughts are difficult; the difficulty lies in the comprehension of the depths of his characters — that is to say, the depth of his knowledge of human nature. The great Shakespearean riddle, in other words, is this: “How did Shakespeare know?” Here is a man who has created hundreds of living figures or characters, every one of which is essentially and totally different from every other, and all of which are perfectly real, perfectly alive, perfectly interesting, never under any circumstances unnatural. To create one such character in common literature is to make a classic, is to achieve a reputation for hundreds of years, is to perform a feat almost divine; like the work of a god, it is a creation of life. But Shakespeare created hundreds of characters. I can not repeat this too often; because you will not observe the whole meaning of it until I have assured you that the other great English dramatists did not *create* any characters at all. They gave us moving and speaking figures which resemble living persons only as ghosts or dreams resemble living persons. The more you become acquainted with them, the less real do you find them. Sometimes they actually melt into each other like clouds, like vapours. They are phantoms. After having read all the plays of Ben Jonson, all the plays of Webster, all the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, all the plays of any other dramatist, you will find that they do not remain distinct in your memory. Not only do you forget them, but you confuse them one with another. Never does this happen in the case of Shakespeare. Every figure in Shakespeare can be touched, heard, and made familiar like an old acquaintance; put your hand upon its breast, and you will feel the heart beat. I will even say one thing stronger than this—it is more easy to forget living persons whom you have really known than it is to forget one of Shakespeare’s great characters.

Let me say here that I shall have to ask your patience,

as some of what I am going to say may seem to you a little tiresome; but I think it is necessary in order that you may get a general idea of the meaning of the difference between Shakespeare and other men. I do not wish to tell you what you can find in books, but only what you will not find in books about Shakespeare.

This said, let us try to understand the secret of the force of Shakespeare's characters. Every one of you have seen a cat. You have seen it not once, but perhaps a thousand times; and as children you have certainly played with kittens, so that you had a good opportunity to study every part of the animal's body. Now how many of you, in spite of that experience, can draw a correct picture of a cat from memory? Perhaps one or two of you can. But can you draw the cat in more than one position? Perhaps one of you can draw it in two or even three positions. There, I imagine, your power stops. It is very doubtful whether you have ever known a man who could draw a cat from memory in any position. I might have said a horse, just as well; but a horse would really be much more difficult.

Now some of you can certainly draw very much better than others. You recognize among yourselves this superior ability on the part of one or two individuals, and you call it talent, or cleverness, or something of that kind. But have you ever stopped to think what this talent or cleverness means? Why should one of you be able to draw from memory better than any of the rest? It is because he has superior faculties; but what are the faculties? One is memory,—memory of that special form which we call the representative faculty. To put the matter very shortly and in very simple language, one of you can draw a cat from memory better than the rest, not so much because of manual dexterity, as because, when *he* thinks of a cat, there immediately shapes itself in his brain a much more vivid and correct image of the animal than that which the memories of the rest of you are capable of forming. But we are not yet more than half-way toward the explanation of this

extremely simple fact. Why should the brain of one student be capable of forming mental images much more exact than any of which other brains are capable? It must mean that there is some physiological difference. This physiological difference is like a difference in what is called the "sensitivity" of photographic plates. Some plates, you know, will photograph anything in one-fiftieth, one-seventy-fifth or one-hundredth of a second, while other plates work very slowly, requiring three or four seconds to define an image,—and the chances always are that during long exposure the images may become blurred or spoiled by accident. I do not wish to carry this comparison as far as it might be carried; the illustration is sufficient. Now this superior "sensitivity" of brain is found to be always coincident with a very high development of what is called in physiology nervous-tissue. I do not mean that this high development necessarily extends to all parts of the brain of the man distinguished by a special talent. The more the talent is special, the more certain it is that the nervous sensitivity is also special—that is, confined to some particular part of the cerebral structure. We can not go much farther than this. If you should ask the reason of such differences between individual and individual, I should answer hereditary accumulation; but when we trace the thing back as far as human knowledge permits us, we are stopped by the infinite mystery which lies beyond all life and which it is quite useless for us to try to understand.

I need scarcely tell you that it would be incomparably more difficult to draw from memory the correct picture of a human face in six or seven different moods than it would be to draw the head of an animal in several different attitudes. Still this is no very great feat. But to draw a character, the play of moral feeling which makes a character, and to do this in four or five different moods, is not a little feat but a very great feat indeed. Very few men are able even to express one of their own moods truthfully and impressively—much less to objectify it. Imagine, then, the

gigantic power of the brain that could create thousands of different moods as expressed by hundreds of different characters of every age and sex.

The problem of Shakespeare is therefore a psychological problem; and if it took the world some hundreds of years to understand Shakespeare, this was only because Shakespeare was himself in advance of humanity several hundred years by virtue of intellectual superiority. A human brain, immensely developed beyond the average, can not be imagined by the average. The existence of such a brain may constitute a danger to the human race. Very much depends upon the direction given to its faculties. One such brain came into existence shortly before the beginning of the present century; and in the short space of eleven years—from 1804 to 1815—the working of that brain resulted in the destruction of 3,700,000 human lives (H. Taine. *Les origines de la France contemporaine*: 3^e partie, *le Régime moderne*. Vol. 1, p. 115). For a long time after the accession of Napoleon to power the world attributed his ascendancy to good fortune; there was no suspicion of the enormous range of the faculties of that mind—the mind that complained of the smallness of the population of Europe, and that dreamed of a conquest of the Orient, where it could use five or six hundred millions of lives for its operations. But when the suspicion did come at last, the existence of that individual was felt to be a danger to the human race, and by a desperate coalition against him, the nations of Europe succeeded in isolating him until the time of his death. The faculties of Napoleon were bent in the direction of war, economics, finance, and all forms of administration. Unfortunately the destructive tendencies dominated the constructive. Now I would compare the brain of Shakespeare to Napoleon's; but the development of his faculties was altogether in a constructive and creative direction. In more than one respect we find points of resemblance, nevertheless, between the two minds. The most noticeable of the prodigious qualities of both was memory; and in both cases the faculties were hereditary, not developed

by education. In Shakespeare as in Napoleon, the language faculty, although immense, was in a comparatively low state of cultivation. The compositions of both were marked by extraordinary faults—faults of form, faults of all kinds; yet the faculties in either case were almost incomparable. We know, for example, that Shakespeare's composition was not made like the compositions of other men. He never re-wrote or changed his manuscript, if we are to believe the actors who played with him; and yet, thus flung down upon paper, his thoughts now fill the world.

I have compared the mnemonic faculty of Shakespeare with that of Napoleon; but only by way of general illustration. Really the memory power was very different in either case. In Shakespeare it takes a form so extraordinary that it is still a psychological puzzle. Attributing his knowledge of character to purely personal experience, we should have to say that he had the power of representing with absolute accuracy every feeling that he had ever known in any situation. No doubt a very considerable amount of personal feeling has been reproduced in his unapproachable dramas. But the experience of fifty lifetimes could not account for everything in them. Beyond experience, what could have given him the knowledge of his hundreds of characters? There is only one name commonly given to the power which enabled him to be so unrivalled a creator; and that faculty is intuition. But what is intuition? You may say that you believe that it is imagination in the form of instinct. And what is instinct? Instinct, the man of science will tell you, is inherited knowledge—is, in a certain sense, the non-personal knowledge obtained not from the experience of one life, but from the experiences of hundreds of thousands of lives. Religious persons in western countries do not like these suggestions of science; and I do not think that I should be allowed to say in many western universities what now I wish to say about Shakespeare's genius. You need not accept my opinions if you do not like them; I offer them only suggestively. I shall say therefore that the faculty

of Shakespeare represents something very much resembling the memory of thousands of experiences in hundreds of anterior lives, as man and woman, in different conditions of civilization, and different parts of the earth. Remember, however, that I am speaking symbolically. I am trying to explain the nature of a faculty which can only be suggested by symbolism, because no science can yet furnish a detailed explanation of it.

This is what differentiates Shakespeare from all other dramatists; and, without attempting illustration, let us now turn to the subject of the man himself. One thing we know, through the help of modern psychology, which previous generations did not know about Shakespeare. This is that he was certainly a man of a most extraordinary and exceptional physical organization. From his work we can discover that his nervous organization must have been superior to almost any now existing; and, as I said before, unless this development is in one direction only, it presupposes a magnificent physical constitution. In the case of Shakespeare, we have proof absolute that his faculties were not one-sided; and that a more perfectly balanced character is not possible even to imagine. The first chapters of his life give us, indeed, the contrary impression; but the higher faculties of a man are not developed in early youth. When we study Shakespeare's life in the years of his maturity, we discover the unusual phenomenon of a supreme artist who is also a supremely good man of business, who achieved almost without effort a position and a respectability that no actor could have obtained before him.

I need scarcely say to you that all the stories and theories about Shakespeare's plays having been written by Bacon or by somebody else are silly nonsense, and that no sensible man now pays any attention to them. I shall not refer to them again. On the other hand, although we know very little about Shakespeare's life, the little that we do know is very important, and the documents concerning it are very exact. I shall speak about the facts of his career, however,

only in relation to the study of his personality. He was born at Stratford-on-Avon in April, 1564. He was the son of a merchant named John Shakespeare, who appears to have been a man of some influence in the little town, and who held the office of high bailiff—an office corresponding to that of mayor—in 1568. When a boy, Shakespeare was apparently distinguished from other boys chiefly by his greater activity and mischievousness, but we can judge of this only from the general tone of a number of anecdotes and traditions. He was sent to a grammar school at Stratford, and there may have obtained the rudiments of an education, but nothing more. At the age of eighteen Shakespeare was married to a girl of twenty-six. It would seem that the marriage was forced upon him by his own fault, and also by a sentiment which every honourable man must respect. At the early age of twenty-one he had already three children, and no occupation—a very heavy burden for a young man to start through life with. About 1586 his father appears to have lost all his money and all his possessions. The family was utterly ruined. A more unfortunate position for the young man of twenty-one with a family of three children, as well as his own father's family to take care of, could scarcely be imagined. The next year he probably went to London. We hear nothing about him of importance for about five years. Then, in 1592, we suddenly hear the complaints from dramatists and actors that a new-comer is beginning to crowd them out, to dominate them, to do as he pleases with their dramas, and to monopolize public attention. In 1594 we find him playing before Queen Elizabeth at Christmas time. Thereafter his success begins. It is quite evident that from the time he entered London, Shakespeare, although a stranger, very soon obtained the mastery in the career which he had chosen, and that his domination over smaller minds and characters was founded not only upon some dim recognition of his intellectual superiority, but also upon the recognition of a character of immense force. No weak man, nobody not of a very masterful disposition,

could have accomplished so much in so short a time. Very soon the murmurs against him were hushed. They were hushed simply because they had become useless. He had dominated not only those jealous of him, but also the English public. The great mass of the people who support the theatres were carried away by him; never before had such an actor been seen. The higher-class people, the gentry, the nobility, even the great lords about Queen Elizabeth, recognized Shakespeare, and gave him their friendship. Shakespeare did not appeal to them merely as an actor; he appealed to them as a poet. In the age of poetry, the age of new culture, the age of the Renaissance, this country boy without education presumed to enter the lists as a poet, and produced immediately the finest poetry of the period. Before that astonishing talent all opposition naturally broke down. In 1593 appeared his "Venus and Adonis," a poem in the richest and most voluptuous tone of the Renaissance; and even in that time it went rapidly through a number of editions, and was to be found in almost every lady's chamber. He thus achieved at once what ordinary poets must work for half a lifetime to obtain,—literary recognition. This was followed the next year by the poem, also successful, on the rape of Lucretia. But the finest parts of Shakespeare's poetical work, those matchless sonnets which place him in the first rank of English poets, were not so quickly composed. They were written during a period of about sixteen years, portions only appearing at a time. The truth is that Shakespeare had very little time to write poetry, and wrote it chiefly for amusement or relaxation; his real business was the writing of plays by day and the acting of plays by night. He was doing, and doing easily, the work of ten or twelve men, but doing it infinitely better than twelve men could have done it.

No less than thirty-seven plays constitute his known work; besides which we have reason to suppose that he had some share in the writing or shaping of other plays. But of these thirty-seven, each is a masterpiece which still

excites the world's admiration, and must continue so to do for hundreds of years to come. Sometimes we find him producing plays at the rate of three in one year. I do not know that this rate of production could be considered a very high one in the case of an ordinary playwright. Dryden, for example, afterwards willingly undertook to produce three plays a year, and did it for a short time; while, in our own day, the productivity of some eminent French playwrights has certainly been astonishing. But no playwright ever produced in one year three plays of really classic merit, much less anything approaching to a play of Shakespeare. What makes it particularly difficult to understand Shakespeare's productivity in this line, as I have suggested before, is the fact that Shakespeare was acting and teaching actors at the same time that he was writing; and this dramatic activity is the severest of possible strains upon the nervous nature of any man. Shakespeare does not seem to have felt it in the time of his youth and strength; he even seems to have found plenty of leisure to talk with various noblemen, to visit numerous friends, to attend banquets and parties, and to have sharply attended also to business. As early as 1597 he had made enough money to purchase land in his native town of Stratford, with the purpose of retrieving the family fortunes, and of making a comfortable home for his family. Besides this he was soon able to make himself absolutely independent in London; he bought a theatre, became its manager, and employed those who had previously been his employers or comrades on the stage. In 1609 he had built himself a comfortable home at Stratford, and made an independent fortune and retired from the theatre, except as a writer of plays.

Now this means a very extraordinary life and still more extraordinary force of character. You can imagine for yourselves the obstacles which this man had to encounter, and you can appreciate the wonderful way in which he almost immediately broke them down, and rapidly made himself rich. But you must not forget another very impor-

tant revelation which the story of this life makes for us—I mean the moral revelation. The difficulties in the way of success are not so much those which men are accustomed to think about, as they are those which men are not accustomed to think about until it is too late—as in the case of Marlowe and his companions. The first obstacle which a man really encounters in the world is the most dangerous and least perceived,—I mean Pleasure. Everywhere about a man of handsome presence and kindly character temptations swarm. Women favour him; drinking and gambling companions debauch him. In this respect the world is not at all different now from what it was in the time of Shakespeare. Pleasure is the real danger, and nowhere is this danger so extreme as in the world of the drama, where the conventions have always been more or less relaxed. Now there are two ways in which a young man can face this danger successfully. One is to impose upon himself habits of absolute austerity, to deny himself everything, to pursue one purpose only and never to swerve from a single rule of settled conduct. Such a man must, of course, expect to become unpopular—in other words, to get himself disliked, and to bear a good deal of suffering in consequence. The other way is much more difficult, but also much more creditable. It is simply to take one's share of pleasure whenever offered, without at any time losing the power of self-command, and without ever doing anything of a disgraceful kind. Now the man who can drink with drinking companions and never lose his head; the man who can mix with characters of all kinds, men and women, and never commit a folly, must be a strong man and a wise man,—especially if he can do all this and yet keep the friendship of all classes. Now this is exactly what Shakespeare did. We have seen that in his youth he was not quite so wise; but he learned wisdom quickly. He was generous and at the same time economical; he was fond of pleasure, but never allowed pleasure to master him after he began the struggle for life; he was intensely imaginative and sensitive, yet he

never allowed his feelings to drive him into any extremes; and in middle age he was able to retire to private life with a comfortable fortune. Only a wonderful man could have done this.

Yet it must have cost terribly. The volume of work which Shakespeare wrote, the character of that work, the circumstances under which it was completed, alone signify such a nervous strain as scarcely any man could undergo and live. In addition there was the strain of family troubles—troubles which to an affectionate and sensitive nature must have been extremely trying. And finally we know this fact—through modern psychology—that Shakespeare must have been naturally predisposed to great unhappiness simply because of his astounding power for abstract thinking. Any man having not only a very powerful imagination, but the capacity to make the shapes of his imagination living and real, must be in a very unhappy condition when put face to face with the harsh realities of existence.

You may have noticed the power of abstraction in imaginative children. They dream awake; they dream while you are talking to them; they dream while you are trying to teach them. Stupid teachers are likely to be very cruel to such children. They mistake this tendency to dream—which means really that the imagination is powerful enough to dominate all reality except pain—for dulness, and they attempt to enforce attention by blows and harsh words. Clever teachers know that the only way to teach such children is to sympathize with them, to win their confidence, and to teach them altogether by appealing to this imagination, by directing it, and by cultivating it. Mechanical education means great suffering to children of this kind. But what I wish to remind you of is the effect upon the child of being roughly awakened from his little dream,—probably you have noticed the sudden expression of pain; and you will also, I think, have observed that a child, after having been three or four times in succession harshly upbraided for thinking about something else than what you

want him to think about, will burst into tears. Now it would be a great mistake to think that this is the result of a wilful disposition; it is the result of a very real and very severe pain—mental pain. For the whole machinery of the delicate little brain, with its network of nerves and its network of blood vessels, is directed in one absolutely natural direction, invariably pleasurable; and the sudden interruption of its operation means more than a checking of pleasure—it means also a violent shock to the still tender cerebral mechanism. In grown persons of strong imaginative power, the pain of such a shock is probably greater; but the machinery is under excellent control, and the capacity to bear pain has been well developed. For the child, such experiences are not only cruel but dangerous.

Now, by his capacity to dream, the great poet in more ways than one very much resembles the child, and the practical world with which he has to contend treats him very much like a cruel master. His pleasure, emotional and intellectual, infinitely exceeding any pleasure possible to common minds, is being incessantly and pitilessly interrupted and mocked by the hard facts of everyday life. If he be wealthy, and therefore able to isolate himself at will, he is very fortunate, and may be able to do great things. If he be poor and in a painful subordinate position, he is likely to suffer much more than can be even imagined; he will be able, in most cases, to do good work only at rare intervals; and the result of his struggle may be a total breakdown, physical as well as moral. Sometimes he becomes insane. Often he incurs the world's condemnation by extraordinary excesses. Remember that there can be no more foolish and wicked error than to suppose that the pain and pleasure of all human beings is the same, that one man can bear just as much suffering or enjoy just as much delight as another. In no two human beings can the capacity for pain and pleasure be exactly the same, for there are no two nervous systems exactly alike. The pain which a poet, a genius, a man of powerful imagination may feel, is much greater than

the pain which other men have to bear, simply because of his more complex and incomparably more delicate nervous system.

Therefore modern psychology, studying the work of Shakespeare, perceiving its enormous physical cost, is immediately struck by the mystery of the man's power to endure what the world must have inflicted upon him. The great question is, "How did this man live?" No ordinary man could bear one-tenth of what Shakespeare must have borne; and yet he passed through life smoothly, triumphantly, and calmly. No doubt we have here a phenomenon very much like that which the psychology of Napoleon gives us. In both these men of genius there appears to have been developed, in a prodigious way, what is physiologically called inhibitory power. I mean this: Just as a very powerful engine requires a very complicated and powerful apparatus to check and change its movements, so a very powerful mind can be protected only from serious injury by something corresponding to those parts of the engine which can instantly stop or reverse the motion. Napoleon compared his own mind, not to a steam engine, but to a chest of drawers; still his illustration was admirable. He said, "If you call one drawer or compartment of my mind Finance, another War, another Geography, you will understand my meaning when I say that I can always open one drawer at will and keep all the other drawers firmly locked." Shakespeare must have had the same extraordinary faculty. It is given to very few men, and it alone can explain Shakespeare's ability to endure the experiences of his career. I need scarcely tell you that control of the imagination and intellectual operations is an infinitely more difficult thing than what we commonly call self-control — which really signifies little more than the regulation of outer action.

But, as I have said, this must have cost enormously. After all, the mind depends for its support upon the body, and a very powerful mind is likely to exhaust and consume the body very rapidly. When genius has the emotional

character, its possessor seldom lives long. Shakespeare must have been a very strong man, but he died in 1616 (some say on his own birthday) at the age of fifty-two. For such a constitution, we may say that this was dying young. But there must have been many extraordinary physical strains, also, upon the life of an actor in those days. We must remember the difficulties of night-life, the unhealthy character of London in the Elizabethan age, the non-sanitary nature of the early theatre—foul as an out-house. Besides we must remember that Shakespeare had plenty of domestic trouble, and domestic trouble wears out a man more quickly than almost any other kind of trouble. There is yet one other matter to consider—whether love for some other woman than his wife was or was not a cause of great suffering to Shakespeare. On this subject opinion is much divided. The evidence for the affirmative is chiefly, if not entirely, drawn from the poems of Shakespeare, especially the “Sonnets.” But I imagine that we can never obtain really sufficient evidence for the belief. When we consider how much of human life has been reflected by Shakespeare with startling reality, though foreign to his own personal experience, how dare we say that his marvellous intuition may not have enabled him to paint and to animate all the sorrows of a passion never indulged in by him except in imagination? Of course, while we think it likely that such verses as those beginning “The Passionate Pilgrim,”

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,

were inscribed to a real person, I must remind you that it is equally possible the person existed only in Shakespeare’s dream. About no other great genius is it so difficult to draw conclusions from published writings as in the case of Shakespeare. As a rule he never shows us his own personality throughout the multitude of his plays, but always other personalities. Why then should we suppose that he chose to be less impersonal in his poems?

Many different Shakespearean scholars have grouped the plays of Shakespeare in different ways. Some have made three classes, some four, others five and more. Some authorities would put the English historical plays in a group by themselves. But the general opinion until recently seems to have been that the plays should be arranged as Comedies, Tragedies, Historical Plays and Dramas or Melodramas. Now what I want to observe is that the student can escape all this trouble and confusion by accepting the opinion of the greatest modern lecturer upon Shakespeare, Professor Ten Brink, and by recognizing that all the plays can be divided very simply into two classes only,—Comedies and Tragedies.

Real scholarship is not shown by the capacity to put forth an enormous amount of detail; it is shown by the capacity for synthesis. Synthesis means the co-ordination of detail. It is just in this capacity that Ten Brink has shown himself especially great, and I should advise you to accept his opinion. I shall assume therefore that Shakespeare wrote only Tragedies and Comedies.

But if we were to divide his thirty-seven plays into these two classes, it is very necessary that you should know exactly what is meant by tragedy, and what is meant by comedy. Ten Brink uses these terms, just as our best English critics use them, in the classical sense only. Most people have an idea that a comedy is a play written to make people laugh—a funny play, in short; and that a tragedy is a play in which there is some killing or a good deal of grief or passion. Put into the briefest form, the popular notion is that a comedy makes you laugh, and a tragedy makes you cry. But this is all wrong, or nearly all wrong. Remember that the great and terrible poem of Dante is called, and very correctly called, the *Divine Comedy*. Now in the classic sense the difference between a tragedy and a comedy lies not so much in the incidents of the plays, but in the order of the incidents. A tragedy should begin with a calm and peaceful opening, or even a pleasant, merry

opening is possible—and then should gradually become more sombre and terrible till the climax is reached. On the other hand, a comedy may begin even in a tragical manner; but the progress of the play must be a steady brightening of tone until a grateful conclusion is arrived at. It is not at all necessary that a comedy should make you laugh, in order to be a comedy. Some of the greatest comedies do not make us laugh at all. And now you will understand why Dante called his poem the *Divine Comedy*. It begins in Hell; but it ends in Heaven. The whole progress of the poem represents a brightening of conditions until the highest of all conditions is reached at the sight of the *Mystical Rose*.

Taking the classical meaning of the words, therefore, we can save all trouble by dividing the whole of Shakespeare's plays into tragedies and comedies. Yet the distinction can not always be made a very sharp one. The reason is that Shakespeare's genius sometimes invented a new form of drama which it is almost impossible to class. "*Measure for Measure*" must be classed as a comedy; the ending of it is according to the rules of comedy. But, as has well been said, "it oversteps the bounds of comedy." There is no play more sombre and more psychologically terrible than "*Measure for Measure*." From first to last the nerves of the spectator or the reader are kept in a state of extreme tension, which sometimes accentuates into real pain—I may almost say agony. Few tragedies could be more tragical without bloodshed; yet we have classed the play as a comedy.

I think this is all that is necessary to say about grouping. You will see that there are no difficulties in your way according to the judgment of the best scholars. We may now turn to another subject about which an enormous amount of stuff has been written to very little purpose,—the origin of Shakespeare's plays. I believe that we can treat this topic just as simply, though not perhaps as tersely, as the question of grouping.

The first general fact which you should know is that Shakespeare did not invent any of his plays,—with perhaps

one exception, the "Love's Labour's Lost." When he wanted to write a play he simply took a play that had been written before, and wrote it over again; or else he took some famous story which he had read in a book, and made a play out of it; in not a few cases, he used two or three different stories as the material for one of his own dramas. This is the general fact; and it is very significant. Only a great genius can do this. Shakespeare felt so conscious of his own power that the question of a new subject never even occurred to him. No matter how old the subject was, he could make it new; no matter how beautifully a story had been told, he could tell it infinitely better. Nearly all great genius in literature has acted in the same way. Genius does not need to invent, because it re-creates anything which it touches. The greatest of French dramatists, Molière, did just as Shakespeare did; he took his material wherever he could find it.

In a general way, a knowledge of the sources of Shakespeare's plays is of no use to you at all, except in one particular,—the sources show you, better than anything else could, the enormousness of Shakespeare's genius. For when you hear it said that such and such a poet got his inspiration from such and such a story, and look at the story, and find in it almost nothing in the least resembling the poem, then you can understand what inspiration means. It does not mean that a man borrows ideas and expressions from somebody else—literary theft, vulgar plagiarism; it means only that the ideas or expressions of somebody else have excited in the poet's mind a new and completely original train of fancies. Of course Shakespeare sometimes took a whole plot from some other dramatist, as he did in the case of Greene, without the least compunction. But the plot was for Shakespeare nothing more than the frame of a picture. We must suppose that his judgments were made something after this fashion: "I have read Chaucer's poem; it is not badly written, but it is not true to human nature. Cressida was not, could not be, what Chaucer represented her; she was quite

another kind of woman,—weak, selfish, and totally immoral. Now *I* will show you what kind of woman she really was, and what she said.” Then he wrote, we may suppose, “Troilus and Cressida,” and of course the power of his creation makes us see at once that Chaucer’s conception was not natural. Shakespeare must have done this in many cases. Studying the history of Anthony and Cleopatra in Plutarch, he was led to form an idea of Cleopatra probably nearer the truth than that of any historian and certainly nearer to truth than that of Chaucer or any other poet. He said to himself, “This woman was a courtesan; but she loved. She could not be vulgar, because she was a queen and a Greek, but she was certainly a courtesan. I must represent her therefore as ruling her lover entirely by the arts of the courtesan, although at the same time sincerely devoted to him, so far as the weakness and selfishness of her nature allowed her to be. At a pinch, she would sacrifice him, or anybody else; but so long as the pinch does not come, she loves him.” Such is his conception,—incomparably difficult to carry out, yet supremely well carried out. Or take another case—the story of Hamlet. It was not a new story in Shakespeare’s day, but Shakespeare saw possibilities in it that nobody else had ever dreamed of. So keen was his perception here, that it was not until Goethe had studied the piece that he was really able to understand the greatness of Shakespeare’s knowledge. Hamlet is a victim of circumstances, but not of the circumstances suggested by Belleforest’s narrative. He is a victim of circumstances simply and solely because his character is not strong enough for the situation in which he finds himself placed. A powerful man—a man of the stamp of William the Conqueror, for example—would have mastered such a situation in a moment; but Hamlet is too scrupulous, too affectionate, too sensitive, and too weak. Therefore he lives like a man in hell until the frightful tragedy ends. In every case we may say that Shakespeare’s conception of a character was different from that of any writers who had studied such a character be-

fore him. Consequently he never could feel any scruple about taking an old story for his subject. The story might be good or bad; that made no difference. It could not be bad for Shakespeare, because with his genius he could always see possibilities in a story infinitely beyond the capacity of the man who had written it. And it is because of all this that I tell you, or rather advise you, not to give yourselves any trouble about the sources of Shakespeare's plays. The important thing to do is to study one or two of the plays or as many as you can, and find out for yourselves something of the wonderful beauty in them. If a really great translation of Shakespeare's plays should ever be made into your language, it will probably be made by university students; and I can imagine no possibility of making it, except by a perfectly natural study of the work in itself, without giving any attention to commentaries, theories, chronology, or anything of what is called Shakespeareanism.

Will it not surprise you to think that Shakespeare was able to delight the common public during the age of Elizabeth with plays which only our own great scholars perfectly understand to-day? The explanation is very simple. The audience of that time enjoyed the plays exactly as a boy enjoys reading them now—just as very clever stories well dramatized. Questions of psychology and all that sort of thing never enter into the boy's head,—and never entered into Shakespeare's head. His art was unconscious, he never knew how wonderful his own work was; he only felt that it was true. And he was speaking not to scholars or men of science, but to thousands of people who could neither read nor write. The poorest little village in Japan has a more comfortable theatre of a temporary kind than Shakespeare's permanent theatre could have been; and the development of dramatic accessories in Japan long before the *Meiji* era, was incomparably greater than anything which Shakespeare could avail himself of. I told you, during our talk about religious plays, that scenery, fine dresses, or costumes, and

other attractions were used in these dramas during the latter part of the Middle Ages. But those religious dramas had been supported by public subscription and by wealthy municipalities; they could afford to pay for all this. It was quite otherwise in the case of Elizabethan drama, especially in Shakespeare's day. No theatre in London could then afford scenery or fine costumes or any other attraction except that of spirited acting and fine composition. Only rich people could even afford to watch the plays of Shakespeare under a roof. In the Globe theatre, for example, which looked something like a panorama building in Japan to-day, a great part of the theatre was uncovered; and it used to rain upon the heads of those who could not afford to pay for what we call now private boxes. All this, and many other interesting facts, ought to be remembered as proof that Shakespeare had no idea of appealing to a cultured or to a special class, but to the people only. And nothing will be so important for the future Japanese translator of Shakespeare to bear in mind, as the necessity of perfect naturalness in reading the text.

Another thing against which I think it is the duty of the lecturer to warn the student is the psychological theory—the theory of a fundamental idea in each and all of Shakespeare's plays. A great deal of rubbish, very learned rubbish, has been written upon this subject; and it has all ended in exactly nothing. Shakespeare never had a "fundamental idea"; he had no other plan in writing his plays than to make them as close to truth as he possibly could. He never had even a theory of dramatic composition. He broke through all rules, not only because he did not care about rules, but because he had too large a mind to be confined by theory. There was but one limit which he obeyed, and obeyed magnificently—the limit imposed by the dramatic necessities of the stage. And in conclusion I should say that the sources of Shakespeare's plays exist only nominally in other books and dramas; their real place was in his heart and brain.

The subject of Shakespeare is so large that it would be easy to lecture upon it for at least ten years; but we have only a few days in the month to study it. Therefore I can not attempt anything like a systematic analysis of the plays — nor would such analysis, under present circumstances, be of much value to you. In treating of Shakespeare's characters, I can only attempt to show you in what respect they differ from the characters of other dramatists, not only English dramatists, but dramatists of almost every other country. The great difference to be remembered in a general way is their intense vitality, as I have said before.

Probably no two of us perceive and think about any inanimate object exactly in the same way; nevertheless the impressions that inanimate objects make upon healthy minds differ much less than do the impressions made by living persons. For an object, even an artistic object, appeals rather to what we might call the reflecting surface of the mind than to its depth. In the case of persons, the exterior man as object affects us much less than the interior man as subject. We are forced to think about people whom we meet according to their words and acts. Observing what they do and hearing what they say, we imagine the state of their minds, basing our judgment chiefly upon analogy. The reason, we think, a man feels glad or sad when he says or does certain things, is that in our own experience we have found such words and acts associated with gladness or sadness. And in a loose general way we are often right. Nevertheless, no two of us can be impressed in exactly the same way by the same person,—which shows that our several experiences and our several characters differ very considerably. Personally we have the converse experience. You and I have each three friends, let us suppose. To each of your three friends you must have found you are a different person. No doubt the three may be said to love you equally well; but you will find that their opinions of something you do are very different. And you will notice that while one of the three understands you better than the other two in some respects, he

understands you less in other respects. No man can be exactly the same for two other individuals; and the more cultivated the class in which he moves, the wider is the range of difference in the impressions which he makes.

Now a perfect character in drama retains this living power of affecting different persons in totally different ways while remaining to each and all a very real and natural existence. An artificial character in drama does not. The artificial character seems to everybody nearly the same thing; and the opinions of different persons about such a character will be pretty much the same. In other words, the impression made by the puppet-character is nearly the same as the impression made by an inanimate object—I do not mean to say there is absolutely no difference, but the difference is so slight that we need not talk about it. We feel indifferent to the artificial character; but to the natural character we feel as toward a living person. According to our several dispositions we like, love, dislike, hate, or despise the creation of the dramatist, just as in the case of a person to whom we have been introduced by chance or by request.

There are very few characters in all dramatic literature having the vitality of which I speak; but nearly all Shakespeare's characters have it. No two great critics have ever been affected in exactly the same way by one of Shakespeare's characters; and no two great actors have ever rendered one in exactly the same way. Every distinguished artist who has taken the part of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, for example, has given us an entirely unique rendering, without departing in the least from the play, and without adding an invention of his own. In short, to each great actor Othello or Lear seems as the real person would seem; and the difference of the various actors' conception is explicable solely by the absolute truth of Shakespeare's conception. A proper interpretation of one of Shakespeare's characters is enough to establish for the actor a great and lasting reputation; and with the progress of dramatic art in Europe, we find that the interpretations improve generation after

generation. In our own time, the finest interpretation of Othello has been given not by an Englishman but by an Italian, the great actor Salvini.

The observation which I have just made leads naturally to the subject of the second characteristic of Shakespeare's creations to which I wish to call your attention—I mean their comparative immortality. The humanity of Shakespeare's characters is eternal, if we can use the word eternal at all in relation to earthly things. I shall try to explain what I mean a little more clearly. Humanity, in spite of all theories, is a thing that does not change through the centuries. Civilization is, after all, merely a garment for humanity; different civilizations are but different fashions. Of course I do not mean to imply that civilization, in the sense of ordered living, communal living, is not a moulding force; that it does not develop the moral and intellectual capacities of men to their highest possible degree. But social living is incalculably old; and the changes it has made in human nature have been made slowly. A few years ago, the historian Froude, while visiting Norway, wrote an essay, inspired by his travels, in which he said that if an Englishman of to-day could be placed side by side with one of the old Norsemen, the difference in character would prove to be very small indeed. Religious codes of morals, manners and customs all change more or less in the course of time; but the nature of man changes but very slightly. What we are apt to call civilization means for us fashions of life and thought—to few minds does it signify anything really permanent. Therefore I say that civilization itself represents for the philosopher little more than the outer garment of humanity. The heart of man in the sixteenth century was not different from that of the man of to-day. And a true picture of human character drawn in the eighteenth century should therefore be just as interesting to us as if it were a study of contemporary life. The greater number of dramatic writers, however, never get much below the surface of the thing; very seldom have they been able to touch the kernel,

the real human heart whose beat is not changed by all the changes of time. Therefore their plays and their books become neglected and forgotten. Therefore we do not act the plays of Ben Jonson, or of Fletcher, or of Ford, or of other sixteenth century dramatists; their characters are all dead as themselves. But we do continue to act the plays of Shakespeare, because their humanity is of the kind that can not die. We only get a larger and a truer conception of Shakespeare's humanity as the centuries pass. If the work of Molière enjoys something of the same immortality in France, it is chiefly for the same reason—not at all for the same reason that the plays of Racine are still acted. But Molière is incomparably inferior in vital creation to Shakespeare. Indeed, to find any parallel to him, we have to go back to the Greek writers—I should say especially to Euripides, who can never cease to charm us because of the real humanity which he expressed. But the art of Euripides was fettered by artistic laws which did not exist for Shakespeare; and because the Greek could not enjoy the artistic freedom of the Englishman, he could equal the Englishman only in occasional moments.

There is yet a third fact to remember in connection with Shakespeare's characters: the extraordinary fact that they can not be grouped. I know that you will tell me that you have seen some attempt at grouping them; but I can assure you that no really great critic in these days would attempt any grouping of the kind to which I refer. There are of course several ways of grouping; I mean grouping by classes or types—classes of which the individual members all bear to each other a certain resemblance. In the case of every other dramatist, you will find that his characters can be readily grouped by types; all his villains, for example, represent nearly the same conception; all his virtuous women likewise seem to be more or less identical. But this can never be done with Shakespeare's characters by any one who really understands them; and the fact itself is the most triumphant proof of the incomparable truth of his concep-

tions. For in life, only the superficial observer and the superficial thinker can really class human characters by groups or types. Certainly we do find points of interresemblance between lovable persons, and again between hateful persons. Yet close observation must convince us that every human being is essentially different from every other human being; and that their differences are even greater than their resemblances. We can make only a few very loose and general rules about types of character. For example, it is at least true that individual differentiation increases according to intellectual development, and diminishes as we descend lower in the scale of moral life. Shakespeare has given proof of his instinctive knowledge of both these truths. Each one of his personages is essentially different from every other, but the differences appear greatest in those representatives of the higher classes whom he brings upon the stage, and less in the characters that are lower socially and morally.

Nevertheless, he seems to us — though falsely — greatest in his treatment of humble or of ignoble characters; I say “seems,” because the delusion is altogether due to our unfamiliarity with this kind of art. We have been accustomed, for example, to conceive in our own minds a certain vague general idea of what a bad man is; we have been helped to do this partly through religious teaching and partly through personal experience. But our conception is almost certain to be wrong while we are young, and, if still founded upon personal experience, wrong even when we are old. Judging good or bad actions chiefly in their relation to our own pleasure or displeasure, is the very worst way of judging them; yet it is the way in which they have been judged by nearly every other dramatist except Shakespeare. Shakespeare presents us with the natural man always; and, with few exceptions, the natural man is not entirely bad. The ordinary villain is simply a person in whom the feelings antagonistic to civilized existence dominate the opposite class of feelings. In most cases Shakespeare shows us, what

no other dramatist shows us, mainly the secret working of a bad mind,—the reason of the wickedness done. Thus we can not only understand Macbeth, we can almost sympathize with him. He is not a man incapable of good; he is a man entirely dominated by one furious passion of ambition which urges him to commit crimes otherwise contrary to his nature, as his remorse proves them to be. Or take the case of Cloten. Cloten is one of the most cleverly drawn of Shakespeare's bad characters—a spoiled child developed by over-indulgence into a selfish and brutal man, who is capable of any wickedness when his self-esteem has been wounded.

But these are not the most powerful villains drawn by Shakespeare—quite the contrary. The most powerful is unquestionably Iago. It is of Iago that I particularly wish to speak to you. There is a very peculiar fact about the tragedy of "Othello"—that from the beginning of the play until the end we have no real explanation as to why Iago hates Othello and ruins him. Of course Iago says in one passage that he suspects Othello of having committed adultery with his wife. But it is quite evident at the same time that Iago does not believe anything of the sort. He merely offers a suspicion of this sort as a kind of self-justification. At the end of the tragedy when Iago finds himself in the hands of the law—when he is about to be tortured in order to make him tell the truth—he says that he will never speak again; and we know that the tortures will not make him speak. He will die in silence, and the secret of his hate will die with him. Now it seems to me that this mystery of Iago's hatred is Shakespeare's greatest triumph in the portraiture of this scoundrel. This is reality itself. The really bad man, devoid of natural affection and of any generous feeling, is a character extremely difficult to understand. A good man is very easily deceived by a being of this kind, and can not comprehend either how or why he is deceived. Probably all of you will have occasion to meet at least once during your lives a really malevolent character; and if you do, you will discover that you can not

comprehend such a character. You can defend yourself from his malevolence only through a kind of intuition; if you try to cope with him, cunning against cunning, you will find yourself easily overmatched. But the great puzzle for a frank honest person in such cases is to find out why he is hated. This he will try to do, of course; but he will never succeed. Consequently he is apt at a later time to imagine his mysterious enemy more formidable than he really is—more intelligent. The plain truth is that the very bad persons are difficult to understand not because they are more clever than the rest of mankind, but because they are less human, less emotionally developed. The difficulty of understanding them is very like the difficulty of understanding the feelings and thoughts of an animal. Wherever there is an Othello, there is always likely to be an Iago; and Othello will always be the victim of Iago because he can not understand the existence of a nature so inferior to his own.

But now let us take a glance at the working of the malevolent mind in its turn. Does Iago understand Othello? He understands him well enough to play with him as a cat plays with a mouse, to make him ridiculous, to ruin him, to drive him to murder, and then to suicide. That seems as if he understands something about Othello. But really Iago's cunning is only the cunning of the primitive man, the pure savage. He understands nothing of Othello except the finer emotions of the man in regard to love and friendship, and he understands these only as weaknesses. He sincerely believes them to be weaknesses. Such feelings, he thinks, are a dangerous form of pleasure; a man who has affections and sentiments can at any moment be deceived and destroyed. And he sets to work with a sort of amused curiosity to deceive Othello. We must imagine him thinking to himself somewhat like this: "They have made this man General-in-Chief. They think he is a great soldier and a very wise person. I am only a common soldier, but see what I can do with this man. I can lead him by the nose; I can make him believe any lie—even the most absurd; I can turn him

against his friends; I can make him murder his wife! I can make him kill himself, and disgrace his name for all time. Yet this man whom I can thus play with, as I should play with a doll, they have made General-in-Chief! What fools they must be. Surely *I* could serve the government better than this foolish baby whom I can do as I please with." Without any question, Iago believes himself to be incomparably superior to Othello; and it is probable that this feeling has something to do with his hatred. But not all of it can be thus explained; we must recognize here also the same sort of natural cruelty which prompts the wild monkey to pluck a bird alive, or the cat to torture her prey before killing it. Now my theory is simply this, that Iago could not, even if he had wished, have told us why he hated Othello. The really malevolent being can never tell the reason for his malevolence when that malevolence is merely instinctive, any more than a cat could tell, were she able to speak, why she finds it so pleasurable to tease a mouse before killing it. The normally balanced mind is too apt to imagine that there must be some relative cause for a revengeful or malicious act. It is almost impossible for a good man to imagine that a cruel thing can be done without provocation. But it is just for that reason that a good man is so easily deceived. He does not know that there is such a thing as hatred which is inborn, instinctive, intuitive; and that in every thousand men we should probably find at least one in whom this savage form of malice survives. Shakespeare's dramas, when closely analyzed, present us with all these facts; and his Iago is the most absolutely natural of his painful creations. I should like to call your attention also to another of Shakespeare's villains, popularly considered the most atrocious of all — Aaron in "Titus Andronicus." I can not agree with this popular judgment. I do not think that Aaron is nearly so great a villain as Iago. In Aaron, Shakespeare gives us a picture of primitive man, the real savage, without any sense of morals, and scarcely any sense of pity. He is cruel, he is lustful, he is

immensely cunning,—but he has affection. This is a very important difference. He loves his black child, and he is ready to fight the whole world to save it; otherwise he is an absolute barbarian. But Iago is the civilized man, the polished Italian villain, entirely ruled by interest and malice, and totally insensible to affection of any possible kind.

Even when Shakespeare brings upon the stage such characters as courtesans, every person is distinctively individual. From Cleopatra to Doll Tearsheet the distance is not greater than the distance which Shakespeare always established between any two types of this sort. Notice the quiet courteous woman-of-the-town in "The Comedy of Errors," and the character of the woman in "Pericles"; they are miles apart. But it is rather in the most charming types of good women that his power to individualize seems most astonishing, as far as female characters are concerned. I shall call your attention to only one group—of course I mean "group" simply in my own purely arbitrary sense. Shakespeare gives us three different studies of women disguised as boys in three different plays: "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night" and "Cymbeline."

Nothing could be more difficult than to make three perfectly natural and yet essentially distinct conceptions under these circumstances. But this has been supremely well accomplished. Rosalind, the charming, saucy, mischievous, playful, shrewd but withal very tender, and in the best sense, innocent girl, is a type that any Englishman can recognize as being quite possible to-day. She is a girl of courage and daring, able to master the most difficult situation by goodness of heart and firm resolve combined. She can do very dangerous things; but she is strong enough to do them, and you may be sure that she will never make a moral mistake. Viola in "Twelfth Night" is a much slighter being. She is sweet but timid, and we are kept uneasy about her until the end of the play. This is the kind of girl that fortune has to help; she is not strong enough to master a difficult situation, as Rosalind would; but she is clever, and

her gentleness saves her under circumstances where force would be less successful. Imogen in "Cymbeline" is the child-woman — totally unfit to bear hardship, and still less able to bear unkindness. Under no circumstances could you imagine any two out of these three to be sisters. Each is as different from the rest as if she belonged to a different nation, or rather, a different race. Perhaps Rosalind is the most English type of the three. It will be interesting for the student to remember that in Shakespeare's time these characters were to be acted by boys; and the boys employed for the purpose must certainly have been very extraordinary boys. For the boy had to pretend to be a girl dressed as a boy and pretending to be a boy. The difficulty of taking such a part with success can only be understood by those who can appreciate the psychological play required.

CHAPTER III

THE INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTY

I WISH to speak of the greatest difficulty with which the Japanese students of English literature, or of almost any western literature, have to contend. I do not think that it ever has been properly spoken about. A foreign teacher might well hesitate to speak about it—because, if he should try to explain it merely from the western point of view, he could not hope to be understood; and if he should try to speak about it from the Japanese point of view, he would be certain to make various mistakes and to utter various extravagances. The proper explanation might be given by a Japanese professor only, who should have so intimate an acquaintance with western life as to sympathize with it. Yet I fear that it would be difficult to find such a Japanese professor for this reason, that just in proportion as he should find himself in sympathy with western life, in that proportion he would become less and less able to communicate that sympathy to his students. The difficulties are so great that it has taken me many years even to partly guess how great they are. That they can be removed at the present day is utterly out of the question. But something may be gained by stating them even imperfectly. At the risk of making blunders and uttering extravagances, I shall make the attempt. I am impelled to do so by a recent conversation with one of the cleverest students that I ever had, who acknowledged his total inability to understand some of the commonest facts in western life,—all those facts relating, directly or indirectly, to the position of woman in western literature as reflecting western life.

Let us clear the ground at once by putting down some facts in the plainest and lowest terms possible. You must

try to imagine a country in which the place of the highest virtue is occupied, so to speak, by the devotion of sex to sex. The highest duty of the man is not to his father, but to his wife; and for the sake of that woman he abandons all other earthly ties, should any of these happen to interfere with that relation. The first duty of the wife may be, indeed, must be, to her child, when she has one; but otherwise her husband is her divinity and king. In that country it would be thought unnatural or strange to have one's parents living in the same house with wife or husband. You know all this. But it does not explain for you other things, much more difficult to understand, especially the influence of the abstract idea of woman upon society at large as well as upon the conduct of the individual. The devotion of man to woman does not mean at all only the devotion of husband to wife. It means actually this,—that every man is bound by conviction and by opinion to put all women before himself, simply because they are women. I do not mean that any man is likely to think of any woman as being his intellectual and physical superior; but I do mean that he is bound to think of her as something deserving and needing the help of every man. In time of danger the woman must be saved first. In time of pleasure, the woman must be given the best place. In time of hardship the woman's share of the common pain must be taken voluntarily by the man as much as possible. This is not with any view to recognition of the kindness shown. The man who assists a woman in danger is not supposed to have any claim upon her for that reason. He has done his duty only, not to her, the individual, but to womankind at large. So we have arrived at this general fact, that the first place in all things, except rule, is given to woman in western countries, and that it is given almost religiously.

Is woman a religion? Well, perhaps you will have the chance of judging for yourselves if you go to America. There you will find men treating women with just the same respect formerly accorded only to religious dignitaries or to

great nobles. Everywhere they are saluted and helped to the best places; everywhere they are treated as superior beings. Now if we find reverence, loyalty and all kinds of sacrifices devoted either to a human being or to an image, we are inclined to think of worship. And worship it is. If a western man should hear me tell you this, he would want the statement qualified, unless he happened to be a philosopher. But I am trying to put the facts before you in the way in which you can best understand them. Let me say, then, that the all important thing for the student of English literature to try to understand, is that in western countries woman is a cult, a religion, or if you like still plainer language, I shall say that in western countries woman is a god.

So much for the abstract idea of woman. Probably you will not find that particularly strange; the idea is not altogether foreign to eastern thought, and there are very extensive systems of feminine pantheism in India. Of course the western idea is only in the romantic sense a feminine pantheism; but the Oriental idea may serve to render it more comprehensive. The ideas of divine Mother and divine Creator may be studied in a thousand forms; I am now referring rather to the sentiment, to the feeling, than to the philosophical conception.

You may ask, if the idea or sentiment of divinity attaches to woman in the abstract, what about woman in the concrete—individual woman? Are women individually considered as gods? Well, that depends on how you define the word god. The following definition would cover the ground, I think:—“Gods are beings superior to man, capable of assisting or injuring him, and to be placated by sacrifice and prayer.” Now according to this definition, I think that the attitude of man towards woman in western countries might be very well characterized as a sort of worship. In the upper classes of society, and in the middle classes also, great reverence towards women is exacted. Men bow down before them, make all kinds of sacrifices to please them, beg for

their good will and their assistance. It does not matter that this sacrifice is not in the shape of incense burning or of temple offerings; nor does it matter that the prayers are of a different kind from those pronounced in churches. There is sacrifice and worship. And no saying is more common, no truth better known, than that the man who hopes to succeed in life must be able to please the women. Every young man who goes into any kind of society knows this. It is one of the first lessons that he has to learn. Well, am I very wrong in saying that the attitude of men towards women in the West is much like the attitude of men towards gods?

But you may answer at once,—How comes it, if women are thus revered as you say, that men of the lower classes beat and ill-treat their wives in those countries? I must reply, for the same reason that Italian and Spanish sailors will beat and abuse the images of the saints and virgins to whom they pray, when their prayer is not granted. It is quite possible to worship an image sincerely, and to seek vengeance upon it in a moment of anger. The one feeling does not exclude the other. What in the higher classes may be a religion, in the lower classes may be only a superstition, and strange contradictions exist, side by side, in all forms of superstition. Certainly the western working man or peasant does not think about his wife or his neighbour's wife in the reverential way that the man of the superior class does. But you will find, if you talk to them, that something of the reverential idea is there; it is there at least during their best moments.

Now there is a certain exaggeration in what I have said. But that is only because of the somewhat narrow way in which I have tried to express a truth. I am anxious to give you the idea that throughout the West there exists, though with a difference according to class and culture, a sentiment about women quite as reverential as a sentiment of religion. This is true; and not to understand it, is not to understand western literature.

How did it come into existence? Through many causes,

some of which are so old that we can not know anything about them. This feeling did not belong to the Greek and Roman civilization, but it belonged to the life of the old northern races, who have since spread over the world, planting their ideas everywhere. In the oldest Scandinavian literature you will find that women were thought of and treated by the men of the North very much as they are thought of and treated by Englishmen of to-day. You will find what their power was in the old sagas, such as the Njal-Saga, or "The Story of Burnt Njal." But we must go much further than the written literature to get a full knowledge of the origin of such a sentiment. The idea seems to have existed that woman was semi-divine, because she was the mother, the creator of man. And we know that she was credited among the Norsemen with supernatural powers. But upon this northern foundation there was built up a highly complex fabric of romantic and artistic sentiment. The Christian worship of the Virgin Mary harmonized with the northern belief. The sentiment of chivalry reinforced it. Then came the artistic resurrection of the Renaissance, and the new reverence for the beauty of the old Greek gods, and the Greek traditions of female divinities; these also coloured and lightened the old feeling about womankind. Think also of the effects with which literature, poetry and the arts have since been cultivating and developing the sentiment. Consider how the great mass of western poetry is love poetry, and the greater part of western fiction love stories.

Of course the foregoing is only the vaguest suggestion of a truth. Really my object is not to trouble you at all about the evolutionary history of the sentiment, but only to ask you to think what this sentiment means in literature. I am not asking you to sympathize with it, but if you could sympathize with it you would understand a thousand things in western books which otherwise must remain dim and strange. I am not expecting that you can sympathize with it. But it is absolutely necessary that you should understand its relation to language and literature. Therefore I have to

tell you that you should try to think of it as a kind of religion, a secular, social, artistic religion, not to be confounded with any national religion. It is a kind of race feeling or race creed. It has not originated in any sensuous idea, but in some very ancient superstitious idea. Nearly all forms of the highest sentiment and the highest faith and the highest art have had their beginnings in equally humble soil.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE RELATION OF LIFE AND CHARACTER TO LITERATURE

I

THE other day, when lecturing on Miss Brontë, I promised a lecture in regard to certain qualities of creative work in fiction. This is the lecture that I now wish to give; but the subject is one which requires a broad consideration of many other things besides methods. What it really implies you will find indicated in the title of this lecture.

Remember that when I am talking to you about literature I never mean history or science or philosophy; I mean only the great division of that literary art which is the expression of feeling and of emotional life. Bearing this in mind we can proceed.

The three main divisions of literature are poetry, drama and fiction. I want to speak of these in relation to the lives of the men who engage in their production. That is what is meant by the title of the essay. This is a very important subject for every student of literature to consider. Any one wishing to become an author in any one of the three branches of literature that I have mentioned, must ask himself honestly several questions and be able to answer them in the affirmative. If he cannot answer them in the affirmative, he had better leave literature alone — for the time being at least.

The first question is, "Have I creative power?" That is to say, "Am I able to produce either poetry, or fiction, or drama, by my own experience, out of my own mental operation, without following the ideas of other people, or being influenced, consciously or unconsciously, only by the

opinions of others?" If you cannot answer this question with an honest "Yes," then you can only be an imitator.

But suppose that you can answer this first question in the affirmative, there remains another question almost equally important to ask. It is this: "Can I devote my life—or at least the best part of my leisure time—to literary work?" If you cannot be sure of much time to spare, you should be sure, at least, of being able to give, every day of your existence, a short time to one sustained object. If you are not sure of being able to do this, you will find the way of literature very hard indeed.

But there is yet a third question to be asked. Even if you have the power and the time, it is necessary that you should determine this matter: "Must I mingle with society and take my part in everyday life, or should I seek quiet and isolation?" The third question can be answered only according to the character of your particular literary power. Certain kinds of literature require solitude — cannot be produced without it. Other kinds of literature oblige the author, whether he likes or does not like it, to mix a great deal with people, to observe all their actions, and to fill himself with every possible experience of active life.

I think now the ground is swept. We can begin the second section of the lecture.

II

What I have suggested in the above series of questions, must now be dwelt upon in detail. Let us first consider poetry in its relation to the conduct of life.

Poetry is not one of those forms of literature which require that the author shall mix a great deal with active life. On the contrary, poetry is especially the art of solitude. Poetry requires a great deal of time, a great deal of thought, a great deal of silent work, and all the sincerity of which a man's nature is capable. The less that a real poet mingles with social life, the better for his art. This is a well known fact in all countries. It is so well known that if a young

poet allows himself to be flattered and petted and made much of by the rich and mighty, it is commonly said that he is going to be ruined. One cannot be perfectly sincere to oneself and become an object of fashionable attention. It is utterly impossible. The art of poetry requires that the poet be as solitary in his house as a priest. I do not mean that it should be necessary to be an ascetic, or anything of that kind, nor that he should not be troubled with family cares. It is very necessary that he should have a family, and know all that the family means, in order to be a good poet. But he must certainly renounce what are generally called social pleasures. In the same degree that he fails to do this, he is almost certain to fail in his poetry.

Let us here consider a few extraordinary facts about the poetical life. Of course you know that poetry does not mean merely writing verses, no matter how correct the verses may be. It means the power to move men's hearts and minds by verse. Now a Persian poet once observed that no bad man could possibly become a poet. There is a good deal of truth in that statement, notwithstanding some apparent exceptions. You have doubtless read that many European poets were bad men. But you must take such statements with a great deal of reserve and qualification. I imagine, for example, that you will immediately think of Byron. But Byron was not fairly judged; and you must not allow yourselves to accept any mere religious or social declaration about the character of the poet. The real facts are that Byron was unjustly treated and goaded and irritated into immoral courses. Moreover the deeper nature of Byron was essentially generous and sympathetic, and when he follows the inspiration of his deeper nature, he gives us the best of what he has. I might speak of many other poets; you will always find that there was something good and generous in the man, however great his faults may have appeared on the surface. Indeed, I knew only one or two exceptions to this Persian observation that no bad man can be a poet, and these exceptions are not satisfactory. We

find in the time of the Italian Renaissance a few extraordinarily wicked men who made a reputation as poets. I might mention, for example, the name of Malatesta. But when we come to examine the literary work of this cruel and ferocious man, we find that its only merit is the perfect correctness of the verse. Perfectly correct verse was greatly esteemed in that age; but we are much wiser to-day. We now know that no mere correctness qualifies verse as true poetry; and I do not think that the Persian poet would have found any poetry in the love verses of the wicked Malatesta.

Of course when the Persian poet spoke of a bad man, he meant what is bad according to the consensus of human experience. I should not call a man bad only because he happened to offend against particular conventions. I should call a man bad only in so far as his relation to others proves him to be cruel, unfeeling, selfish, and ungrateful. No such man as that can write poetry.

So the fundamental truth of this whole matter is simply that a poet must be born a poet — as the English proverb says, “A poet is born, not made.” No amount of education will make a man a poet. Every year in England two great universities turn out about four thousand good men stuffed with all that systematic education can force into them. German universities can do better than that. French universities do quite as well. But out of these thousands and thousands, how many can become poets? Not half a dozen in all the countries of Europe together. Education will help a poet; it will greatly enrich his powers of language; it will train his ear to the charm of musical sound, and train his brain to perceive all possible laws of proportion and taste in form. But it cannot make him a poet. I suppose there are to-day in England alone at least thirty thousand people capable of writing almost any form of correct verse. Yet perhaps not even two of them are poets; for poetry is a question of character and temperament. One must be born with a love of the beautiful, with great capacities for sym-

pathy, with a certain gentleness of disposition, in order to be able to act upon the feelings of men through literature. The qualities that make the poet, belong to the softer side of human nature—hence the proverb that the poet is a man who is half a woman. I think that you have all observed that certain admirable but hard kinds of mind are almost insensible to sentiment in literature. As a general rule—though exceptions have existed—mathematicians cannot be poets; the great Goethe, distinguished as he was in science by reason of his constructive imagination, was singularly deficient in mathematical capacity. It would appear that certain powers of the mind cannot be cultivated except at the expense of other faculties. Everywhere poets have been recognized as more or less unpractical in active life; they rarely make good business men; they never can do certain things requiring insensibility to the feelings of others. Essentially sympathetic, their conduct is ruled in all things by feelings rather than by cold reason, and that is why they very often make such unfortunate mistakes. But they should be thought of as representing in the highest degree what is emotional in man. If the whole world were governed by hard and fast rules, it would become very much more difficult to live in than it now is because of the poets who help to keep alive the more generous impulses of human nature. That is why they have been called priests.

I do not think that in Japan the most difficult form of sustained emotional effort has ever been comparable to the art of poetry in Western countries. It is, indeed, such a difficult thing, to compare the achievements of two countries, that if I were speaking only of poetry as embodied in verse, I think that you would find my remarks decidedly extravagant. But poetry is not confined to forms of verse. There may be poetry in beautiful prose; and some of the very best English literature deserves to be qualified as prose-poetry, because it produces the emotional effect of verse. Now any form of literature that really does this requires all the time and all the power that the writer can spare. And

it is for this reason that the life of the man who writes it must be solitary—a life of devotion to art.

III

Let us now turn to fiction—excluding the variety of it which might be termed prose-poetry. Fiction should be, in these times, the Mirror of Life. What is a man to do who would devote his time and life in this direction? We must stop and qualify.

Although there are nominally so many different schools of European fiction—Classical, Romantic, Realistic, Naturalistic, Psychological, Problematical, etc., etc.,—we need not bother ourselves with this variety of distinctions, but simply divide fiction into two classes—subjective and objective. Fiction is either a picture of things imagined, or a picture of things actually seen. Can we make a preference? From the artistic point of view I am not sure that we can; for, contrary to what vulgar public opinion believes, the greatest works of fiction and drama have really been subjective, not objective. I need not remind you that Shakespeare did not see and did not experience the incidents of his astonishing plays, and I need not remind you that the great Greek dramatists did not see the facts of tragedy which they put upon the stage and which powerfully move our hearts. This is an astonishing fact, that the mind should perceive more clearly than the eyes—but it is only when the mind is that of a genius. From the artistic standpoint we cannot, nevertheless, dare to say that one method of literature is necessarily better than the other, merely because the greatest work happens to have been done by that method. In some future time we might find an objective method made equally great. And from the individual point of view, from the point of view of the young author, the young student, a preference is absolutely necessary. It is all-important that he should discover in what direction his literary strength is growing. If he feels that he can do better by imagination than by observation, then let him by all means cultivate

romantic work. But if he feels sure that he can do better by using his senses—by observing, comparing—then he must, as a duty to himself, adopt a realistic method. And the conduct of his life in relation to literature must be decided according to which path he decides to take.

As I told you, the highest forms of fiction and drama have been the work of intuition, of imagination. Thackeray, for example, no more than Shakespeare, actually saw or experienced what he put into his novels. Yet those novels much surpassed the novels of Miss Brontë, who only wrote what she heard and saw and felt. If you did not know the real facts of the case, you would think that Thackeray was more realistic than Miss Brontë. Great imaginative work is more realistic than reality itself, more apparently objective than the result of objective study. But as I reminded you, it is only a genius who can reach this sort of realism through intuition. However, there are minor degrees of genius. You must have noticed some of these among yourselves. In any gathering of students there are always a few remarkable persons in whom the other students are willing to put their trust whenever any emergency arises. Suppose a thousand students are in a difficult position of some kind or anxious about something; presently out of that thousand, leaders or guides or advisers would come forward. It is not necessary at all that they should be particularly strong or formidable persons; what is wanted in a time of embarrassment or danger is a good head, not a strong arm. You instinctively know, I presume, that he who has the best head among you is not necessarily the best scholar. It is not scholarship that is needed for difficult circumstances; it is what we call "mother-wit," strong common sense, that is what we commonly mean in England by "a good head." Persons of this kind do not often make mistakes. Notice how they act when they come in contact with strangers—they remain quite at ease, unembarrassed, and they know what to do and what to say on meeting extraordinary persons or extraordinary events. Now what

is this power, this "mother-wit"? It is a kind of strong intuition. It is the best of all wits that a man can be born to. If a man have this gift in a very great degree, and if he happen at the same time to have a love of literature, he can be a great dramatist or a great novelist. There is the real subjective worker. He has no difficulty in creating imaginary persons, and making them perform their parts; he has been born with the knowledge of what most kinds of men and women would do under certain circumstances. But a high degree of genius is not often found in this direction; all that I want you to bear clearly in mind, is that for subjective work, imaginative work, you must know yourselves to possess a certain amount of this intuition. Unless you have it, it were better to work in other directions.

The dramatic faculty, this true creative power of which I am speaking, is always rare in the highest degree. When we find it at all in these days, we find it only in minor degrees. Very possibly it exists in varying states in minds that never cultivate it—not at least in a literary direction. For men having this power now-a-days are likely to use their constructive imagination in directions which assure material success much more certainly than literature can ever do. They may become diplomatists, or great men of business, or bankers, or political leaders; their knowledge of human nature and their intuition of human motives can help them equally well in many other directions besides literature, and in most directions vastly better. This is a very different kind of character from the character of the emotional poet. It is much more varied, and it is much stronger. To speak of any rules for the conduct of literary life in the case of such men is useless. They need no counsel. They do very much as they please, and obstacles never dishearten them. It is worth noting, however, that they generally take an active part in social life; it is more interesting for them than a play; it furnishes them with continual motives of inspiration; and it has no terror for them of any kind. They are like strong swimmers ac-

customed to the surf. I suppose you know that while almost everybody knows how to swim more or less, surf-swimmers are not very common. In America or other countries good surf-swimmers get high wages in the Government life-saving service; one must not only have learned from childhood, but must have great natural strength and skill. Now in the great sea of social life, where clumsy people are so easily drowned, the character of which I speak is like that of a strong surf-swimmer. He has nothing to fear from breakers. Observe also that men of this class, as the history of English literature especially shows, always find time to do what they want, and do not trouble themselves much about the "wear and tear" of social duty. Take, for example, the history of Victorian literature. Only one of the four great Victorian poets possessed the dramatic faculty in a high degree — Robert Browning. Tennyson, Rossetti, and Swinburne led lives of solitude and meditation; Browning on the other hand was constantly in society, studying human nature as well as obtaining enjoyment from social experience. Or take again the prose-writers. The great romantic novelists were all solitary men; the great dramatic novelists were essentially social men. Thackeray, for instance, was especially a man of society. Or to take a still later example, Meredith, the greatest of English psychological novelists, is of course a social figure. It was in the life of the upper classes that he found the substance of his extraordinary novels. Not to multiply examples, which would require too much time, it may be said that as a general rule, solitude is of no use to men of creative genius.

IV

I think I have shown you, or suggested to you, that two great departments of literature — the emotional, as represented especially by poetry; and the creative, as especially represented by drama or the dramatic novels — depend altogether upon character, upon inheritance. You cannot make a great poet or a great dramatist by education, though

education may help. And you have seen that the two kinds of character belonging respectively to romantic literature and to realistic literature are almost exactly opposed to each other. Both are rare. It is not likely in these days that many among us can hope to belong to either class. We generally know whether we belong to one or the other of them at an early period of life. The extraordinary faculties usually, though not always, manifest themselves in youth. It is true that, very rarely, a great talent only develops about middle age—this occurring chiefly in the case of prose writers. But unless we have the very best of reasons to believe ourselves born to great things in literature, it is much better not to imagine that we have any special mission. Most students of literature are more likely to belong to the third class than to either of the classes preceding, and it is of the third class especially that something useful may be said.

The ordinary class of literary men must depend chiefly upon observation and constant practice. They cannot hope for sudden inspiration or for extraordinary intuition. They must find truth and beauty by painfully searching for them; and they can learn how to express what they see and feel only by years of study and application. Education for these is almost, though not absolutely, indispensable. I say "not absolutely," because self-training can sometimes supply all, and more, than the ordinary education is capable of giving. But as a rule to which the exceptions are few, the ordinary student must depend upon his college training. Without it, it is very likely that he will always remain in his work what we call in literature "provincial." Provincialism as a literary term does not mean a country tone, a rustic clumsiness of thinking and speaking. It means a strong tendency to the commonplace, an inclination to dwell upon things universally known as if they were new discoveries; and it also means the habit of allowing oneself to be so unduly influenced by some one book or another, or by one class of ideas, that any well-educated reader recognizes at once the

source of every idea expressed. This is provincialism. The great danger in self-education is that it leaves a man all his life in the provincial stage, unless he happens to have extraordinary chances, extraordinary tastes, and very much time to cultivate both.

The most important thing for the literary student, with a university training, to do at the beginning of a literary career, is to find out as soon as possible in what direction his intellectual strength chiefly lies. It may take years to find this out; but until it is found out he is scarcely likely to do anything great. Where absolute genius does not exist, literature must depend upon the cultivation of a man's best faculties in a single direction. To attempt work in a number of directions is always hazardous, and seldom gives good results. Every literary man has to arrive at this conclusion. It is true that you find in foreign literature cases of men not absolute geniuses, who have done well both in poetry and in prose, or in prose-fiction and in drama—that is, in apparently two directions. I should not instance Victor Hugo; his is a case of pure genius; but I should take such examples as Meredith in England, or Björnson in Norway, as better illustrating what I wish to say. You must remember that in cases like these the two different kinds of literature produced are really very close to each other, so close that one absolutely grows out of the other. For example, the great Norwegian dramatist began as a writer of stories and novels, all of which were intensely dramatic in form. From the dramatic novel to the play is but a short step. Or in the case of the English novelist and poet, we really find illustrations of only one and the same faculty both in his poetry and in his prose. The novels in one case are essentially psychological novels; the poetry is essentially psychological poetry. Again Browning's plays are scarcely more than the development in dramatic form of the ideas to be found in the dramatic poems. Or take the case of Kingsley—essentially a romantic—a romantic of the very first class. He was great in poetry and

great in prose; but there is an extraordinary resemblance between the poetry and the prose in his case, and he was wise enough to write very little poetry, for he knew where his chief strength lay. If you want to see and judge for yourself, observe the verse of Kingsley's poem on Edith of the Swan-Neck, and then read a page or two of the romance of "Hereward the Wake." I could give you fifty examples of the same kind in English literature. Men have succeeded in two directions only when one of these naturally led into the other. But no student should make the serious mistake—a mistake which hundreds of trained English men of letters are making to-day—of trying to write in two entirely different and opposed directions—for example, in romantic poetry and realistic prose. It is very necessary to know in which way your tastes should be cultivated, in which way you are most strong. Mediocrity is the certain result of not knowing. For after all, this last class of literature, like every other, depends for success upon character—upon inborn conditions, upon inheritance of tastes and feelings and tendencies. Once that you know these, the way becomes plain, though not smooth; everything thereafter depends upon hard work, constant effort.

Should one seek or avoid solitude in the pursuance of this ordinary class of literary aims? That again depends upon character. It is first necessary to know your strength, to decide upon the direction to take; these things having been settled, you must know whether you have to depend upon feeling and imagination as well as upon observation, or upon observation only. Your natural disposition will then instruct you. If you find that you can work best in solitude, it is a duty both to yourself and to literature to deny yourself social engagements that may interfere with the production of good work.

All this leads to the subject of an extraordinary difficulty in the way of any new Japanese literature, a difficulty about which I wanted to talk to you from the first. I think you know that leisure is essential to the production of any art

in any country—that is, any national art. I am not speaking of those extraordinary exceptions furnished by men able to produce wonderful things under any circumstances. Such exceptional men do not make national art; they produce a few inimitable works of genius. An art grows into existence out of the slow labour and thought and feelings of thousands. In that sense, leisure is absolutely necessary to art. Need I remind you that every Japanese art has been the result of generations of leisurely life? Those who made the now famous arts of Japan—literature as well as ceramics or painting or metal work—were not men who did their work in a hurry. Nobody was in a hurry in ancient times. Those elaborate ceremonies, now known as tea-ceremonies, indicate the life of a very leisurely and very aesthetic period. I mention that as one illustration of many things. To-day, although some people try to insist that the arts of Japan are as flourishing as ever, the best judges frankly declare that the old arts are being destroyed. It is not only foreign influence in the shape of bad taste that is destroying them; it is the want of leisure. Every year the time formally allowed for pleasure of any kind is becoming more and more curtailed. None of you who are here listening to me can fail to remember a period when people had much more time than they have now. And none of you will fail to see a period in which the want of time will become much more painful, much more terrible than at present. For your civilization is gradually, but surely, taking an industrial character; and in the time when it shall have become almost purely industrial there will be very little leisure indeed. Very possibly you are thinking that England, Germany, and France are essentially industrial countries—though able to produce so much art. But the conditions are not the same. Industrialism in other countries has not rendered impossible the formation of wealthy leisure classes; those leisure classes still exist, and they have rendered possible, especially in England, the production of great literature. A very long time indeed must elapse before

Japan can present an analogous condition.

The want of time you will feel every year more and more. And there are other and more serious difficulties to think about. Every few years young Japanese scholars who have been trained abroad in the universities of Europe—who have been greatly praised there, and who show every promise—return to Japan. After their return, what a burden of obligations is thrust upon their shoulders! They have, to begin with, to assume the cares of a family; they have to become public officers, and to perform official duty for a much greater number of hours than would be asked of men in similar positions abroad; and under no circumstances can they hope for that right to dispose of their own time which is allowed to professors or officials in foreign countries. No: they must at once accept onerous positions which involve hundreds of duties and which are very likely to keep a man occupied on many days of the year from sunrise until a late hour of the night. Even what are thought and what used really to be pleasurable occasions, have ceased to be pleasing; time is lacking for the pleasure, but the fatigue and the pain remain. I need not particularize how many festivals, banquets, public and private celebrations, any public official is obliged to attend. At present this cannot be helped. It is the struggle between the old state and the new; and the readjustment will take many years to effect. But is it any wonder that these scholars do not produce great things in literature? It is common for foreigners to say that the best Japanese scholars do not seem to do anything after they return to Japan. The fact is that they do too much, but not of the kind that leaves a permanent work.

Most of you, whether rich or otherwise, will be asked after your university life is over to do a great deal too much. I imagine that most of you will have to do the work of at least three men. Trained teachers, trained officers, trained men of any kind, are still rare. There are not enough of them; there is too much work to do, and too few

men to do it. And in the face of these unquestionable facts, how can you hope to produce any literature? Assuredly it is very discouraging. It could not be more discouraging.

There is an old English proverb that seems opportune in this connection:

For every trouble under the sun
There is a remedy, or there is none.
If there is one, try to find it;
If there be none, never mind it.

I think you will agree with me that the remedy is for the moment out of the question; and our duty is to "never mind it," as the proverb says. Discouraging for literature though the prospect seems, I think that strong minds should not be frightened by it, but should try to discover whether modern English literature does not offer us some guiding examples in this relation. It certainly does. A great deal of excellent English literature belonging to that third class which I have specified, has been created under just the same kind of disheartening circumstances. Great poetry has not been written under these conditions—that requires solitude. Great drama and great dramatic novels have never been produced under such conditions. But the literature of the essay, which is very important; the great literature of short stories; and a great deal of thoughtful work of the systematic order, such as historical or social or critical studies,—all this has been done very successfully by men who have had no time to call their own during sunlight. The literature of observation and experience, and the literature of patient research, do not require days of thought and leisure. Much of such work has been produced, for many generations in England, a little at a time, every night, before going to bed. For example, there is an eminent English man of letters named Morley of whom you have doubtless heard—the author of many books, and a great influence in literature, who is also one of the busiest of English lawyers and statesmen. For forty or fifty years this man had never a

single hour of leisure by day. All his books were produced, a page or two at a time, late in the evening after his household had gone to sleep. It is not really so much a question of time for this class of literature as a question of perfect regularity of habits. Even twenty minutes a day, or twenty minutes a night, represents a great deal in the course of a couple of years, and may be so used as to produce great results. The only thing is that this small space of time should be utilized regularly as the clock strikes—never interrupted except by unavoidable circumstances, such as sickness. To fatigue one's body, or to injure one's eyesight, by a useless strain is simply a crime. But that should not be necessary under any circumstances in good health. Nor is it necessary to waste time and effort in the production of exactly so much finished manuscript. Not at all. The work of literature should especially be a work of thinking and feeling; the end to be greatly insisted upon is the record of every experience of thought and feeling. Make the record even in pencil, in short hand, in the shape of little drawings—it matters not how, so long as the record is sufficient to keep fresh the memory when you turn to it again. I am quite sure that the man who loves literature and enjoys a normal amount of good health can make a good book within a year or two, no matter how busy he may otherwise be, if he will follow systematic rules of work.

You may ask what kind of work is good to begin with; I have no hesitation in replying, translation. Translation is the best possible preparation for original work, and translations are vastly needed in Japan. No knowledge of Western literature can ever become really disseminated in Japan merely through the university and the school; it can be disseminated only through translations. The influence of French, or German, of Spanish, Italian, and Russian literatures upon English literature has been very largely effected through translations. Scholarship alone cannot help the formation of a new national literature. Indeed, the scholar, by the very nature of his occupation, is too apt to remain

unproductive. After some work of this kind, original work should be attempted. Instinctively some Japanese scholars have been doing this very thing; they have been translating steadily. But there they have mostly stopped. Yet, really, translation should be only the first step of the literary ladder.

As to original work, I have long wanted to say to you something about the real function of literature in relation not to the public, but to the author himself. That function should be moral. Literature ought to be especially a moral exercise. When I use the word moral, please do not understand me to mean anything religious, or anything in the sense of the exact opposite of immoral. I use it here only in the meaning of self-culture—the development within us of the best and strongest qualities of heart and mind. Literature ought to be, for him that produces it, the chief pleasure and the constant consolation of life. Now, old Japanese customs recognized this fact in a certain way. I am referring to the custom of composing poetry in time of pain, in time of sorrow, in all times of mental trials, as a moral exercise. In this particular form the custom is particularly Japanese, or perhaps in origin Chinese, not Western. But I assure you that among men of letters in the West the moral idea has been followed for hundreds of years, not only in regard to poetry, but in regard to prose. It has not been understood by Western writers in the same sharp way; it has not been taught as a rule of conduct; it has not been known except to the elect, the very best men. But the very best men have found this out; and they have always turned to literature as a moral consolation for all the troubles of life. Do you remember the story of the great Goethe, who when told of the death of his son, exclaimed “Forward, across the dead”—and went on with his work? It was not the first time that he had conquered his grief by turning his mind to composition. Almost any author of experience learns to do something of this kind. Tennyson wrote his “In Memoriam” simply as a refuge

from his great grief. Among the poets about whom I lectured to you this year, there is scarcely one whose work does not yield a record of the same thing. The lover of literature has a medicine for grief that no doctor can furnish; he can always transmute his pain into something precious and lasting. None of us in this world can expect to be very happy; the proportion of happiness to unhappiness in the average human life has been estimated as something less than one third. No matter how healthy or strong or fortunate you may be, every one of you must expect to endure a great deal of pain; and it is worth while for you to ask yourselves whether you cannot put it to good use. For pain has a very great value to the mind that knows how to utilize it. Nay, more than this must be said; nothing great ever was written, or ever will be written, by a man who does not know pain. All great literature has its source in the rich soil of sorrow; and that is the real meaning of the famous verses of Goethe:

Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,—
 Who ne'er the lonely midnight hours,
 Weeping upon his bed has sat,—
 He knows ye not, ye Heavenly powers.

Emerson has uttered very nearly the same idea with those famous verses in which he describes the moral effect upon a strong mind of the great sorrow caused by the death of the woman beloved:

Though thou love her as thyself,
 As a self of purer clay,
 Though her parting dim the day,
 Stealing grace from all alive—
 Heartily know,
 When half-gods go
 The Gods arrive!

That is to say, even if you loved that woman more than yourself and thought of her as a being superior to humanity,

even if with her death the whole world seemed to grow dark, and all things to become colourless, and all life to lose its charm; that grief may be good for you. It is only when the demi-gods, the half-gods, have left us, that we first become able to understand and to see the really divine. For all pain helps to make us wise, however much we may hate it at the time. Of course it is only the young man who sits upon his bed at midnight and weeps; he is weak only for want of experience. The mature man will not weep, but he will turn to literature in order to compose his mind; and he will put his pain into beautiful songs or thoughts that will help to make the hearts of all who read them more tender and true.

Remember, I do not mean that a literary man should write only to try to forget his suffering. That will do very well for a beginning, for a boyish effort. But a strong man ought not to try to forget in that way. On the contrary, he should try to think a great deal about his grief, to think of it as representing only one little drop in the great sea of the world's pain, to think about it bravely, and to put his thoughts about it into beautiful and impersonal form. Nobody should allow himself for a moment to imagine that his own particular grief, that his own private loss, that his own personal pain, can have any value in literature, except in so far as it truly represents the great pain of human life.

Above all things the literary man must not be selfish in his writing. No selfish reflection is likely to have the least value; that is why no really selfish person can ever become either a great poet or a great dramatist. To meet and to master pain, but especially to master it, is what gives strength. Men wrestle in order to become strong; and for mental strength, one must learn to wrestle with troubles of all kinds. Think of all the similes in literature that express this truth — about fire separating the gold from the rock, about stones becoming polished by striking together in the flow of a stream, about a hundred natural changes rep-

resenting the violent separation or the destruction of what is superficial.

Better than any advice about methods or models, is I think the simple counsel: "Whenever you are in trouble and do not know exactly what to do, sit down and write something."

Yet one more thing remains to be said, and it is not unimportant. It is this: "A thing once written is not literature." The great difference between literature and everything included under the name of journalism lies in this fact. No man can produce real literature at one writing. I know that there are a great many stories about famous men sitting down to write a wonderful book at one effort, and never even correcting the manuscript afterwards. But I must tell you that the consensus of literary experience declares nearly all these stories to be palpable lies. To produce even a single sentence of good literature requires that the text be written at least three times. But for one who is beginning, three times three were not too much. And I am not speaking of poetry at all—that may have to be written over as many as fifty times before the proper effect is attained. You will perhaps think this is a contradiction of what I told you before, about the great value of writing down, even in pencil, little notes of your thoughts and feelings. But the contradiction only seems; really there is no contradiction at all. The value of the first notes is very great—greater than the value of any intermediate form. But the writer should remember that such notes represent only the outline of the foundation, the surveying and the clearing of the ground on which his literary structure is slowly and painfully to be raised. The first notes do not express the real thought or the real feeling, no matter how carefully you try to write them. They are only signs, ideographs, helping you to remember. And you will find that to reproduce the real thought faithfully in words will require a great deal of time. I am quite sure that few of you will try to do work in this way in the beginning; you will try

every other way first, and have many disappointments. Only painful experience can assure you of the necessity of doing this. For literature more than for any other art, the all-necessary thing is patience. That is especially why I cannot recommend journalism as a medium of expression to literary students—at least, not as a regular occupation. For journalism cannot wait, and the best literature must wait.

I am not sure that these suggestions can have any immediate value; I only hope that you will try to remember them. But in order to test the worth of one of them, I very much hope that somebody will try the experiment of writing one little story or narrative poem, putting it in a drawer, writing it over again, and hiding it again, month after month, for the time of one year. The work need not take more than a few minutes every day after the first writing. After the last writing at the end of the year, if you read it over again, you will find that the difference between the first form and the last is exactly like the difference of seeing a tree a mile off, first with the naked eye, and afterwards with a very powerful telescope.

CHAPTER V

ON COMPOSITION

I

I HOPE to give, at least once in each term, a short lecture upon the practical part of literature and literary study. This will be, or ought to be, of much more value to you than there could be in a single lecture upon the characteristics of an author. I want to speak to you only as a practical man of letters, as one who has served his apprenticeship at the difficult trade of literature. Please understand that in saying this, I am saying only "I am a workman," just as a carpenter would say to you "I am a carpenter," or a smith, "I am a smith." This does not mean in any sense that I am a good workman. I might be a very bad workman, and still have the right to call myself a workman. When a carpenter tells you, "I am a carpenter," you can believe him; but that does not mean that he thinks himself a good carpenter. As for his work, you can judge of that when you find occasion to pay for it. But whether the man be a clumsy and idle workman, or be the best carpenter in town, you know that he can tell you something which you do not know. He has learned how to handle tools, and how to choose the kind of wood best adapted to certain sorts of manufacture. He may be a cheat; he may be very careless about what he does; but it is quite certain that you could learn something from him, because he has served an apprenticeship, and knows, by constant practice of hand and eye, how a carpenter's work should be done.

So much for my position in the matter. Now I want to begin my lecture by trying to disabuse your minds of two or three common errors in regard to literary composition. I

do not say that you all indulge these errors; but I think it not improbable. The first error against which I wish to warn you is the very widespread error that the making of literature—that is to say, the writing of books or poems—is a matter that you can learn through education, through the reading of books, through the mastery of theories. I am going to be absolutely frank with you, but quite heterodox notwithstanding, by telling you that education will not help you to become a poet or a story-teller any more than it could help you to become a carpenter or a blacksmith. There are accessible to you, in libraries, any number of books and treatises about different kinds of woods, about different kinds of tools, and about the industry of wood-work. You might read all of these, and learn by heart every fact of importance that they contain; but that would not enable you to make with your own hands a good table or a good chair. So reading about writing will not teach you how to write. Literature is exactly like a trade in this sense that it can only be acquired by practice. I know that such a statement will shock certain persons of much more learning than I could ever hope to acquire. But I believe this would be entirely due to what is called educational bias. The teachers who teach that literature as a practical art has anything to do with the mere study of books, seem to forget that much of the world's greatest literature was made before there were any books, that the poems of Homer were composed before there were any schools or grammars, that the sacred books of nearly all the great civilizations were written without rules, either grammatical or other—and yet these works remain our admiration for all time.

Another error to be considered, is that the structure of your own language is of such a kind that Western rules of literary art could not be applied to it. But if there be any truth in such a belief, it is truth of a most unimportant kind. As I have told you that a knowledge of literary technicalities, grammatical or prosodial, will not teach you how to write, you will already be able to guess how little I

think of the importance to you of what are commonly called rules of composition. These foreign rules, indeed, are not applicable to your language; but they have no value whatever in the sense I mean. Let us for the time being throw all such rules overboard, and not even think about them. And now that the position is thus made clear, or at least clearer, let me say that the higher rules of literature are universal, and apply equally well to every language under the sun, no matter what its construction. For these universal rules have to do only with the truth; and truth is truth everywhere, no matter in what tongue it may be spoken. Presently we shall turn back to the subject of the universal rule—indeed it will form the principal part of this lecture.

The third error against which I wish to warn you is the foolish belief that great work, or even worthy work, can be done without pains—without very great pains. Nothing has been more productive of injury to young literary students than those stories, or legends, about great writers having written great books in a very short time. They suggest what must be in a million cases impossible, as a common possibility. You hear of Johnson having written “Rasselas” in a few weeks, of Beckford having done a similar thing, or of various other notables never correcting their manuscripts—and the youth who has much self-confidence imagines that he can do the same thing and produce literature. I do not believe those stories; I do not say exactly that they are not true; I only say that I do not believe them, and that the books, as we have them now, certainly represent much more than the work of a few weeks or even months. It is much more valuable to remember that Gray passed fourteen years in correcting and improving a single poem, and that no great poem or book, as we now have the text, represents the first form of the text. Take, for example, the poets that we have been reading. It is commonly said that Rossetti’s “Blessed Damozel” was written in his nineteenth year. This is true; but we have the text

of the poem as it was written in his nineteenth year, and it is unlike the poem as we now have it; for it was changed and corrected and recorrected scores of times to bring it to its present state of perfection. Almost everything composed by Tennyson was changed and changed and changed again, to such an extent that in almost every edition the text differed. Above all things do not imagine that any good work can be done without immense pains. When Dr. Max Müller told Froude, the historian, that he never corrected what he wrote, Froude immediately answered "Unless you correct a great many times, you will never be able to write good English." Now there is good English and good English; and I am not sure that Froude was right. Froude was thinking, I believe, of literary English. Correct English can be written without correction, by dint of long practice in precise writing. Business letters and official documents and various compositions of a kindred sort must be correct English; they are written entirely according to forms and rules, exactly like legal papers in which the mistake of one word might cause unspeakable mischief. But all this has nothing to do with literature. If the art of writing good English or good French or good Japanese were literature, then the lawyers and the bank clerks would represent the highest literature of their respective countries. So far, however, as Froude meant literary English, he is absolutely right. No literature can be produced without much correction. I have told you of primitive literature composed before the time of books and of grammars, which was and is, and will long continue to be, unrivalled literature. But do you suppose that it never was corrected and changed and re-made over and over and over again? Why, most assuredly it was, and corrected not by one only but by thousands and thousands of persons who had learned it by heart. Every generation improved it a little; and at last, when it came to be written down, it had been polished and perfected by the labour of hundreds of years.

Now I suppose all of you have at some time wanted to

get books about how to write English, I suppose that you have all found them, and that the result was only disappointment. It would have been disappointment just the same if you had been looking for French books on how to write French, or German books on how to write German. No books yet exist that will teach you literary work, which will teach you the real secrets of composition. Some day, I trust, there will be such books; but at present there are none, simply because the only men capable of writing them are men who have no time to give to such work. But this having been said, let us return to the subject of Japanese composition. Before trying to give you some practical rules, let me assure you of one thing, that all your foreign studies can be of no literary use to you except in relation to your own tongue. You can not write, you will never be able to write, English literature or French literature or German literature, though you might be able, after years of practice and foreign travel, to write tolerably correct English or French or German—to write a business document, for example, or to write a simple essay dealing only with bare facts. But none of you can hope to be eloquent in any other tongue than your own, or to move the hearts of people by writing in a language which is not your own. There are very few examples in all English literature of a man able to write equally well in two languages—in French and in English for example, close as are these tongues to each other. With an oriental language for a mother tongue, the only hope of being able to create literature in a foreign language is in totally forgetting your own. But the result would not be worth the sacrifice.

I suppose that many of you will become authors, either by accident or by inclination; and if you produce literature, prose or verse, it is to be hoped that you will influence the future literature of your country, by infusing into the work those new ideas which a university course must have forced upon you by thousands. But this alone, this imparting of new ideas, of larger knowledge, would not be literature.

Literature is not scholarship, though it may contain scholarship. Literature means, as I have said before, the highest possible appeal of language to the higher emotions and the nobler sentiments. It is not learning, nor can it be made by any rules of learning.

And now we can turn to the practical side of the subject.

I begin by asking you to remember that the principles of literary composition of the highest class must be exactly the same for Japan or for France or for England or for any other country. These principles are of two kinds, elimination and addition—in other words, a taking away or getting rid of the unnecessary, and the continual strengthening of the necessary. Besides this, composition means very little indeed. The first thing needed, of course, is a perfect knowledge of your own tongue as spoken; I will not say as written, for a perfect knowledge of any tongue as written is possible only to scholarship, and is not at all essential to literature. But a knowledge of the living speech, in all its forms, high and low, common and uncommon, is very desirable. If one can not hope to obtain the knowledge of the whole spoken speech, then I should advise him to throw his strength into the study of a part only, the part that is most natural to him. Even with this partial knowledge excellent literature is possible. But full knowledge will produce larger results in the case of large talent.

II

In all this lecture you must not forget my definition of literature as an art of emotional expression. And the first thing to be considered is the emotion itself, its value, its fugitive subtlety, and the extreme difficulty of “getting hold of it.”

You might ask why I put the emotion before the sensation. Of course the sensation always precedes the emotion. The sensation means the first impression received from the senses, or the revival in memory of such an impression. The emotion is the feeling, very complex, that follows the

sensation or impression. Do not forget this distinction; for it is very important indeed.

Now the reason why I am not going to say much to you about the sensation, is that if a sensation could be accurately described in words, the result would be something like a photograph, nothing more. You might say, a coloured photograph; and it is true that if we discover (as we shall certainly some day discover) the art of photographing in colours, such a coloured photograph would represent almost exactly a visual impression. But this would not be art. A photograph is not art; and the nearer that a painting resembles a photograph by its accuracy, the less it is likely to be worth much from the artistic point of view. To describe sensations would be no more literature in the higher sense, than a photograph could be called art in the higher sense. I shall therefore boldly take the position that literature is not a picture of sensations, but of emotions.

All this must be very fully illustrated. When I say "emotion" you perhaps think of tears, sorrow, regret. But this would be a mistake. Let us begin by considering the very simplest kind of emotion—the emotion of a tree.

Two things happen when you look at a tree. First you have the picture of the tree reflected upon the brain through the medium of sight—that is to say, a little card picture, a little photograph of the tree. But even if you wanted to paint this image with words you could not do it; and if you could do it, the result would not be worth talking about. But almost as quickly, you receive a second impression, very different from the first. You observe that the tree gives you a peculiar feeling of some kind. The tree has a certain character, and this perception of the character of the tree, is the feeling or the emotion of the tree. That is what the artist looks for; and that is what the poet looks for.

But we must explain this a little more. Every object, animate or inanimate, causes a certain feeling within the person who observes it. Everything has a face. Whenever you meet a person for the first time, and look at the face

of that person, you receive an impression that is immediately followed by some kind of feeling. Either you like the face, or you dislike it, or it leaves in you a state of comparative indifference. We all know this in regard to faces; but only the artist and poet know it in regard to things. And the difference between the great artist and the great poet and the rest of the world is only that the artist or the poet perceives the face of things, what is called the physiognomy of things—that is to say, their character. A tree, a mountain, a house, even a stone has a face and a character for the artistic eye. And we can train ourselves to see that character by pursuing the proper methods.

Now suppose that I were to ask all of you to describe for me a certain tree in the garden of the University. I should expect that a majority among you would write very nearly the same thing. But would this be a proof that the tree had given to all of you the same kind of feeling? No, it would not mean anything of the sort. It would mean only that a majority among you had acquired habits of thinking and writing which are contrary to the principles of art. Most of you would describe the tree in nearly the same way, because, in the course of years of study, your minds have been filled with those forms of language commonly used to describe trees; you would remember the words of some famous poet or story-teller, and would use them as expressing your own feelings. But it is perfectly certain that they would not express your own feelings. Education usually teaches us to use the ideas and the language of other men to describe our own feelings, and this habit is exactly contrary to every principle of art.

Now suppose there is one among you of a remarkably powerful talent of the poetical and artistic kind. His description of the tree would be startlingly different from that of the rest of you; it would surprise you all, so that you would have to look at the tree again in order to see whether the description was true. Then you would be still more astonished to find that it was much more true than any

other; and then you would not only discover that he had enabled you to understand the tree in a new way, but also that the rest of you had but half seen it, and that your descriptions were all wrong. He would not have used the words of other men to describe the tree; he would have used his own, and they would be very simple words indeed, like the words of a child.

For the child is incomparably superior to the average man in seeing the character of things; and the artist sees like the child. If I were to ask twenty little children—say, five or six years old—to look at the same tree that we were talking about, and to tell me what they think of it, I am sure that many of them would say wonderful things. They would come much nearer to the truth than the average university student, and this just because of their absolute innocence. To the child's imagination everything is alive—stones, trees, plants, even household objects. For him everything has a soul. He sees things quite differently from the man. Nor is this the only reason for the superiority of the child's powers of observation. His instinctive knowledge, the knowledge inherited from millions of past lives, is still fresh, not dulled by the weight of the myriad impressions of education and personal experience. Ask a child, for example, what he thinks of a certain stranger. He will look and say "I like him," or "I dislike him." Should you ask, "Why do you dislike that man?" the child, after some difficulty, will tell you that he does not like something in his face. Press the little fellow further to explain, and after a long and painful effort he will suddenly come out with a comparison of startling truth that will surprise you, showing that he has perceived something in the face that you did not see. This same instinctive power is the real power of the artist, and it is the power that distinguishes literature from mere writing. You will now better understand what I meant by saying that education will not teach a person how to make poetry, any more than a reading of books could teach a man how to make a table or a chair. The

faculty of artistic seeing is independent of education, and must be cultivated outside of education. Education has not made great writers. On the contrary, they have become great in spite of education. For the effect of education is necessarily to deaden and dull those primitive and instinctive feelings upon which the higher phases of emotional art depend. Knowledge can only be gained in most cases at the expense of certain very precious natural faculties. The man who is able to keep the freshness of the child in his mind and heart, notwithstanding all the knowledge that he absorbs, that is the man who is likely to perform great things in literature.

Now we have clearly defined what I mean by the feeling or emotion which the artist in literature must seek to catch and express. We took the simplest example possible, a tree. But everything, and every fancy, and every being to be treated of in literature must be considered in precisely the same way. In all cases the object of the writer should be to seize and fix the character of the thing, and he can do this only by expressing the exact feeling that the thing has produced in his mind. This is the main work of literature. It is very difficult. But why it is difficult we have not yet considered.

What happens when the feeling comes? You feel then a momentary thrill of pleasure or pain or fear or wonder; but this thrill passes away almost as suddenly as it comes. You can not write it down as fast as it vanishes. You are left then only with the sensation or first impression of the thing in your mind, and a mere memory of the feeling. In different natures the feeling is different, and it lasts longer in some than in others; but in all cases it passes away as rapidly as smoke, or perfume blown by a wind. If you think that anybody can put down on paper this feeling exactly as it is received, immediately upon receiving it, you are much mistaken. This can be accomplished only by arduous labour. The labour is to receive the feeling.

At first you will be exactly in the condition of a person

trying to remember a dream after waking up. All of us know how difficult it is to remember a dream. But by the help of the sensation, which was received during sleep, the feeling may be revived. My recommendation would be in such a case to write down immediately, as fully as you can, the circumstances and the cause of the emotion, and to try to describe the feeling as far as possible. It makes no difference then whether you write at all grammatically, nor whether you finish your sentences, nor whether you write backwards or forwards. The all-essential thing is to have notes of the experience. These notes should be the seed from which the plant will be made to grow and to blossom.

Reading over these quick notes, you will perceive that the feeling is faintly revived by them, especially by certain parts of them. But of course, except to you, the notes would still be of no possible value. The next work is to develop the notes, to arrange them in their natural order, and to construct the sentences in a correct way. While doing this you will find that a number of things come back to your mind which you had forgotten while making the notes. The development of the notes is likely to be four or five times longer, perhaps even ten times longer, than were the notes themselves. But now, reading over the new writing, you find that the feeling is not revived by it; the feeling has entirely vanished, and what you have written is likely to seem commonplace enough. A third writing you will find to better both the language and the thought, but perhaps the feeling does not revive. A fourth and a fifth writing will involve an astonishing number of changes. For while engaged in this tiresome work, you are sure to find that a number of things which you have already written are not necessary, and you will also find that the most important things remaining have not been properly developed at all. While you are doing the work over again, new thoughts come; the whole thing changes shape, begins to be more compact, more strong and simple; and at last, to your delight, the feeling revives—nay, revives more strongly

than at first, being enriched by new psychological relations. You will be surprised at the beauty of what you have done; but you must not trust the feeling then. Instead of immediately printing the thing, I should advise you to put it into a drawer, and leave it there for at least a month, without looking at it again. When you re-read it after this interval, you are certain to find that you can perfect it a great deal more. After one or two further remodellings it will be perhaps the very best that you can do, and will give to others the same emotion that you yourself felt on first perceiving the fact or the object. The process is very much like that of focussing with a telescope. You know that you must pull the tubing out a little further, or push it in a little further, and then pull it again and then push it again many times before you can get the sharpest possible view of a distant object. Well, the literary artist has to do with language what the sight-seer must do with a telescope. And this is the first thing essential in any kind of literary composition. It is drudgery, I know; but there is no escape from it. Neither Tennyson, nor Rossetti, nor anybody else of great importance in English literature has been able to escape from it within our own day. Long practice will not lighten this labour in the least. Your methods may become incomparably more skilful; but the actual volume of work will always be about the same.

I imagine that some of you might ask: "Is there no other way of expressing emotion or sentiment than that which you have been trying to describe to us? You say that the highest literature is emotional expression; but there is nothing more difficult than the work you have suggested; is there no other way?"

Yes, there is another way, and a way which I sometimes imagine is more in harmony with the character of the Japanese genius, and perhaps with the character of the Japanese language. But it is just as difficult; and it has this further disadvantage that it requires immense experience, as well as a very special talent. It is what has been called

the impersonal method, though I am not sure that this title is a good one. Very few great writers have been able to succeed at it; and I think that these few have mostly been Frenchmen. And it is a method suitable only for prose.

An emotion may be either expressed or suggested. If it is difficult to express, it is at least quite as difficult to suggest; but if you can suggest it, the suggestion is apt to be even more powerful than the expression, because it leaves much more to the imagination. Of course you must remember that all literary art must be partly suggestive—do not forget that. But by the impersonal method, as it has been called, it becomes altogether suggestive. There is no expression of emotion by the writer at all—that is to say, by the narrator. Nevertheless the emotion comes as you read, and comes with extraordinary power. There is only one very great writer of our own times who succeeded perfectly by this method—that was Guy de Maupassant.

A number of facts may be related, quite dispassionately and plainly, in such a manner as to arouse very great feeling; or a conversation may be so reported as to convey to the mind the exact feelings of the speakers, and even to suggest every look or action without any description at all. But you will see at once that the great difficulty here lies not so much in the choice of the word values (although that also is indispensable) as in the choice of facts. You must become a perfect judge of the literary worth—I mean the emotional value—of the simplest fact in itself. Now a man who can make such judgments must have had a vast experience of life. He must have the dramatic faculty greatly developed. He must know the conversational peculiarities of the language of all classes. He must be able to group men and women by types. And I doubt very much whether any person can do this while he is young. In most cases the talent and capacity for it can develop only in middle life, because it is only by that time that a person could have the proper experience. Therefore I could not recommend an attempt to follow this method at the beginning of a lit-

erary career, though I should strongly recommend every conceivable cultivation of the powers which may render it possible. Remember that in addition to experience it requires a natural faculty of perception as vivid as that of a painter. I have mentioned one name only in relation to this kind of work, but I should also call your attention to such stories as those of Prosper Mérimée — “Carmen,” “Mateo Falcone.” Occasionally you will find stories by Daudet, especially the little stories of the war between France and Germany, showing the method in question. But in these the style is usually somewhat mixed; there is some description attempted, showing a personal feeling. In the best work of Maupassant and of Mérimée, the personal element entirely disappears. There is no description, except in some conversational passages put into the mouth of another person; there are only facts, but they are facts that “take you by the throat,” to use a familiar expression.

I am sure that you are not yet quite satisfied by these definitions, or attempts at definitions, of the two working methods. I suppose that there are among you some good writers capable of writing in a few weeks, or even in a few days, a story which, if published in a Japanese periodical, would please thousands of readers, and would bring tears perhaps to many eyes. I do not doubt your powers to please the public, to excite their emotions, to strengthen their best sentiments; and I have said that it is the office of literature to do this. But if you ask me whether I would call this work literature, I should answer “No; that is journalism. It is work which has been quickly, and therefore imperfectly, done. It is only the ore of literature; it is not literature in the true sense.” But you will say, “The public calls it literature, accepts it as literature, pays for it as literature—what more do you want?”

I can best explain by an illustration. Next to the Greeks, the Arabs were perhaps the most skilful of poets and artists in describing beauty in words. Every part of the body had a beauty of a special kind; and this special beauty had a

special name. Furthermore all beauty was classified, ranked. If a woman belonged to the first rank of beauty, she was called by a particular name, signifying that when you saw her the first time you were startled, and that every time that you looked at her again after that, she seemed to become more and more and more beautiful until you doubted the reality of your own senses. A woman who belonged only to the second class of beauty would charm you quite as much the first time that you saw her; but after that, when you looked at her again you would find that she was not so beautiful as you had thought at first. As for women of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh classes of beauty, it is only necessary to say that the same rule held good; more and more defects would show themselves, according to the class, upon familiarity. Now the difference between cheap emotional literature of the journalistic sort and true literature, is exactly of the same kind. Cheap literature pays best for the time being, and great literature scarcely pays at all. But a great story written by a master seems more and more beautiful every time that you read it over again; and through generations and centuries it seems to be more and more beautiful to those who read it. But cheap literature, although it pleases even more the first time that it was read, shows defects upon a second reading, and more defects upon a third reading, and still more upon a fourth reading, until the appearance of the defects spoils all the pleasure of the reader, and he throws away the book or the story in disgust. So do the public act in the long run. What pleases them to-day they throw away to-morrow; and they are right in throwing it away, because it does not represent careful work.

One more general observation may be made, though you should remember that all general statements involve exceptions. But bearing this in mind, it is not too much to say that what are called classics in any language are classics because they represent perfect workmanship, and that books which are not classics usually represent imperfect workmanship.

III

The next subject to consider will be construction—that is to say, the architecture of the composition, the first rules for putting the thing together.

The most common difficulty of literary work is how to begin. Everybody, all over the world, is troubled just this way. A boy is, to whom you give a subject and tell him to write about it. How shall I begin? The greatest poets, the greatest essayists, the greatest dramatists are not all superior to this weakness. They all have to ask themselves the same question at times. The beginning is the difficulty. But the experienced learn how to avoid it. I believe that most of them avoid the trouble of beginning by very simple means.

What means?

By not beginning at all.

This may require a little explanation. In the old days there were rules for beginning, just as there were rules for everything else. Literature was subjected to the same imposition of rhetoric as were other compositions. We shall have more to say about this when we come to the subject of style. In history, in the critical essay, above all in philosophy, a beginning is very necessary. Scope and plan must be determined beforehand. You must know what you want to say, and how you intend to say it, and how much space will be required for saying it. Serious and solid work of the purely intellectual kind must be done according to a fixed and logical method. I am sure that I need not explain why. But it is quite otherwise in regard to poetry and other forms of emotional and imaginative literature. The poet or the story-teller never gets the whole of his inspiration at once; it comes to him only by degrees, while he is perfecting the work. His first inspiration is only a sudden flash of emotion, or the sudden shock of a new idea, which at once awakens and sets into motion many confused trains of other interrelated emotions and ideas. It ought

to be obvious, therefore, that the first inspiration might represent not the beginning of anything, but the middle of it, or the end.

I was startled some years ago in Kyoto while watching a Japanese artist drawing horses. He drew the horses very well; but he always began at the tail. Now it is the Western rule to begin at the head of the horse; that is why I was surprised. But upon reflection, it struck me, that it could not really make any difference whether the artist begins at the head or the tail or the belly or the foot of the horse, if he really knows his business. And most great artists who really know their business do not follow other people's rules. They make their own rules. Every one of them does his work in a way peculiar to himself; and the peculiarity means only that he finds it more easy to work in that way. Now the very same thing is true in literature. And the question, "How shall I begin?" only means that you want to begin at the head instead of beginning at the tail or somewhere else. That is, you are not yet experienced enough to trust to your own powers. When you become more experienced you will never ask the question; and I think that you will often begin at the tail—that is to say, you will write the end of the story before you have even thought of the beginning.

The working rule is this: Develop the first idea or emotion that comes to you before you allow yourself to think about the second. The second will suggest itself, even too much, while you are working at the first. If two or three or four valuable emotions or ideas come to you about the same time, take the most vigorous of them, or the one that most attracts you to begin with, unless it happens to be also the most difficult. For the greater number of young writers I should say: Follow the line of least resistance, and take the easiest work first. It does not matter at all whether it is to belong to the middle or to the end or to the beginning of a story or poem. By developing the different parts or verses separately from each other, you will soon discover this astonishing fact, that they have a tendency to

grow together of themselves, and into a form different from that which you first intended, but much better. This is the inspiration of form as construction. And if you try always to begin at the beginning, you are very likely to miss this inspiration. The literary law is, let the poem or the story shape itself. Do not try to shape it before it is nearly done. The most wonderful work is not the work that the author shapes and plans; it is the work that shapes itself, the work that obliges him, when it is nearly done, to change it all from beginning to end, and to give it a construction which he had never imagined at the time of beginning it.

You will see that these rules, results of practical experience, and perfectly well known to men of letters in every country of Europe, are exactly the opposite of the rules taught in schools and universities. The student is always told how to begin, and always puzzles himself about a beginning. But the men who make literature, the poets, the great story-tellers of the highest rank—they never begin. At least, they never begin at the beginning according to rule; they draw their horses from the hoof or the tail much more often than from the head.

That is all that I have to say about construction. You may think this is very little. I reply that it is quite enough. Instinct and habit will teach all the rest; and they are better masters than all grammarians and rhetoricians. What a man can not learn by literary instinct, and can not acquire by literary habit, he will never, never be able to obtain from rules or books. I am afraid that some of these opinions may seem very heretical, but I must now be guilty of a much greater heresy, when I introduce you to my ideas about style. I think—in fact I feel quite sure—that everything which has been written upon the subject of style is absolute nonsense, because it mistakes results for causes. I hold that such writing has done immense injury to the literary student in every part of the world; and I propose to prove to you that there is no such thing as style.

IV

I suppose you will ask me, "Why do you talk to us about the styles of Macaulay and Burke and Ruskin, if you do not believe that there is such a thing as style?" I will answer that it is my duty in lectures to explain as far as I can the reasons why different writers are valued; and in order to do this I must use the word "style" because it is customary, and because it indicates something. But the general notion attaching to that something is wrong. What was called "style" no longer exists. What is called "style" ought to be called something else—I should say "character."

If you look at the dictionary you will find various definitions of the word "style," but all these can be reduced to two. The first, or general style, is simply rhetorical; it means the construction of sentences according to a complete set of rules, governing the form and proportion of every part of the sentence. This once was style. There was a time when everybody was supposed to write according to the same rules, and in almost exactly the same way. We might expect that work done by different individuals according to such rules would be all very much alike; and as a matter of fact, there was a great likeness in the styles of French and English writers during the time that classical rules of composition were in force. I suppose you know that by classical I mean rules obtained from study of the Greek and Latin writers. The effort of Western men of letters during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was to imitate the old classics. So they had rules and measures for everything, for every part of a sentence, and for the position of every word. Therefore the styles did greatly resemble each other. In France the similarity I refer to was greater than in England, the French being a more perfect language, and much closer to Latin than English. For example, you would find it very hard to distinguish the style of a story written by Diderot from the style of a story written by Voltaire. The Encyclopædists, as they are called, wrote

very much after the same fashion. But a fine critic could detect differences, nevertheless. For no matter how exact the rules might be, the way of obeying them would differ according to differences of character, mental character; I need scarcely tell you that no two minds think and feel in exactly the same way. These differences of individual thinking and feeling necessarily give a slightly different tone to the work of each writer, even in the most rigid period of classical style. And this difference of tone is what we call style to-day—after the old classical rules have been given up. But there is still much popular error upon the subject of individual style. People think still with the ideas of the eighteenth century. They think that there are rules for individual style, because there are rules for classical style. They think that when we talk of the style of Macaulay or Froude, of Arnold or of De Quincey, we mean certain rules of composition by which the literary method of one man can be known from that of another. I should like to see any man living attempt to define these rules. The authors themselves could not define them. There are no such rules. This is altogether an error—and a very serious error. The differences are not due to any definable rules at all; they are due entirely to individual differences of character. And therefore I say that style, in the modern meaning of the word, is character.

This remains to be proved. Let us see what any author's style means to-day. It means that his method of constructing sentences differs appreciably from the method in which other men construct their sentences. And how is the difference shown? Chiefly in three ways:

1. By a certain metrical form of sentence peculiar to the writer.
2. By a certain quality of sound—sonority—in the sentence, not due merely to measure, but to a sense of the musical value of words.
3. By choice of words giving particular impressions of force or colour.

Now how can we define and illustrate these three peculiarities in any writer? I say that it cannot be done. One might, as Mr. Saintsbury did, take some sentences from the Bible, or from any volume of rich prose, and arrange the sentences so as to show their measure and accent, by the same means that the accent and measure of poetry can be shown. But even thus the cadences could not be shown. In order to show the cadence we should have to adopt the suggestion of a very clever American man of letters, Sidney Lanier, and set the sentence to music—I mean write it with a musical notation above every word, in addition to the use of accents and feet. So much might be done. But there would still remain the impossible task of defining an author's conception of word values. Words are very much like lizards; they change colour according to position. Two different writers using the same word to express the same idea can give to that word two entirely different characters, for much depends upon the place of the word in the sentence, or, in simpler language, upon the combination to which it belongs. And all this work is more or less unconscious on the author's part. He chooses not by rule, but by feeling, by what is called the literary instinct. Attempts have been made to define differences of this kind as exhibited in the styles of different authors by counting and classifying the verbs and adjectives and adverbs used by each. These attempts resulted in nothing at all. The same thing has been tried in regard to poetry. How many times Tennyson uses the adjective "red" and how many times Swinburne uses the adjective "red" may be interesting to know; but it will not help us in the least to understand why the value of the same adjective as Tennyson uses it is quite different from the value it obtains as used by Swinburne. All such differences must be due to psychological differences; therefore again I say that style is character.

And here let me utter a word of warning as to the uselessness of trying to study "style" in modern English authors. I have often been asked by students whom they

should read for the study of style—and other questions of that kind, showing that they did not understand what style really is. I must even venture to say that no Japanese student who has not spent a great many years away from Japan, can possibly understand differences of foreign style. The reason must be obvious. To appreciate differences of style in foreign authors, you must have an absolutely perfect knowledge of the foreign language; you must know all its capacities of rhythm, accent, sonority, and colour. You must know the comparative values of one hundred thousand words—and that for you is impossible. Therefore, so far as foreign literature is concerned, do not trouble yourselves trying to understand anything about style which does not depend upon old forms of rhetoric. And even if you should learn enough of the old rules to understand all the rules and sub-rules for the construction of an eighteenth century sentence, the want of training in Greek and Latin would make that knowledge almost useless to you. Style can be studied by you only in a very vague way. But I hold that way to be the most important, because it means character. What I have just said is, of course, a digression, because it is of Japanese and not of English composition that I am now going to speak.

Here you must recognize that I am sadly hampered by my absolute ignorance of the Japanese language. There are many things that I should like to talk to you about which it is out of my power to talk of for this reason. But there are general facts, independent of differences of language; and I believe that by keeping to those I shall not speak altogether in vain. In Japanese, or in any other language, the style of the writer ought to represent character, if any style, except a purely conventional one, be possible. And now what I want to say is this: If any writer does his best to perfect his work, the result of the pains that he takes will be style in the true sense. That is, his work will have an individuality, a character about it, differentiating it from all other work on the same subject. It will be

recognizably his, just as much as his face or his way of talking belongs to him and not to anybody else. But just in the same degree to which he does not take pains there will be less evidence of character, therefore less style. The work of many clumsy people will be found to have a general family resemblance. The work of the truly energetic and painstaking will be found to differ prodigiously. The greater the earnestness and the labour, the more marked the style. And now you will see what I am coming at—that style is the outcome of character developed through hard work. Style is nothing else than that in any country.

Here observe another fact. In the general history of literature, wherever we find a uniformity of style, we find no progress, and no very great literary achievements. The classic period of the English eighteenth century is an example. But the reverse is the case when general style disappears and individual style develops. That means high development, originality, new ideas, everything that signifies literary progress. Now one bad sign in the English literature of the close of the present century—that is, the English literature of to-day—is that style has almost disappeared. There is a general style again, as there was in the first part of the eighteenth century. Out of a hundred English novels published this month, you would scarcely be able to tell the difference between one author's writing and another's. The great stylists are dead, except Ruskin, and he has ceased to write. The world of fiction is again governed by a set of rules which everybody follows; and novel writing, as well as essay writing (with rare exceptions), has become a trade instead of an art. Therefore nothing great appears, and nothing great is likely to appear until a reaction sets in. There is of course the extraordinary genius of Kipling, who keeps aloof from all conventions, and has made new styles of his own in almost every department of pure literature. But there is no other to place beside him, and he probably owes his development quite as much to the fact that he was born in India as to

his really astonishing talent. And this brings me to the last section of this lecture—the subject of language. One fact of Kipling's work, and not the least striking fact, is the astonishing use which he has made of the language of the people. Although a consummate master of serious and dignified style when he pleases to be, he never hesitates to speak the speech of the streets when he finds that it serves his purpose better. Well, remember that Emerson once said, "The speech of the street is incomparably more forceful than the speech of the academy."

V

I now hope that you will have a little patience with me, as I am going to speak against conventions. I believe that Japanese literature is still to a great extent in its classic state, that it has not yet freed itself from the conventions of other centuries, and that the full capacities of the language are not expressed in its modern productions. I believe that to write in the vernacular, the every day speech of conversation and of the people, is still considered vulgar. And I must venture to express the hope that you will eventually fight boldly against these conventions. I think that it is absolutely essential. I do not believe that any new Japanese literature can come into existence, and influence life and thought and national character, and create for Japan what she very much needs, literary sympathy, until Japan has authors who will not be afraid to write in the true tongue of the people. One thing is certain, that the change must come. Whoever helps it to come will be doing his country an inestimable service, for so long as literature is shaped only to the understanding of a special class of educated persons, it cannot influence the nation at all. The educated classes of any country represent but a very small portion of the great whole. They must be the teachers; yet they can not teach in the language of the academy. They must teach in the language of the people, just as Wyclif, and Chaucer, and other great English men of letters

once found it necessary to do in order to create a new public opinion. Japan will certainly need a new popular literature; and although you may say that a certain class of popular literature is furnished by a certain class of writers, I would answer that a great popular literature cannot be furnished by uneducated persons, or by persons without a large range of knowledge; it must be furnished by scholars, or at least by men of taste, who are willing to speak to the masses in their mother tongue, and who care to touch the hearts of the millions. This is the true object of literature in any country. And so far as literary expression is power, think of what is lost by allowing that power to be cramped in the same way that English literature was cramped a hundred years ago. Here is a man who can delight ten or twenty thousand readers of culture, but who can not be more than a name to the nation at large. Here is another man who can speak to forty millions of people at once, making himself equally well understood by the minister in his office and by the peasant in his rice-field. Who is the greatest force? Who is able to do most for the future of his country? Who represents the greatest power? Certainly it is not the man who pleases only twenty thousand people. It is the man who, like the young English poet already mentioned, can speak to all his countrymen in the world at the same time, and with such power that everybody both feels and understands. Recently when the Russian emperor proposed disarmament of the European powers, our young poet sent to the London *Times* a little poem about a bear—a treacherous bear. There is no part of the English speaking world in which the poem was not read; and I am quite sure that it had much more effect on English public opinion than the message of the Emperor of Russia. That is power. The man who can speak to a hundred millions of people may be stronger than a king. But he must not speak in the language of the academy.

CHAPTER VI

ON READING IN RELATION TO LITERATURE

AS the term approaches its close, I wish to keep my promise regarding a series of lectures relating to literary life and work, to be given independently of texts or authorities, and to represent, as far as possible, the results of practical experience among the makers of literature in different countries. The subject for this term will be Reading—apparently, perhaps, a very simple subject, but really not so simple as it looks, and much more important than you may think it. I shall begin this lecture by saying that very few persons know how to read. Considerable experience with literature is needed before taste and discrimination can possibly be acquired; and without these, it is almost impossible to learn how to read. I say *almost* impossible; since there are some rare men who, through a natural inborn taste, through a kind of inherited literary instinct, are able to read very well even before reaching the age of twenty-five years. But these are great exceptions, and I am speaking of the average.

For, to read the characters or the letters of the text does not mean reading in the true sense. You will often find yourselves reading words or characters automatically, even pronouncing them quite correctly, while your minds are occupied with a totally different subject. This mere mechanism of reading becomes altogether automatic at an early period of life, and can be performed irrespective of attention. Neither can I call it reading to extract the narrative portion of a text from the rest simply for one's personal amusement, or, in other words, to read a book "for the story." Yet most of the reading that is done in the world is done in exactly this way. Thousands and

thousands of books are bought every year, every month, I might even say every day, by people who do not read at all. They only think that they read. They buy books just to amuse themselves, "to kill time," as they call it; in one hour or two their eyes have passed over all the pages, and there is left in their minds a vague idea or two about what they have been looking at; and this they really believe is reading. Nothing is more common than to be asked, "Have you read such a book?" or to hear somebody say, "I have read such and such a book." But these persons do not speak seriously. Out of a thousand persons who say, "I have read this," or "I have read that," there is not one perhaps who is able to express any opinion worth hearing about what he has been reading. Many and many a time I hear students say that they have read certain books; but if I ask them some questions regarding the book, I find that they are not able to make any answer, or at best, they will only repeat something that somebody else has said about what they think that they have been reading. But this is not peculiar to students; it is in all countries the way that the great public devour books. And to conclude this introductory part of the lecture, I would say that the difference between the great critic and the common person is chiefly that the great critic knows how to read, and that the common person does not. No man is really able to read a book who is not able to express an original opinion regarding the contents of a book.

No doubt you will think that this statement of the case confuses reading with study. You might say, "When we read history or philosophy or science, then we do read very thoroughly, studying all the meanings and bearings of the text, slowly, and thinking about it. This is hard study. But when we read a story or a poem out of class-hour, we read for amusement. Amusement and study are two different things." I am not sure that you all think this; but young men generally do so think. As a matter of fact, every book worth reading ought to be read in precisely the

same way that a scientific book is read—not simply for amusement; and every book worth reading should have the same amount of value in it that a scientific book has, though the value may be of a totally different kind. For, after all, the good book of fiction or romance or poetry is a scientific work; it has been composed according to the best principles of more than one science, but especially according to the principles of the great science of life, the knowledge of human nature.

In regard to foreign books, this is especially true; but the advice suggested will be harder to follow, when we read in a language which is not our own. Nevertheless, how many Englishmen do you suppose really read a good book in English? how many Frenchmen read a great book in their own tongue? Probably not more than one in two thousand of those who think that they read. What is more, although there are now published every year in London upwards of six thousand books, at no time has there been so little good reading done by the average public as to-day. Books are written, sold, and read after a fashion—or rather according to the fashion. There is a fashion in literature as well as in everything else; and a particular kind of amusement being desired by the public, a particular kind of reading is given to supply the demand. So useless have become to this public the arts and graces of real literature, the great thoughts which should belong to a great book, that men of letters have almost ceased to produce true literature. When a man can obtain a great deal of money by writing a book without style or beauty, a mere narrative to amuse, and knows at the same time that if he should give three, five, or ten years to the production of a really good book, he would probably starve to death, he is forced to be untrue to the higher duties of his profession. Men happily situated in regard to money matters, might possibly attempt something great from time to time; but they can hardly get a hearing. Taste is so much deteriorated within the past few years, that, as I told you

before, style has practically disappeared—and style means thinking. And this state of things in England has been largely brought about by bad habits of reading, by not knowing how to read.

For the first thing which a scholar should bear in mind is that a book ought not to be read for mere amusement. Half-educated persons read for amusement, and are not to be blamed for it; they are incapable of appreciating the deeper qualities that belong to a really great literature. But a young man who has passed through a course of university training should discipline himself at an early day never to read for mere amusement. And once the habit of the discipline has been formed, he will even find it impossible to read for mere amusement. He will then impatiently throw down any book from which he cannot obtain intellectual food, any book which does not make an appeal to the higher emotions and to his intellect. But on the other hand, the habit of reading for amusement becomes with thousands of people exactly the same kind of habit as wine-drinking or opium-smoking; it is like a narcotic, something that helps to pass the time, something that keeps up a perpetual condition of dreaming, something that eventually results in destroying all capacity for thought, giving exercise only to the surface parts of the mind, and leaving the deeper springs of feeling and the higher faculties of perception unemployed.

Let us simply state what the facts are about this kind of reading. A young clerk, for example, reads every day on the way to his office and on the way back, just to pass the time; and what does he read? A novel, of course; it is very easy work, and it enables him to forget his troubles for a moment, to dull his mind to all the little worries of his daily routine. In one day or two days he finishes the novel; then he gets another. He reads quickly in these days. By the end of the year he has read between a hundred and fifty and two hundred novels; no matter how poor he is, this luxury is possible to him, because of the institution

of circulating libraries. At the end of a few years he has read several thousand novels. Does he like them? No; he will tell you that they are nearly all the same, but they help him to pass away his idle time; they have become a necessity for him; he would be very unhappy if he could not continue this sort of reading. It is utterly impossible that the result can be anything but a stupefying of the faculties. He can not even remember the names of twenty or thirty books out of thousands; much less does he remember what they contain. The result of all this reading means nothing but a cloudiness in his mind. That is the direct result. The indirect result is that the mind has been kept from developing itself. All development necessarily means some pain; and such reading as I speak of has been employed unconsciously as a means to avoid that pain, and the consequence is atrophy.

Of course this is an extreme case; but it is the ultimate outcome of reading for amusement whenever such amusement becomes a habit, and when there are means close at hand to gratify the habit. At present in Japan there is little danger of this state of things; but I use the illustration for the sake of its ethical warning.

This does not mean that there is any sort of good literature which should be shunned. A good novel is just as good reading as even the greatest philosopher can possibly wish for. The whole matter depends upon the way of reading, even more than upon the nature of what is read. Perhaps it is too much to say, as has often been said, that there is no book which has nothing good in it; it is better simply to state that the good of a book depends incomparably more for its influence upon the habits of the reader than upon the art of the writer, no matter how great that writer may be.

In a previous lecture I tried to call your attention to the superiority of the child's methods of observation to those of the man; and the same fact may be noticed in regard to the child's method of reading. Certainly the child can read

only very simple things; but he reads most thoroughly; and he thinks and thinks and thinks untiringly about what he reads; one little fairy tale will give him mental occupation for a month after he has read it. All the energies of his little fancy are exhausted upon the tale; and if his parents be wise, they do not allow him to read a second tale, until the pleasure of the first, and its imaginative effect, has begun to die away. Later habits, habits which I shall venture to call bad, soon destroy the child's power of really attentive reading. But let us now take the case of a professional reader, a scientific reader; and we shall observe the same power, developed of course to an enormous degree. In the office of a great publishing house which I used to visit, there are received every year sixteen thousand manuscripts. All these must be looked at and judged; and such work in all publishing offices is performed by what is called professional readers. The professional reader must be a scholar, and a man of very uncommon capacity. Out of a thousand manuscripts he will read perhaps not more than one; out of two thousand he may possibly read three. The others he simply looks at for a few seconds—one glance is enough for him to decide whether the manuscript is worth reading or not. The shape of a single sentence will tell him that, from the literary point of view. As regards subject, even the title is enough for him to judge, in a large number of cases. Some manuscripts may receive a minute or even five minutes of his attention; very few receive a longer consideration. Out of sixteen thousand, we may suppose that sixteen are finally selected for judgment. He reads these from beginning to end. Having read them, he decides that only eight can be further considered. The eight are read a second time, much more carefully. At the close of the second examination the number is perhaps reduced to seven. These seven are destined for a third reading; but the professional reader knows better than to read them immediately. He leaves them locked up in a drawer, and passes a whole week without looking at them.

At the end of the week he tries to see whether he can remember distinctly each of these seven manuscripts and their qualities. Very distinctly he remembers three; the remaining four he can not at once recall. With a little more effort, he is able to remember two more. But two he has utterly forgotten. This is a fatal defect; the work that leaves no impression upon the mind after two readings can not have real value. He then takes the manuscripts out of the drawer, condemns two—the two he could not remember—and re-reads the five. At the third reading everything is judged—subject, execution, thought, literary quality. Three are discovered to be first class; two are accepted by the publishers only as second class. And so the matter ends.

Something like this goes on in all great publishing houses; but unfortunately not all literary work is now judged in the same severe way. It is now judged rather by what the public likes; and the public does not like the best. But you may be sure that in a house such as that of the Cambridge or the Oxford University publishers, the test of a manuscript is very severe indeed; it is there read much more thoroughly than it is likely ever to be read again. Now this professional reader whom we speak of, with all his knowledge and scholarship and experience, reads the book very much in the same way as the child reads a fairy-tale. He has forced his mind to exert all its powers in the same minute way that the child's mind does, to think about everything in the book, in all its bearings, in a hundred different directions. It is not true that a child is a bad reader; the habit of bad reading is only formed much later in life, and is always unnatural. The natural and also the scholarly way of reading is the child's way. But it requires what we are apt to lose as we grow up, the golden gift of patience; and without patience nothing, not even reading, can be well done.

Important then as careful reading is, you can readily perceive that it should not be wasted. The powers of a well-trained and highly educated mind ought not to be

expended upon any common book. By common I mean cheap and useless literature. Nothing is so essential to self-training as the proper choice of books to read; and nothing is so universally neglected. It is not even right that a person of ability should waste his time in "finding out" what to read. He can easily obtain a very correct idea of the limits of the best in all departments of literature, and keep to that best. Of course, if he has to become a specialist, a critic, a professional reader, he will have to read what is bad as well as what is good, and will be able to save himself from much torment only by an exceedingly rapid exercise of judgment, formed by experience. Imagine, for example, the reading that must have been done, and thoroughly done, by such a critic as Professor Saintsbury. Leaving out of the question all his university training, and his mastery of Greek and Latin classics, which is no small reading to begin with, he must have read some five thousand books in the English of all centuries, — learned thoroughly everything that was in them, the history of each one, and the history of its author, whenever that was accessible. He must also have mastered thoroughly the social and political history relating to all this mass of literature. But this is still less than half his work. For being an authority upon two literatures, his study of French, both old and new French, must have been even more extensive than his study of English. And all his work had to be read as a master reads; there was little mere amusement in the whole from beginning to end. The only pleasure could be in results; but these results are very great. Nothing is more difficult in this world than to read a book and then to express clearly and truly in a few lines exactly what the literary value of the book is. There are not more than twenty people in the world that can do this, for the experience as well as the capacity required must be enormous. Very few of us can hope to become even third or fourth class critics after even a lifetime of study. But we can all learn to read; and that is not by any means a small feat. The great critics

can best show us the way to do this, by their judgment.

Yet after all, the greatest of critics is the public—not the public of a day or a generation, but the public of centuries, the consensus of national opinion or of human opinion about a book that has been subjected to the awful test of time. Reputations are made not by critics, but by the accumulation of human opinion through hundreds of years. And human opinion is not sharply defined like the opinion of a trained critic; it cannot explain; it is vague, like a great emotion of which we cannot exactly describe the nature; it is based upon feeling rather than upon thinking; it only says, “we like this.” Yet there is no judgment so sure as this kind of judgment, for it is the outcome of an enormous experience. The test of a good book ought always to be the test which human opinion, working for generations, applies. And this is very simple.

The test of a great book is whether we want to read it only once or more than once. Any really great book we want to read the second time even more than we wanted to read it the first time; and every additional time that we read it we find new meanings and new beauties in it. A book that a person of education and good taste does not care to read more than once is very probably not worth much. Sometime ago there was a very clever discussion going on regarding the art of the great French novelist, Zola; some people claimed that he possessed absolute genius; others claimed that he had only talent of a very remarkable kind. The battle of argument brought out some strange extravagances of opinion. But suddenly a very great critic simply put this question: “How many of you have read, or would care to read, one of Zola’s books a second time?” There was no answer; the fact was settled. Probably no one would read a book by Zola more than once; and this is proof positive that there is no great genius in them, and no great mastery of the highest form of feeling. Shallow or false any book must be, that, although bought by a hundred thousand readers, is never read more than

once. But we can not consider the judgment of a single individual infallible. The opinion that makes a book great must be the opinion of many. For even the greatest critics are apt to have certain dulnesses, certain inappreciations. Carlyle, for example, could not endure Browning; Byron could not endure some of the greatest of English poets. A man must be many sided to utter a trustworthy estimate of many books. We may doubt the judgment of the single critic at times. But there is no doubt possible in regard to the judgment of generations. Even if we cannot at once perceive anything good in a book which has been admired and praised for hundreds of years, we may be sure that by trying, by studying it carefully, we shall at last be able to feel the reason of this admiration and praise. The best of all libraries for a poor man would be a library entirely composed of such great works only, books which have passed the test of time.

This then would be the most important guide for us in the choice of reading. We should read only the books that we want to read more than once, nor should we buy any others, unless we have some special reason for so investing money. The second fact demanding attention is the general character of the value that lies hidden within all such great books. They never become old: their youth is immortal. A great book is not apt to be comprehended by a young person at the first reading except in a superficial way. Only the surface, the narrative, is absorbed and enjoyed. No young man can possibly see at first reading the qualities of a great book. Remember that it has taken humanity in many cases hundreds of years to find out all that there is in such a book. But according to a man's experience of life, the text will unfold new meanings to him. The book that delighted us at eighteen, if it be a good book, will delight us much more at twenty-five, and it will prove like a new book to us at thirty years of age. At forty we shall re-read it, wondering why we never saw how beautiful it was before. At fifty or sixty years of age the same facts will repeat

themselves. A great book grows exactly in proportion to the growth of the reader's mind. It was the discovery of this extraordinary fact by generations of people long dead that made the greatness of such works as those of Shakespeare, of Dante, or of Goethe. Perhaps Goethe can give us at this moment the best illustration. He wrote a number of little stories in prose, which children like, because to children they have all the charm of fairy-tales. But he never intended them for fairy-tales; he wrote them for experienced minds. A young man finds very serious reading in them; a middle aged man discovers an extraordinary depth in their least utterance; and an old man will find in them all the world's philosophy, all the wisdom of life. If one is very dull, he may not see much in them, but just in proportion as he is a superior man, and in proportion as his knowledge of life has been extensive, so will he discover the greatness of the mind that conceived them.

This does not mean that the authors of such books could have preconceived the entire range and depth of that which they put into their work. Great art works unconsciously without ever suspecting that it is great; and the larger the genius of a writer, the less chance there is of his ever knowing that he has genius; for his power is less likely to be discovered by the public until long after he is dead. The great things done in literature have not usually been done by men who thought themselves great. Many thousand years ago some wanderer in Arabia, looking at the stars of the night, and thinking about the relation of man to the unseen powers that shaped the world, uttered all his heart in certain verses that have been preserved to us in the Book of Job. To him the sky was a solid vault; of that which might exist beyond it, he never even dreamed. Since his time how vast has been the expansion of our astronomical knowledge! We now know thirty millions of suns, all of which are probably attended by planets, giving a probable total of three hundred millions of other worlds within sight of our astronomical instruments. Probably multitudes of

these are inhabited by intelligent life; it is even possible that within a few years more we shall obtain proof positive of the existence of an older civilization than our own upon the planet Mars. How vast a difference between our conception of the universe and Job's conception of it. Yet the poem of that simple minded Arab or Jew has not lost one particle of its beauty and value because of this difference. Quite the contrary! With every new astronomical discovery the words of Job take grander meanings to us, simply because he was truly a great poet and spoke only the truth that was in his heart thousands of years ago. Very anciently also there was a Greek story-teller who wrote a little story about a boy and a girl in the country called "Daphnis and Chloe." It was a little story, telling in the simplest language possible how the boy and the girl fell in love with each other, and did not know why, and all the innocent things they said to each other, and how grown-up people kindly laughed at them and taught them some of the simplest laws of life. What a trifling subject, some might think. But that story, translated into every language in the world, still reads like a new story to us; and every time we re-read it, it appears still more beautiful, because it teaches a few true and tender things about innocence and the feeling of youth. It never can grow old, any more than the girl and the boy whom it describes. Or, to descend to later times, about three hundred years ago a French priest conceived the idea of writing down the history of a student who had been charmed by a wanton woman, and led by her into many scenes of disgrace and pain. This little book, called "Manon Lescaut," describes for us the society of a vanished time, a time when people wore swords and powdered their hair, a time when everything was as different as possible from the life of to-day. But the story is just as true of our own time as of any time in civilization; the pain and the sorrow affect us just as if they were our own; and the woman, who is not really bad, but only weak and selfish, charms the reader almost as much as she charmed her

victim, until the tragedy ends. Here again is one of the world's great books, that cannot die. Or, to take one more example out of a possible hundred, consider the stories of Hans Andersen. He conceived the notion that moral truths and social philosophy could be better taught through little fairy-tales and child stories than in almost any other way; and with the help of hundreds of old fashioned tales, he made a new series of wonderful stories that have become a part of every library and are read in all countries by grown-up people much more than by children. There is in this astonishing collection of stories, a story about a mermaid which I suppose you have all read. Of course there can be no such thing as a mermaid; from one point of view the story is quite absurd. But the emotions of unselfishness and love and loyalty which the story expresses are immortal, and so beautiful that we forget about all the unreality of the frame-work; we see only the eternal truth behind the fable.

You will understand now exactly what I mean by a great book. What about the choice of books? Some years ago you will remember that an English man of science, Sir John Lubbock, wrote a list of what he called the best books in the world — or at least the best hundred books. Then some publishers published the hundred books in cheap form. Following the example of Sir John, other literary men made different lists of what they thought the best hundred books in existence; and now quite enough time has passed to show us the value of these experiments. They have proved utterly worthless, except to the publishers. Many persons may buy the hundred books; but very few read them. And this is not because Sir John Lubbock's idea was bad; it is because no one man can lay down a definite course of reading for the great mass of differently constituted minds. Sir John expressed only his opinion of what most appealed to him; another man of letters would have made a different list; probably no two men of letters would have made exactly the same one. The choice of great books must

under all circumstances be an individual one. In short, you must choose for yourselves according to the light that is in you. Very few persons are so many sided as to feel inclined to give their best attention to many different kinds of literature. In the average of cases it is better for a man to confine himself to a small class of subjects—the subjects best according with his natural powers and inclinations, the subjects that please him. And no man can decide for us without knowing our personal character and disposition perfectly well and being in sympathy with it, where our powers lie. But one thing is easy to do—that is, to decide, first, what subject in literature has already given you pleasure, to decide, secondly, what is the best that has been written upon that subject, and then to study that best to the exclusion of ephemeral and trifling books which profess to deal with the same theme, but which have not yet obtained the approbation of great critics or of a great public opinion.

Those books which have obtained both are not so many in number as you might suppose. Each great civilization has produced only two or three of the first rank, if we except the single civilization of the Greeks. The sacred books embodying the teaching of all great religions necessarily take place in the first rank, even as literary productions; for they have been polished and repolished, and have been given the highest possible literary perfection of which the language in which they are written is capable. The great epic poems which express the ideals of races, these also deserve a first place. Thirdly, the masterpieces of drama, as reflecting life, must be considered to belong to the highest literature. But how many books are thus represented? Not very many. The best, like diamonds, will never be found in great quantities.

Besides such general indications as I thus ventured, something may be said regarding a few choice books—those which a student should wish to possess good copies of and read all his life. There are not many of these. For European students it would be necessary to name a number of

Greek authors. But without a study of the classic tongues such authors could be of much less use to the students of this country; moreover, a considerable knowledge of Greek life and Greek civilization is necessary to quicken appreciation of them. Such knowledge is best gained through engravings, pictures, coins, statues—through those artistic objects which enable the imagination to see what has existed; and as yet the artistic side of classical study is scarcely possible in Japan, for want of pictorial and other material. I shall therefore say very little regarding the great books that belong to this category. But as the whole foundation of European literature rests upon classical study, the student should certainly attempt to master the outlines of Greek mythology, and the character of the traditions which inspired the best of Greek literature and drama. You can scarcely open an English book belonging to any high class of literature, in which you will not find allusions to Greek beliefs, Greek stories, or Greek plays. The mythology is almost necessary for you; but the vast range of the subject might well deter most of you from attempting a thorough study of it. A thorough study of it, however, is not necessary. What is necessary is an outline only; and a good book, capable of giving you that outline in a vivid and attractive manner would be of inestimable service. In French and German there are many such books; in English, I know of only one, a volume in Bohn's Library, Keightley's "Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy." It is not an expensive work; and it has the exceptional quality of teaching in a philosophical spirit. As for the famous Greek books, the value of most of them for you must be small, because the number of adequate translations is small. I should begin by saying that all verse translations are useless. No verse translation from the Greek can reproduce the Greek verse—we have only twenty or thirty lines of Homer translated by Tennyson, and a few lines of other Greek poets translated by equally able men, which are at all satisfactory. Under all circumstances take a prose trans-

lation when you wish to study a Greek or Latin author. We should of course consider Homer first. I do not think that you can afford not to read something of Homer. There are two excellent prose translations in English, one of the Iliad and one of the Odyssey. The latter is for you the more important of the two great poems. The references to it are innumerable in all branches of literature; and these references refer usually to the poetry of its theme, for the Odyssey is much more a romance than is the Iliad. The advantage of the prose translation by Lang and Butcher is that it preserves something of the rolling sound and music of the Greek verse, though it is only prose. That book I should certainly consider worth keeping constantly by you; its utility will appear to you at a later day. The great Greek tragedies have all been translated; but I should not so strongly recommend these translations to you. It would be just as well, in most cases, to familiarize yourselves with the stories of the dramas through other sources; and there are hundreds of these. You should at least know the subject of the great dramas of Sophocles, Æschylus, and above all Euripides. Greek drama was constructed upon a plan that requires much study to understand correctly; it is not necessary that you should understand these matters as an antiquarian does, but it is necessary to know something of the stories of the great plays. As for comedy, the works of Aristophanes are quite exceptional in their value and interest. They require very little explanation; they make us laugh to-day just as heartily as they made the Athenians laugh thousands of years ago; and they belong to immortal literature. There is the Bohn translation in two volumes, which I would strongly recommend. Aristophanes is one of the great Greek dramatists whom we can read over and over again, gaining at every reading. Of the lyrical poets there is also one translation likely to become an English classic, although a modern one; that is Lang's translation of Theocritus, a tiny little book, but very precious of its kind. You see I am mentioning very few; but these few

would mean a great deal for you, should you use them properly. Among later Greek work, work done in the decline of the old civilization, there is one masterpiece that the world will never become tired of—I mentioned it before, the story of “Daphnis and Chloe.” This has been translated into every language, and I am sorry to say that the best translation is not English, but French—the version of Amyot. But there are many English translations. That book you certainly ought to read. About the Latin authors, it is not here necessary to say much. There are very good prose translations of Virgil and Horace, but the value of these to you can not be very great without a knowledge of Latin. However, the story of the *Æneid* is necessary to know, and it were best read in the version of Conington. In the course of your general education it is impossible to avoid learning something regarding the chief Latin writers and thinkers; but there is one immortal book that you may not have often seen the name of; and it is a book everybody should read—I mean the “Golden Ass” of Apuleius. You have this in a good English translation. It is only a story of sorcery, but one of the most wonderful stories ever written, and it belongs to world literature rather than to the literature of a time.

But the Greek myths, although eternally imperishable in their beauty, are not more intimately related to English literature than are the myths of the ancient English religion, the religion of the Northern races, which has left its echoes all through our forms of speech, even in the names of the days of the week. A student of English literature ought to know something about Northern mythology. It is full of beauty also, beauty of another and stranger kind; and it embodied one of the noblest warrior-faiths that ever existed, the religion of force and courage. You have now in the library a complete collection of Northern poetry, I mean the two volumes of the “*Corpus Poeticum Boreale*.” Unfortunately you have not as yet a good collection of the Sagas and Eddas. But, as in the case of the vaster subject of

Greek mythology, there is an excellent small book in English, giving an outline of all that is important—I mean necessary for you—in regard to both the religion and the literature of the Northern races, Mallet's "Northern Antiquities." Sir Walter Scott contributed the most valuable portion of the translations in this little book; and these translations have stood the test of time remarkably well. The introductory chapters by Bishop Percy are old-fashioned, but this fact does not in the least diminish the stirring value of the volume. I think it is one of the books that every student should try to possess.

With regard to the great modern masterpieces translated into English from other tongues, I can only say that it is better to read them in the originals, if you can. If you can read Goethe's "Faust" in German, do not read it in English; and if you can read Heine in German, the French translation in prose, which he superintended, and the English translations (there are many of them) in verse can be of no use to you. But if German be too difficult, then read "Faust" in the prose version of Hayward, as revised by Dr. Buchheim. You have that in the library; and it is the best of the kind in existence. "Faust" is a book that a man should buy and keep, and read many times during his life. As for Heine, he is a world poet, but he loses a great deal in translation; and I can only recommend the French prose version of him; the English versions of Browning and Lazarus and others are often weak. Some years ago a series of extraordinary translations of Heine appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*; but these have not appeared, I believe, in book form.

As for Dante, I do not know whether he can make a strong appeal to you in any language except his own; and you must understand the middle ages very well to feel how wonderful he was. I might say something similar about other great Italian poets. Of the French dramatists, you must study Molière; he is next in importance only to Shakespeare. But do not read him in any translation. Here I

should say positively, that one who cannot read French might as well leave Molière alone; the English language cannot reproduce his delicacies of wit and allusion.

As for modern English literature, I have tried in the course of my lectures to indicate the few books deserving of a place in world-literature; and I need scarcely repeat them here. Going back a little further, however, I should like to remind you again of the extraordinary merit of Malory's book, the "Morte D'Arthur," and to say that it is one of the very few that you should buy and keep and read often. The whole spirit of chivalry is in that book; and I need scarcely tell you how deep is the relation of the spirit of chivalry to all modern English literature. I do not recommend you to read Milton, unless you intend to make certain special studies of language; the linguistic value of Milton is based upon Greek and Latin literature. As for his lyrics—that is another matter. Those ought to be studied. As there is little more to say, except by way of suggestion, I think that you ought, every one of you, to have a good copy of Shakespeare, and to read Shakespeare through once every year, not caring at first whether you can understand all the sentences or not; that knowledge can be acquired at a later day. I am sure that if you follow this advice you will find Shakespeare become larger every time that you read him, and that at last he will begin to exercise a very strong and very healthy influence upon your methods of thinking and feeling. A man does not require to be a great scholar in order to read Shakespeare. And what is true of reading Shakespeare, you will find to be true also in lesser degree of all the world's great books. You will find it true of Goethe's "Faust." You will find it true of the best chapters in the poems of Homer. You will find it true of the best plays of Molière. You will find it true of Dante, and of those books in the English Bible about which I gave a short lecture last year. And therefore I do not think that I can better conclude these remarks than by repeating an old but very excellent piece of advice which

has been given to young readers: “Whenever you hear of a new book being published, read an old one.”

CHAPTER VII

THE VALUE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN FICTION

THE subject of this lecture is much more serious than may appear to you from this title. Young men of your age are not likely to believe in ghosts, nor inclined to consider the subject as worthy of attention. The first things necessary to understand are the philosophical and literary relations of the topic. Let me tell you that it would be a mistake to suppose that the stories of the supernatural have had their day in fine literature. On the contrary, wherever fine literature is being produced, either in poetry or in prose, you will find the supernatural element very much alive. Scientific knowledge has not at all diminished the pleasure of mankind in this field of imagination, though it may have considerably changed the methods of treatment. The success of writers of to-day like Maeterlinck is chiefly explained by their skill in the treatment of the ghostly, and of subjects related to supernatural fear. But without citing other living writers, let me observe that there is scarcely any really great author in European literature, old or new, who has not distinguished himself in the treatment of the supernatural. In English literature, I believe there is no exception—even from the time of the Anglo-Saxon poets to Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare to our own day. And this introduces us to the consideration of a general and remarkable fact, a fact that I do not remember to have seen in any books, but which is of very great philosophical importance:—There is something ghostly in all great art, whether of literature, music, sculpture, or architecture.

But now let me speak to you about this word “ghostly”; it is a much bigger word, perhaps, than some of you imagine. The old English had no other word for “spiritual” or “supernatural”—which two terms you know, are not English

but Latin. Everything that religion to-day calls divine, holy, miraculous, was sufficiently explained for the old Anglo-Saxons by the term ghostly. They spoke of a man's ghost, instead of speaking of his spirit or soul; and everything relating to religious knowledge they called ghostly. In the modern formula of the Catholic confession, which has remained almost unchanged for nearly two thousand years, you will find that the priest is always called a "ghostly" father—which means that his business is to take care of the ghosts or souls of men as a father does. In addressing the priest, the penitent really calls him "Father of my ghost." You will see, therefore, that a very large meaning really attaches to the adjective. It means everything relating to the supernatural. It means to the Christian even God himself, for the Giver of Life is always called in English the Holy Ghost.

Accepting the evolutionary philosophy which teaches that the modern idea of God as held by western nations is really but a development from the primitive belief in a shadow-soul, the term ghost in its reference to the Supreme Being certainly could not be found fault with. On the contrary, there is a weirdness about this use of the word which adds greatly to its solemnity. But whatever belief we have, or have not, as regards religious creeds, one thing that modern science has done for us, is to prove beyond all question that everything which we used to consider material and solid is essentially ghostly, as is any ghost. If we do not believe in old-fashioned stories and theories about ghosts, we are nevertheless obliged to recognize to-day that we are ghosts of ourselves—and utterly incomprehensible. The mystery of the universe is now weighing upon us, becoming heavier and heavier, more and more awful, as our knowledge expands, and it is especially a ghostly mystery. All great art reminds us in some way of this universal riddle; that is why I say that all great art has something ghostly in it. It touches something within us which relates to infinity. When you read a very great thought, when you see a

wonderful picture or statue or building, and when you hear certain kinds of music, you feel a thrill in the heart and mind much like the thrill which in all times men felt when they thought they saw a ghost or a god. Only the modern thrill is incomparably larger and longer and deeper. And this is why, in spite of all knowledge, the world still finds pleasure in the literature of the supernatural, and will continue to find pleasure in it for hundreds of years to come. The ghostly represents always some shadow of truth, and no amount of disbelief in what used to be called ghosts can ever diminish human interest in what relates to that truth.

So you will see that the subject is not altogether trifling. Certainly it is of very great moment in relation to great literature. The poet or the story-teller who cannot give the reader a little ghostly pleasure at times never can be either a really great writer or a great thinker. I have already said that I know of no exception to this rule in the whole of English literature. Take, for instance, Macaulay, the most practical, hard-headed, logical writer of the century, the last man in whom you would expect to find the least trace of superstition. Had you read only certain of his essays, you would scarcely think him capable of touching the chords of the supernatural. But he has done this in a masterly way in several of the "Lays of Ancient Rome" — for example, in speaking of the apparition of the Twin Brethren at the battle of Lake Regillus, and of Tarquin haunted by the phantom of his victim Lucretia. Both of these passages give the ghostly thrill in a strong way; and there is a fainter thrill of the same sort to be experienced from the reading of parts of "The Prophecy of Capys." It is because Macaulay had this power, though using it sparingly, that his work is so great. If he had not been able to write these lines of poetry which I referred to, he could not even have made his history of England the living history that it is. A man who has no ghostly feeling cannot make anything alive, not even a page of history or a page of oratory. To touch men's souls, you must know all that those

souls can be made to feel by words; and to know that, you must yourself have a "ghost" in you that can be touched in the same way.

Now leaving the theoretical for the practical part of the theme, let us turn to the subject of the relation between ghosts and dreams.

No good writer — no great writer — ever makes a study of the supernatural according to anything which has been done before by other writers. This is one of those subjects upon which you cannot get real help from books. It is not from books, nor from traditions, nor from legends, nor from anything of that kind that you can learn how to give your reader a ghostly thrill. I do not mean that it is of no use for you to read what has been written upon the subject, so far as mere methods of expression, mere effects of literary workmanship, are concerned. On the contrary, it is very important that you should read all you can of what is good in literature upon these subjects; you will learn from them a great deal about curious values of words, about compactness and power of sentences, about peculiarities of beliefs and of terrors relating to those beliefs. But you must never try to use another man's ideas or feelings, taken from a book, in order to make a supernatural effect. If you do, the work will never be sincere, and will never make a thrill. You must use your own ideas and feelings only, under all possible circumstances. And where are you to get these ideas and feelings from, if you do not believe in ghosts? From your dreams. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, all the artistic elements of ghostly literature exist in your dreams, and form a veritable treasury of literary material for the man that knows how to use them.

All the great effects obtained by poets and story writers, and even by religious teachers, in the treatment of supernatural fear or mystery, have been obtained, directly or indirectly, through dreams. Study any great ghost story in any literature, and you will find that no matter how surprising or unfamiliar the incidents seem, a little patient

examination will prove to you that every one of them has occurred, at different times, in different combinations, in dreams of your own. They give you a thrill. But why? Because they remind you of experiences, imaginative or emotional, which you had forgotten. There can be no exception to this rule — absolutely none. I was speaking to you the other day about a short story by Bulwer-Lytton, as being the best ghost story in the English language. The reason why it is the best story of this kind is simply because it represents with astonishing faithfulness the experiences of nightmare. The terror of all great stories of the supernatural is really the terror of nightmare, projected into waking consciousness. And the beauty or tenderness of other ghost stories or fairy-stories, or even of certain famous and delightful religious legends, is the tenderness and beauty of dreams of a happier kind, dreams inspired by love or hope or regret. But in all cases where the supernatural is well treated in literature, dream experience is the source of the treatment. I know that I am now speaking to an audience acquainted with literature of which I know practically nothing. But I believe that there can be no exception to these rules even in the literature of the Far East. I do not mean to say that there may not be in Chinese and in Japanese literature many ghost stories which are not derived from dream-experience. But I will say that if there are any of this kind, they are not worth reading, and cannot belong to any good class of literature. I have read translations of a number of Chinese ghost stories in French, also a wonderful English translation of ghostly Chinese stories in two volumes, entitled "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio," by Herbert Giles. These stories, translated by a great scholar, are very wonderful; but I noticed that in every successful treatment of a supernatural subject, the incidents of the story invariably correspond with the phenomena of dreams. Therefore I think that I cannot be mistaken in my judgment of the matter. Such Japanese stories as I could get translations of, obeyed the same rule. The other

day, in a story which I read for the first time, I was very much interested to find an exact parallel between the treatment of a supernatural idea by the Japanese author, and by the best English author of dream studies. The story was about a picture, painted upon a screen, representing a river and a landscape. In the Japanese story (perhaps it has a Chinese origin) the painter makes a sign to the screen; and a little boat begins to sail down the river, and sails out of the picture into the room, and the room becomes full of water, and the painter, or magician, or whoever he is, gets into the boat and sails away into the picture again, and disappears for ever. This is exactly, in every detail, a dream story, and the excellence of it is in its truth to dream experience. The same phenomena you will find, under another form, in "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking Glass."

But to return to the point where we left off. I was saying that all successful treatment of the ghostly or the impossible must be made to correspond as much as possible with the truth of dream experience, and that Bulwer-Lytton's story of the haunted house illustrates the rule. Let us now consider especially the literary value of nightmare. Nightmare, the most awful form of dream, is also one of the most peculiar. It has probably furnished all the important elements of religious and supernatural terror which are to be found in really great literature. It is a mysterious thing in itself; and scientific psychology has not yet been able to explain many facts in regard to it. We can take the phenomena of nightmare separately, one by one, and show their curious relation to various kinds of superstitious fear and supernatural belief.

The first remarkable fact in nightmare is the beginning of it. It begins with a kind of suspicion, usually. You feel afraid without knowing why. Then you have the impression that something is acting upon you from a distance—something like fascination, yet not exactly fascination, for there may be no visible fascinator. But feeling uneasy, you wish to escape, to get away from the influence that is making

you afraid. Then you find it is not easy to escape. You move with great difficulty. Presently the difficulty increases—you cannot move at all. You want to cry out, and you can not; you have lost your voice. You are actually in a state of trance—seeing, hearing, feeling, but unable to move or speak. This is the beginning. It forms one of the most terrible emotions from which a man can suffer. If it continued more than a certain length of time, the mere fear might kill. Nightmare does sometimes kill, in cases where the health has been very much affected by other causes.

Of course we have nothing in ordinary waking life of such experience—the feeling of being deprived of will and held fast from a great distance by some viewless power. This is the real experience of magnetism, mesmerism; and it is the origin of certain horrible beliefs of the Middle Ages in regard to magical power. Suppose we call it supernatural mesmerism, for want of a better word. It is not true mesmerism, because in real hypnotic conditions, the patient does not feel or think or act mentally according to his own personality; he acts by the will of another. In nightmare the will is only suspended, and the personal consciousness remains; this is what makes the horror of it. So we shall call the first stage supernatural mesmerism, only with the above qualification. Now let us see how Bulwer-Lytton uses this experience in his story.

A man is sitting in a chair, with a lamp on the table beside him, and is reading Macaulay's essays, when he suddenly becomes uneasy. A shadow falls upon the page. He rises, and tries to call; but he cannot raise his voice above a whisper. He tries to move; and he cannot stir hand or foot. The spell is already upon him. This is the first part of nightmare.

The second stage of the phenomenon, which sometimes mingles with the first stage, is the experience of terrible and unnatural appearances. There is always a darkening of the visible, sometimes a disappearance or dimming of the light. In Bulwer-Lytton's story there is a fire burning in the room,

and a very bright lamp. Gradually both lamp and fire become dimmer and dimmer ; at last all light completely vanishes, and the room becomes absolutely dark, except for spectral and unnatural luminosities that begin to make their appearance. This also is a very good study of dream experience. The third stage of nightmare, the final struggle, is chiefly characterized by impossible occurrences, which bring to the dreamer the extreme form of horror, while convincing him of his own impotence. For example, you try to fire a pistol or to use a steel weapon. If a pistol, the bullet will not project itself more than a few inches from the muzzle ; then it drops down limply, and there is no report. If a sword or dagger, the blade becomes soft, like cotton or paper. Terrible appearances, monstrous or unnatural figures, reach out hands to touch ; if human figures, they will grow to the ceiling, and bend themselves fantastically as they approach. There is one more stage, which is not often reached — the climax of the horror. That is when you are caught or touched. The touch in nightmare is a very peculiar sensation, almost like an electric shock, but unnaturally prolonged. It is not pain, but something worse than pain, an experience never felt in waking hours.

The third and fourth stages have been artistically mixed together by Bulwer-Lytton. The phantom towers from floor to ceiling, vague and threatening ; the man attempts to use a weapon, and at the same time receives a touch or shock that renders him absolutely powerless. He describes the feeling as resembling the sensation of some ghostly electricity. The study is exactly true to dream-experience. I need not here mention this story further, since from this point a great many other elements enter into it which, though not altogether foreign to our subject, do not illustrate that subject so well as some of the stories of Poe. Poe has given us other peculiar details of nightmare-experience, such as horrible sounds. Often we hear in such dreams terrible muffled noises, as of steps coming. This you will find very well studied in the story called "The Fall of the House of

Usher.” Again in these dreams inanimate objects either become alive, or suggest to us, by their motion, the hiding of some horrible life behind them—curtains, for example, doors left half open, alcoves imperfectly closed. Poe has studied these in “Eleonora” and in some other sketches.

Dreams of the terrible have beyond question had a good deal to do with the inspiration both of religious and of superstitious literature. The returning of the dead, visions of heavenly or infernal beings,—these, when well described, are almost always exact reproductions of dream-experience. But occasionally we find an element of waking fear mixed with them—for example, in one of the oldest ghost stories of the world, the story in “The Book of Job.” The poet speaks of feeling intense cold, and feeling the hairs of his head stand up with fear. These experiences are absolutely true, and they belong to waking life. The sensation of cold and the sensation of horror are not sensations of dreams. They come from extraordinary terror felt in active existence, while we are awake. You will observe the very same signs of fear in a horse, a dog, or a cat—and there is reason to suppose that in these animal cases, also, supernatural fear is sometimes a cause. I have seen a dog—a brave dog, too—terribly frightened by seeing a mass of paper moved by a slight current of air. This slight wind did not reach the place where the dog was lying; he could not therefore associate the motion of the paper with a motion of the wind; he did not understand what was moving the paper; the mystery alarmed him, and the hair on his back stood up with fear. But the mingling of such sensations of waking fear with dream sensations of fear, in a story or poem, may be very effectually managed, so as to give to the story an air of reality, of actuality, which could not be obtained in any other way. A great many of our old fairy ballads and goblin stories mixed the two experiences together with the most excellent results. I should say that the fine German story of “Undine” is a good example of this kind. The sight of the faces in the water of the river, the changing

of waterfalls and cataracts into ghostly people, the rising from the closed well of the form of Undine herself, the rising of the flood behind her, and the way in which she “weeps her lover to death” — all this is pure dream; and it seems real because most of us have had some such experiences of fancy in our own dreams. But the other part of the story, dealing with human emotions, fears, passions—these are of waking life, and the mixture is accomplished in a most artistic way. Speaking of Undine obliges me also to speak of Undine’s predecessors in mediæval literature—the mediæval spirits, the *succubæ* and *incubi*, the sylphs and salamanders or salamandrines, the whole wonderful goblin population of water, air, forest, and fire. All the good stories about them are really dream studies. And coming down to the most romantic literature of our own day, the same thing must be said of those strange and delightful stories by Gautier, “La Morte Amoureuse,” “Arria Marcella,” “Le Pied de Momie.” The most remarkable is perhaps “La Morte Amoureuse”; but there is in this a study of double personality, which complicates it too much for purposes of present illustration. I shall therefore speak of “Arria Marcella” instead. Some young students visit the city of Pompeii, to study the ruins and the curiosities preserved in the museum of Naples, nearby. All of them are familiar with classic literature and classic history; moreover, they are artists, able to appreciate the beauty of what they see. At the time of the eruption, which occurred nearly two thousand years ago, many people perished by being smothered under the rain of ashes; but their bodies were encased in the deposit so that the form was perfectly preserved as in a mould. Some of these moulds are to be seen in the museum mentioned; and one is the mould of the body of a beautiful young woman. The younger of the three students sees this mould, and romantically wishes that he could see and love the real person, so many centuries dead. That night, while his companions are asleep, he leaves his room and wanders into the ruined city, for the pleasure of thinking all by himself. But presently,

as he turns the corner of a street, he finds that the city looks quite different from what it had appeared by day; the houses seem to have grown taller; they look new, bright, clean. While he is thus wandering, suddenly the sun rises, and the streets fill with people—not the people of to-day, but the people of two thousand years ago, all dressed in the old Greek and Roman costumes. After a time a young Greek comes up to the student and speaks to him in Latin. He has learned enough Latin at the university to be able to answer, and a conversation begins, of which the result is that he is invited to the theatre of Pompeii to see the gladiators and other amusements of the time. While in this theatre, he suddenly sees the woman that he wanted to see, the woman whose figure was preserved in the Naples museum. After the theatre, he is invited to her house; and everything is very delightful until suddenly the girl's father appears on the scene. The old man is a Christian, and he is very angry that the ghost of his daughter should deceive a young man in this manner. He makes a sign of the cross, and immediately poor Arria crumbles into dust, and the young man finds himself alone in the ruins of Pompeii. Very beautiful this story is; but every detail in it is dream study. I have given so much mention to it only because it seems to me the very finest French example of this artistic use of dream experience. But how many other romances belong to the same category? I need only mention among others Irving's "The Adelantado of the Seven Cities," which is pure dream, so realistically told that it gives the reader the sensation of being asleep. Although such romances as "The Seven Sleepers," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Urashima," are not, on the other hand, pure dreams, yet the charm of them is just in that part where dream experience is used. The true romance in all is in the old man's dream of being young, and waking up to cold and grave realities. By the way, in the old French lays of Marie de France, there is an almost precisely similar story to the Japanese one—similar, at least, at all points except the story of the tortoise. It is

utterly impossible that the oriental and the occidental story-tellers could have, either of them, borrowed from the other; more probably each story is a spontaneous growth. But it is curious to find the legend substantially the same in other literatures—Indian and Arabian and Javanese. In all of the versions the one romantic truth is ever the same—a dream truth.

Now besides the artistic elements of terror and of romance, dreams certainly furnish us with the most penetrating and beautiful qualities of ghostly tenderness that literature contains. For the dead people that we loved all come back to us occasionally in dreams, and look and talk as if they were actually alive, and become to us everything that we could have wished them to be. In a dream-meeting with the dead, you must have observed how everything is gentle and beautiful, and yet how real, how true it seems. From the most ancient times such visions of the dead have furnished literature with the most touching and the most exquisite passages to unselfish affection. We find this experience in nearly all the ancient ballad-literature of Europe; we find it in all the world's epics; we find it in every kind of superior poetry; and modern literature draws from it more and more as the years go by. Even in such strange compositions as the "Kalevala" of the Finns, an epic totally unlike any other ever written in this world, the one really beautiful passage in an emotional sense is the coming back of the dead mother to comfort the wicked son, which is a dream study, though not so represented in the poem.

Yet one thing more. Our dreams of heaven, what are they in literature but reflections in us of the more beautiful class of dreams? In the world of sleep all the dead people we loved meet us again; the father recovers his long-buried child, the husband his lost wife, separated lovers find the union that was impossible in this world, those whom we lost sight of in early years—dead sisters, brothers, friends—all come back to us just as they were then, just as loving, and as young, and perhaps even more beautiful than they could

really have been. In the world of sleep there is no growing old; there is immortality, there is everlasting youth. And again how soft, how happy everything is; even the persons unkind to us in waking life become affectionate to us in dreams. Well, what is heaven but this? Religion in painting perfect happiness for the good, only describes the best of our dream life, which is also the best of our waking life; and I think you will find that the closer religion has kept to dream experience in these descriptions, the happier has been the result. Perhaps you will say that I have forgotten how religion teaches the apparition of supernatural powers of a very peculiar kind. But I think that you will find the suggestion for these powers also in dream-life. Do we not pass through the air in dreams, pass through solid substances, perform all kinds of miracles, achieve all sorts of impossible things? I think we do. At all events, I am certain that when, as men of letters, you have to deal with any form of supernatural subject—whether terrible, or tender, or pathetic, or splendid—you will do well, if you have a good imagination, not to trust to books for your inspiration. Trust to your own dream-life; study it carefully, and draw your inspiration from that. For dreams are the primary source of almost everything that is beautiful in the literature which treats of what lies beyond mere daily experience.

CHAPTER VIII

LITERATURE AND POLITICAL OPINION

IT has been for some time my purpose to deliver a little lecture illustrating the possible relation between literature and politics—subjects that seem as much opposed to each other as any two subjects could be, yet most intimately related. You know that I have often expressed the hope that some of you will be among those who make future literature of Japan, the literature of the coming generation; and in this connection, I should like to say that I think the creation of Japanese literature (and by literature I mean especially fiction and poetry) to be a political necessity. If “political necessity” seems to you too strong a term, I shall say national requirement; but before I reach the end of this lecture, I think you will acknowledge that I used the words “political necessity” in a strictly correct sense.

In order to explain very clearly what I mean, I must first ask you to think about the meaning of public opinion in national politics. Perhaps in Japan to-day public opinion may not seem to you of paramount importance in deciding matters of statecraft, though you will acknowledge that it is a force which statesmen have, and must always have, to deal with. But in western countries, where the social conditions are very different, and where the middle classes represent the money power of the nation, public opinion may mean almost everything. I need scarcely tell you that the greatest force in England is public opinion—that is to say, the general national opinion, or rather feeling, upon any subject of moment. Sometimes this opinion may be wrong, but right or wrong is not here the question. It is the power that decides for or against war; it is the power that decides for or against reform; it is the power that to a very great

degree influences English foreign policy. The same may be said regarding public opinion in France. And although Germany is, next to Russia, the most imperial of European powers, and possesses the most tremendous military force that the world has ever seen, public opinion there also is still a great power in politics. But most of all, America offers the example of public opinion as government. There indeed the sentiment of the nation may be said to decide almost every question of great importance, whether domestic or foreign.

Now the whole force of such opinion in the West depends very much for its character upon knowledge. When people are correctly informed upon a subject, they are likely, in the mass, to think correctly in regard to it. When they are ignorant of the matter, they are of course apt to think wrongly about it. But this is not all. What we do not know is always a cause of uneasiness, of suspicion, or of fear. When a nation thinks or feels suspiciously upon any subject, whether through ignorance or otherwise, its action regarding the subject is tolerably certain to be unjust. Nations, like individuals, have their prejudices, their superstitions, their treacheries, their vices. All these are of course the result of ignorance or of selfishness, or of both together. But perhaps we had better say roundly that all the evil in this world is the result of ignorance, since selfishness itself could not exist but for ignorance. You will also have remarked in your reading of modern history that the more intelligent and educated, that is to say the less ignorant, a nation is, the more likely is its policy in foreign matters to be marked by something resembling justice.

Now how is national feeling created to-day upon remote and foreign subjects? Perhaps some of you will answer, by newspapers — and the remark would contain some truth. But only a little truth; for newspapers do not as a rule treat of other than current events, and the writers of newspapers themselves can write only out of the knowledge they happen to have regarding foreign and unfamiliar matters. I should

say that the newspaper press has more to do with the making of prejudice than with the dissemination of accurate knowledge in regard to such matters, and that at all times its influence can be only of the moment. The real power that shapes opinion in regard to other nations and other civilizations is literature—fiction and poems. What one people in Europe knows about another people is largely obtained, not from serious volumes of statistics, or grave history, or learned books of travel, but from the literature of that people—the literature that is an expression of its emotional life.

Do not think that public opinion in western countries can be made by the teaching of great minds, or by the scholarship of a few. Public opinion, in my meaning, is not an intellectual force at all. It could not possibly be made an intellectual force. It is chiefly emotional, and may be a moral force, but nothing more. Nevertheless, even English ministers of state have to respect it always, and have to obey it very often indeed. And it is largely made, as I have told you, by literature—not the literature of philosophy and of science, but the literature of imagination and of feeling. Only thousands of people can read books of pure science and philosophy; but millions read stories and verses that touch the heart, and through the heart influence the judgment.

I should say that English public feeling regarding many foreign countries has been very largely made by such literature. But I have time only to give you one striking example—the case of Russia. When I was a boy the public knew absolutely nothing about Russia worth knowing, except that the Russian soldiers were very hard fighters. But fighting qualities, much as the English admired them, are to be found even among savages, and English experience with Russian troops did not give any reason for a higher kind of admiration. Indeed, up to the middle of the present century the Russians were scarcely considered in England as real human kindred. The little that was known of Russian

customs and Russian government was not of a kind to correct hostile feeling—quite the contrary. The cruelties of military law, the horrors of Siberian prisons,—these were often spoken of; and you will find even in the early poetry of Tennyson, even in the text of “The Princess,” references to Russia of a very grim kind.

All that was soon to be changed. Presently translations into French, into German, and into English, of the great Russian authors began to make their appearance. I believe the first remarkable work of this sort directly translated into English was Tolstoy’s “Cossacks,” the translator being the American minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Schuyler. The great French writer Mérimée had already translated some of the best work of Gógol and Púshkin. These books began to excite extraordinary interest. But a much more extraordinary interest was aroused by the subsequent translations of the great novels of Turgénev, Dostöevsky, and others. Turgénev especially became a favourite in every cultured circle in Europe. He represented living Russia as it was—the heart of the people, and not only the heart of the people but the feelings and the manners of all classes in the great empire. His books quickly became world-books, nineteenth century classics, the reading of which was considered indispensable for literary culture. After him many other great works of Russian fiction were translated into nearly all the languages of Europe. Nor was this all. The great intellect of Russia, suddenly awakening, had begun to make itself heavily felt in the most profound branches of practical science. The most remarkable discovery of modern times in chemistry, concerning the law of atomic weights, was a Russian discovery; the most remarkable work of physiography accomplished in regard to Northern Asia was the work of Prince Kropotkin, who still lives, and writes wonderful books and memoirs. I am mentioning only two cases out of hundreds. In medicine, in linguistics, in many other scientific directions, the influence of Russian work and thought is now widely recognized. But however

scientific men might find reason to respect the Russian intellect, it is not by intellect that a nation can make itself understood abroad. The great work of making Russia understood was accomplished chiefly by her novelists and story-tellers. After having read those wonderful books, written with a simple strength of which we have no parallel example in western literature, except the works of a few Scandinavian writers, the great nations of the West could no longer think of Russians as a people having no kinship with them. Those books proved that the human heart felt and loved and suffered in Russia just as in England, or France, or Germany; but they also taught something about the peculiar and very great virtues of the Russian people, the Russian masses—their infinite patience, their courage, their loyalty, and their great faith. For, though we could not call these pictures of life beautiful (many of them are very terrible, very cruel), there is much of what is beautiful in human nature to be read between the lines. The gloom of Turgénev and of his brothers in fiction only serves to make the light seem more beautiful by contrast. And what has been the result? A total change of western feeling towards the Russian people. I do not mean that western opinion has been at all changed as regards the Russian government. Politically Russia remains the nightmare of Europe. But what the people are has been learned, and well learned, through Russian literature; and a general feeling of kindness and of human sympathy has taken the place of the hatred and dislike that formerly used to tone popular utterances in regard to Russians in general.

Now you will see very clearly what I mean, what I am coming to. Vast and powerful as the Russian nation is, it has great faults, great deficiencies, such as have not characterized the people of this country for thousands of years. So far as civilization signifies manners and morals, education and industry, I should certainly say that the Japanese even hundreds of years ago were more civilized as a nation than the Russians of to-day are, than the Russians can be even

for a long time to come. Yet what is known in western countries about Japan? Almost nothing. I do not mean that there are not now hundreds of rich people who have seen Japan, and have learned something about it. Thousands of books about Japan have been written by such travellers. But these travellers and writers represent very little; certainly they do not represent national opinion in any way. The great western peoples—the masses of them—know just as little about Japan to-day as was known about Russia at the beginning of this century. They know that Japan can fight well, and she has railroads, and ships of war; and that is about all that has made an impression upon the public mind. The intellectual classes of Europe know a great deal more, but as I have said, these do not make public opinion, which is largely a matter of feeling, not of thinking. National feeling can not be reached through the head; it must be reached through the heart. And there is but one class of men capable of doing this—your own men of letters. Ministers, diplomats, representatives of learned societies—none of these can do it. But a single great novelist, a single great poet, might very well do it. No one foreign in blood and in speech could do it, by any manner of means. It can only be done by Japanese literature, thought by Japanese, written by Japanese, and totally uninfluenced by foreign thinking and foreign feeling.

Let me try to put this truth a little more plainly to you by way of illustration. At present the number of books written by foreigners about Japan reaches many thousands; every year at least a dozen new books appear on the subject; and nevertheless the western reading public knows nothing about Japan. Nor could it be said that these books have even resulted in lessening the very strong prejudices that western people feel towards all Oriental nations—prejudices partly the result of natural race-feeling, and partly the result of religious feeling. Huxley once observed that no man could imagine the power of religious prejudice until he tried to fight it. As a general rule the men who try to

fight against western prejudices in regard to the religions of other peoples, are abused whenever possible, and when not possible, they are either ignored or opposed by all possible means. Even the grand Oxford undertaking of the translations of the sacred books of the eastern races was very strongly denounced in many quarters; and the translators are still accused of making eastern religions seem more noble than they really could be. I mention this fact only as an illustration of one form of prejudice; and there are hundreds of others. At the present time any person who attempts to oppose these, has no chance of being fairly heard. But the general opinion is that any good things said about the civilization, the ethics, the industry, or the faith of Japan, are said for selfish motives—for reasons of flattery or fear or personal gain; and that the unkind, untruthful, and stupid things said, are said by brave, frank, independent, and very wise people. And why is this? Because the good and bad alike have been said only by foreigners. What any foreigner now says about Japanese life and thought and character will have very little influence on the good side, though it may have considerable influence on the other side. This is inevitable. Moreover, remember that the work done by foreigners in the most appreciative and generous directions has not been of a kind that could reach the western mass of readers. It could reach only small intellectual circles. You can not touch the minds of a great people by mere books of travel, or by essays, or by translations of literature having nothing in common with western feeling. You can reach them only through more humane literature, fiction and poetry, novels and stories. If only foreigners had written about Russia, the English people would still think of the Russian upper classes as barbarians, and would scarcely think of the great nation itself as being humanly related to them. All prejudices are due to ignorance; ignorance can be dissipated best by appeals to the nobler emotions. And the nobler emotions are best inspired by pure literature.

I should suppose that more than one of you would feel inclined to ask, "What need we care about the prejudices and the stupidities of ignorant people in western countries?" Well, I have already told you that at the present time these relatively ignorant and stupid millions have a great deal to do with state-policy. It is the opinion of the ignorant, much more than the opinion of the wise, that regulates the policy of western governments with foreign nations. That would be a good reason of itself. But I will now go further, and say that I think the absence of a modern Japanese literature, such as I am advocating, is indirectly to be regretted also for commercial reasons. It is quite true that commerce and trade are not exactly moral occupations; they are conducted according to relative morality, perhaps, not according to positive morality. In short, business is not moral. It is a kind of competition; and all competitions are in the nature of war. But in this war, which is necessary, and which can not be escaped, a very great deal depends upon the feelings with which the antagonists regard each other. A very great deal depends upon sympathy, even in business, upon an understanding of the simplest feelings regarding right and wrong, pleasure and pain; for, at bottom, all human interests are based upon these. I am quite certain that a Japanese literature capable of creating sympathy abroad would have a marked effect in ameliorating business conditions and in expanding commercial possibilities. The great mass of business is risk. Now men are more or less in the position of enemies, when they have to risk without perfect knowledge of all the conditions upon the other side. In short, people are afraid of what they do not understand. And there is no way by which the understanding could be so quickly imparted as through the labours of earnest men of letters. I might mention in this connection that I have seen lately letters written by merchants in a foreign country, asking for information in regard to conditions in this country, which proved the writers to know even less about Japan than they know about the moon. In ten years, two

or three—nay, even one great book—would have the effect of educating whole business circles, whole millions of people in regard to what is true and good in this country.

Now I have put these thoughts before you in the roughest and simplest way possible, not because I think that they represent a complete argument on the subject, but because I trust they contain something which will provoke you to think very seriously about the matter. A man may do quite as great a service to his country by writing a book as by winning a battle. And you had proof of this fact the other day, when a young English writer fell sick, with the result that all over the world the cables were set in motion to express to him the sympathy of millions and millions of people, while kings and emperors asked about his health. What had this young man done? Nothing except to write a few short stories and a few little songs that made all Englishmen understand each other's heart better than before, and that had made other nations better understand the English. Such a man is really worth to his country more than a king. If you will remember this, I believe the lecture I have given will bear good fruit at some future day.

CHAPTER IX

THE QUESTION OF THE HIGHEST ART

IN taking this title for the present short lecture, I have not said "literary art," but simply art. That is because I think that all the arts are so related to each other, and to some form of highest truth, that each obeys the same laws as the others, and manifests the same principles. Of course I intend to refer especially to literary art; but in order to do this effectually, I must first speak about art in general.

I take it that art signifies the emotional expression of life in some form or other. This may be expressed in music, in painting, in sculpture, in poetry, in drama, or in fiction. Truth to life is the object even of the best fiction—though the story in itself may not be true, or may even be impossible. But it has of course been said that the kinds of art are almost innumerable. The question that I want to answer is this: "What is the highest form of art?"

Without attempting to discuss the different kinds of art in any way, I think we may fairly assume that intellectual life represents something higher than physical life, and that ethical life represents something higher still. In short, the position of Spencer that moral beauty is far superior to intellectual beauty, ought to be a satisfactory guide to the answer of this question. If moral beauty be the very highest possible form of beauty, then the highest possible form of art should be that which expresses it.

I do not think that anybody would deny these premises from a philosophical point of view. But the mere statement that moral beauty ought to be ranked above all other beauty, and that the highest art should necessarily express moral beauty, leaves a vague and unsatisfactory impression upon the mind. It is not very easy to answer the question, "How

can music or painting or sculpture or poetry or fiction represent moral beauty?" And have I not often told you that books written for a moral purpose are nearly always in-artistic and unsatisfactory?

It seems to me that a solution of this difficulty is at least suggested by the experience of love.

To love another human being is really a moral experience, although this fact is very commonly overlooked. You might say, "That is all very fine, but how can it be a moral experience to love a bad person, or to love for sense and self?" I shall answer that the selfish side of the feeling has no importance at all; and that whether the person loved be good or bad or indifferent is also of no importance. I mean that the experience is not at all affected as to its moral side by the immorality of the conditions of it. Certainly it is a great misfortune and a great folly to love a bad person; but in spite of the misfortune and the folly a certain moral experience comes, which has immense value to a wholesome nature. The experience is one which very few of the poets and philosophers dwell upon; yet it is the only important, the supremely important, part of the experience. What is it? It is the sudden impulse to unselfishness. For there are two sides to every passion of love in a normal human life. One side is selfish; the other side, and the stronger, is unselfish. In other words, one of the first results of truly loving another human being is the sudden wish to die for the sake of that person, to endure anything, to attempt anything difficult or dangerous for the benefit of the person beloved. That is what Tennyson refers to in the celebrated verse about the chord of Self suddenly disappearing. The impulse to self-sacrifice is the moral experience of loving; and this experience is not necessarily confined to the kind of affection described by Tennyson. Other forms of love may produce the same result. Strong faith may do it. Patriotism may do it. I have only mentioned the ordinary form of love, because it is the most universal experience, and most likely to produce the moral impulse, the unselfish desire to suffer

pain, to suffer loss, or even to suffer death, for the sake of a person loved.

I know that mere beauty of form may produce such emotion, though beauty of form is by no means the highest source of moral inspiration. There is a possible relation between physical and moral beauty; but it does not seem to be a relation now often realized in this imperfect world. Intellectual beauty never, I think, excites our affection—though it may excite our admiration. Moral beauty, the highest of all, has indeed been a supreme source of unselfish action; but it has moved men's minds chiefly through super-human ideals, and very seldom through the words or acts of a person, an individual. It must be confessed that in a person we are much more ready to perceive the lower than the higher forms of beauty.

But in this we have a suggestion of possible values in regard to future art. Taking it for granted that some forms of beauty inspire men with such affection as to make them temporarily unselfish, I do not see any reason to doubt that in future very much higher forms of beauty will produce the same effect. I should say that the highest form of art must necessarily be such art as produces upon the beholder the same moral effect that the passion of love produces in a generous lover. Such art would be a revelation of moral beauty for which it were worth while to sacrifice self,—of moral ideas for which it were a beautiful thing to die. Such an art ought to fill men even with a passionate desire to give up life, pleasure, everything, for the sake of some grand and noble purpose. Just as unselfishness is the real test of strong affection, so unselfishness ought to be the real test of the very highest kind of art. Does this art make you feel generous, make you willing to sacrifice yourself, make you eager to attempt some noble undertaking? If it does, then it belongs to the higher class of art, if not to the very highest. But if a work of art, whether sculpture or painting or poem or drama, does not make us feel kindly, more generous, morally better than we were before seeing

it, then I should say that, no matter how clever, it does not belong to the highest forms of art.

By this statement I do not mean in the least to decry such art as the sculpture of the Greeks, as the painting of the Italians—not at all. The impression of great sculpture and a great painting, like the impression of grand music, *is* to make us feel more kindly to our fellowmen, more unselfish in our actions, more exalted in our aspirations. When art has not this effect, it is often because the nature of man is deficient, not because his art is bad. But I do not know that any art which has existed in the past could be called the highest possible. The highest possible ought to be, I think, one that treats of ethical ideals, not physical ideals, and of which the effect should be a purely moral enthusiasm. Sculpture, painting, music,—these arts can never, I imagine, attempt the highest art in the sense that I mean. But drama, poetry, great romance or fiction, in other words, great literature, may attempt the supreme, and very probably will do so at some future time.

CHAPTER X

NOTE UPON THE ABUSE AND THE USE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

As I have been asked, on various occasions, to express an opinion as to the use of literary societies, as well as asked to join some of them, I have been thinking that a short lecture, embodying my beliefs upon the subject, might be of use to you. It is not at all necessary that you should approve my opinions; but I am sure that you will find them worth thinking about, because they are based upon something better than any experience of my own—the experience and the teaching of really wise men. Let me begin, then, by saying that I am strongly opposed to the existence of most literary societies, and that I believe such societies may do very considerable injury to young talents.

There is a general principle, especially insisted upon by Herbert Spencer in his *Sociology*, which applies to the world of literature just as much as it does to the world of political economy, or the world of industrialism. That principle is this: whatever can be done by the individual in the best way possible, is not work for a society to attempt, unless this society can greatly improve the work of the individual. You know that sociologists are never tired of pointing out that, even in the case of private companies and state undertakings, the private companies invariably do the better work. Of course the larger social questions connected with competition, lie outside of my province; I am reminding you of them, but I have no wish to dwell upon them. Only remember that the general principle is applicable to all forms of human work and effort. Co-operation is valuable only when it can accomplish what is beyond the

power of the individual. When it cannot accomplish this, it is much more likely to make mischief or to act as a check than to do any good. One reason for this is very simple—co-operation is unfavourable to personal freedom of thought or action. If you work with a crowd, you must try to obey the opinions of the majority; you must act in harmony with those about you. How very unfavourable to literary originality such a condition would prove, we shall presently have reason to see.

But first let me observe that all kinds of literary societies are not to be indiscriminately condemned. Some literary societies are very useful, and have accomplished great services to literature, by doing for literature what no individual could possibly do. For example, in England societies have been formed for the editing and publishing of valuable old texts. The Early English Text Society is an example, one of perhaps a score. No one man could have done the work of this society, nor the work of the Percy Text Society, nor the work of a dozen others of which you have undoubtedly heard. Such work requires a great deal of money, such as very few even rich men could spare, and it requires a vast amount of labour, beyond the capacity of any single person. Now in these cases hundreds of people contribute money to support the work, and dozens of scholars are thus enabled to concentrate their efforts in a single direction. It would be folly to say that societies of this kind are not of the very highest value. But they are valuable only because they do what individual effort could not do.

Again, societies formed in colleges and in universities, for the purpose of encouraging literary effort, or debating, or any other beginnings in the great arts of composition or of eloquence, are certainly to be recommended. They are to be recommended because they stimulate the novice to do many things which he might not have self-confidence to attempt without encouragement. How many a student must have first discovered his own abilities in the direction of oratory or poetry or fiction, through the stimulus that his

college society first gave him. He thought that he could not make a speech, but one day, much against his will, he found that the opinion of his fellow students compelled him to make a speech, and the result was that he proved to be better qualified than others to do what he had imagined impossible. So with the first efforts in many directions. The majority forces us to make them; and in such instances the influence of the majority is to develop individual power. But I will still say that here the value of such societies begins and ends. There are wonderful societies of this kind in all the great colleges and universities of the world; and they help to develop the first budding of talent, the first literary and artistic ambition. But the best of them never produce anything great. They work with raw material; the very best things published by students of the great English universities, for example, are always somewhat immature. If we acknowledge that some stimulus of a healthy kind is given to literary ambition by this form of co-operation, then we grant about all that can be granted.

Once that the individual mind blossoms and develops, from that moment the influence of societies ceases to be a benefit, and threatens to become an injury. The very same social opinion that compelled and encouraged the first effort would almost certainly oppose itself to further development after a certain fixed degree. The early encouragement might be voiced in some such persuasion as this: "Try to show yourself as clever as the rest of us." But at a later time, the like social opinion would certainly declare, "You must not be eccentric and think so differently from the rest of us. If you do think that way, please do not express your opinions, for they will not be tolerated." I am putting the case rather strongly, of course. But the second form of address just quoted is really that form of address which the world uses to every kind of original talent. The world is not nearly so liberal, generous, appreciative, as the literary societies of colleges and of universities. Public opinion is above all things conservative in almost every

direction in which original talent aims. Instinctively it attempts to block every departure from conventional ways of thought and action. And any mature society of a certain average size is pretty sure to represent public opinion in a strong form. It will therefore be much more likely to act as a strangling power than as a developing power. I would venture to say, however, that the proper conditions of literary independence and mutual encouragement in a literary society must depend very much upon the number of its members. And I should put the number very low—so low that I think you will be rather surprised at the statement. I do not think that a literary society of the sort to which I have referred, should consist at any time of more than two or three persons. Combinations of three have been proved both possible and beneficial. Any large figure, even four, I should think dangerous. And the combination of three should be, I think, a combination of differences, not of similarities. The durability of the brotherhood would depend upon mutual appreciation, not upon unity of idealism or singleness of opinion. But naturally this question comes up, “Can we call a fraternity of three persons a literary society?” Perhaps not; yet I firmly believe that any larger combination of individuals for a literary purpose would not accomplish any good, and should not be formed, except for such purposes as that of giving financial aid. Now I shall try to explain why.

Experience among professional men of letters tends to show that there is but one way, one influence, through which they can really assist each other toward the realization of higher things—that is, friendship and sympathy. Friendship, real friendship, admits of perfect freedom between mind and mind, perfect frankness, perfect understanding, and therefore complete sympathy. But the conditions of human nature are such that, even among common minds, perfect friendship can seldom extend to any considerable number of persons. So there is a Spanish proverb on the subject, which is worth quoting:

Compañía de uno, compañía ninguno ;
Compañía de dos, compañía de Dios,
Compañía de tres, compañía es ;
Compañía de cuatro, compañía de Diablo.

Which is to say, one is no company ; two is God's company ; three is company ; but four is the Devil's company. Now though it may seem funny, this proverb is really wise, as most Spanish proverbs are ; for it signifies that a perfect friendship of more than three has been found very difficult. When four make the company, a division of opinion or feeling is almost certain to result ; for two will be apt to unite against one or both of the others, when some vexed question arises. I believe that you must have known this to be true in your own experience. At all events, a literary association made for real and serious literary objects of a high class, can only be beneficial and enduring if built upon friendship and sympathy ; and friendship and sympathy of the quality needed cannot be expected from a combination of more than three.

Perhaps you will think of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and other societies. But now that we have full details about these societies, we find that they were societies in name rather than in fact. The Pre-Raphaelite society existed only by groups of three, and these groups touched each other only at long intervals. Moreover, the only thing that kept the threes affiliated even by the thinnest of threads, was a certain business necessity. I believe you will find in the history of English literature that nearly all great men have been solitary workers, and have had remarkably few friends. Certainly this has been the case in modern times. I cannot think of any way in which a literary combination could be of serious value to a serious literary worker, except in the manner that I have indicated.

You will perhaps remember that in England and in America there are thousands of "literary societies," that almost every country town has a literary society of some

kind; indeed, I might remark that even in Yokohama and in Kobe the foreign merchants have made a "literary society." But it does not at all follow that these societies are literary because they are called literary. Do not be deceived by this fact of the popularity of literary societies in England and elsewhere. Such societies are formed for purposes of which the average student has no idea. They are formed for purely social purposes, to bring young men and women together, to enable parents to marry their daughters, to enable small musicians or small poets or popular journalists to obtain a little social influence. I do not care how big the society may be, that is the real end of it. There is a little music, a little speaking, a commonplace essay. Then there is a great deal of introduction and of social gossip. This is only a commonplace and vulgar playing—it is pretending. And I am speaking to superior men, to educated men. As a university man must take literature seriously, he cannot be interested in nonsense of the sort which I have been describing, and only as nonsense can the thing exist for him. You do not find real men of letters bothering themselves with societies of that kind.

Now, to sum up, I will say that literary societies of a serious character, such as those formed in universities, and sometimes outside of them, have this value—they will help men to rise up to the general level. Now "the general level" means mediocrity; it cannot mean anything else. But young students of either sex, or young persons of sentiment, must begin by rising to mediocrity; they must grow. Therefore I say that such societies give valuable encouragement to young people. But though the societies help you to rise to the general level, they will never help you to rise above it. And therefore I think that the man who has reached his full intellectual strength can derive no benefit from them. Literature, in the true sense, is not what remains at the general level; it is the exceptional, the extraordinary, the powerful, the unexpected, that soars far above the general level. And therefore I think that a university

graduate intending to make literature his profession, should no more hamper himself by belonging to literary societies, than a man intending to climb a mountain should begin by tying a very large stone to the ankle of each foot.

And yet, in spite of what I have said against the serious value of literary societies, I must confess I myself belong to a literary society. But it is really the most sensible society of the kind imaginable. There are no meetings which one is obliged to attend; there is no demand for literary work of any sort; you are not even obliged to know the other members of the society. We make every year a contribution of money; but we must contribute for twenty years and never get anything in return. Then you might ask, "What is the use of such a society?" It is very useful indeed. Thousands of writers belong to it, but very few of them use it. The object of the society is to provide money for the employment of good lawyers to defend the interests of authors against dishonourable publishers. Authors are generally very poor men, and very easy to take advantage of in business. To go to law with a publisher is out of the power of a poor man, in nine cases out of ten. But if a thousand poor men get together, each to contribute every year a small sum in the interests of right and justice, without asking any direct return for it, then a great deal may be done. As it is, the society employs very skilful lawyers and advisors. If any one member of the society be unjustly treated, all the others thus combine to defend him. Now that is an illustration of what a society really should be formed for — only to do for each of its members what the individuals cannot possibly do for themselves. Otherwise there is absolute independence. No man is obliged to give his time or his work to the society at home; there is no literary labour attempted; all the legal work is done by persons hired by the society. I think that a society of that kind formed with the general object of protecting the interests of Japanese authors, and therefore of protecting the growth of future Japanese literature, would be of great

service. But otherwise I can imagine no value to university graduates in a literary society of any sort, containing more than three members.

CHAPTER XI

TOLSTOY'S THEORY OF ART

LAST year I gave a short lecture in regard to a new theory of art, suggesting that the highest form of any kind of art ought to have the effect of exciting a noble enthusiasm and a sincere desire of self-sacrifice. I compared the ideal effect of such an art with the emotional effect of first love upon a generous mind, observing that the real influence of a generous passion is intensely moral, that it creates a desire to sacrifice self. But at that time I had not read Tolstoy's famous essay upon the very same subject. That essay reinforces a great many truths that I have tried to dwell upon in other lectures; and no book of the present time has excited so much furious discussion. So I think that it is quite important enough to talk about to-day. As university students it is necessary that you should be fully acquainted with what is going on in the literary world; and the appearance of Tolstoy's book (it first appeared only in the form of magazine essays) is a very great literary event. It is entitled in the French version, "*Qu'est ce que l'Art?*"

Before going any further, I must warn you not to allow yourselves to be prejudiced against the theory by anything in the way of criticism made upon it. One of the most important things for a literary student to learn is not to allow his judgment to be formed by other people's opinions. I have to lecture to you hoping that you will keep to this rule even in regard to my own opinion. Do not think that something is good or bad, merely because I say so, but try to find out for yourself by unprejudiced reading and thinking whether I am right or wrong. In the case of Tolstoy, the criticisms have been so fierce and in some respects so

well founded, that even I hesitated for a moment to buy the book. But I suspected very soon that any book capable of making half the world angry on the subject of art must be a book of great power. Indeed, it is rather a good sign that a man is worth something, when thousands of people abuse him simply for his opinions. And now, having read the book, I find that I was quite right in my reflections. It is a very great book, but you must be prepared for startling errors in it, extraordinary misjudgments, things that really deserve harsh criticism. Many great thinkers are as weak in some one direction as they happen to be strong in another. Ruskin, who could not really understand Greek art, and who resembled Tolstoy in many ways, was a man of this kind, inclined to abuse what he did not understand, Japanese art not less than Greek art. About Greek art one of his judgments clearly proves the limitation of his faculty. He said that the Venus de Medici was a very uninteresting little person. Tolstoy has said more extraordinary things than that; he has no liking for Shakespeare, for Dante, for other men whose fame has been established for centuries. He denies at once whole schools of literature, whole schools of painting and whole schools of music. If the wrong things which he has said were picked out of his book and printed on a page all by themselves (this has been done by some critics), you would think after reading that page that Tolstoy had become suddenly insane. But you must not mind these blemishes. Certain giants must never be judged by their errors, but only by their strength, and in spite of all faults the book is a book which will make anybody think in a new and generous way. Moreover, it is utterly sincere and unselfish—the author denouncing even his own work, the wonderful books of his youth, which won for him the very highest place among modern novelists. These, he now tells us, are not works of art.

There is a qualification to be made in regard to all this. Tolstoy does not deny that most art that he condemns is art in a narrow sense; he means that it is not good art, not the

best, and therefore ought not to be praised. This being understood, I can better begin to explain his doctrine.

The first position which he takes is about as follows: A great deal of what has been called great art cannot be understood except by educated people. You must be educated and refined in a considerable degree, in order to understand the beauty of a Greek gem or statue, an elaborate piece of music, or a supreme piece of modern poetry. You must be trained to understand the beauty of what modern society calls beautiful. Take a peasant from the people, and show to him a great painting, or repeat to him a great poem, or make him listen to a grand piece of harmonized music; and then ask him what he thinks of these things. As a sincere man, he will tell you that he prefers to look at the picture in his village church, to hear the songs of beggar-minstrels, or to listen to a piece of dance music. This is unquestionable fact; nobody can deny it.

But the substance of a nation in any country, the mass of its humanity, is not cultured, is not rich, is not refined; it consists of peasants and workers, not of fine ladies and gentlemen. The cultivated class must always be small; the majority of a nation must always remain workers. And according to the common acceptation and practice of art, art is something which only the highly educated and wealthy can be made to understand and to enjoy. Therefore art is something with which nine-tenths at least, of the human race, can have nothing to do!

Yet what of the alleged inferiority of the masses? Are they really inferior beings, are they unsusceptible to the highest and best emotions? What are these highest and best emotions that artists talk so much about? Are they not loyalty, love, duty, resignation, patience, courage—everything that means the strength of the race and the goodness of it? Has the peasant no loyalty, no love, no courage, no patience, no patriotism? Or, rather is it not the peasant who is most willing to give his life for his emperor and his country, to sacrifice himself for the sake

of others, to do in time of danger the greatest deeds of heroism, to sacrifice himself in time of peace for the sake of others; to obey under all circumstances? Is it not the peasant really who loves most? Who is the best of husbands and fathers? Who, in all that makes religion worth having, is the most devout of believers? Tell the real truth, and acknowledge that the peasant is morally a better man than the average of the noble and wealthy. He is emotionally better, and he is better in the strength of his character. Where do we find what is called human goodness? Where are we to go to look for everyday examples of every virtue? Is it around the wealthy people of cities, or is it among the people of the country, the people who cannot understand art? There is only one answer to this question, and it is the same answer that Ruskin made a long time ago. The poor are as a whole the best people. If you want to look for holiness in the sense of human goodness, you must look for it among the poor. Everything noble in the emotional life is there. The evil devices and follies of a few do not signify; the great mass of the people are good.

Well, the great mass of the people have nothing to do with art, though they are good. But what is art? It is the power to convey emotion by means of words, music, colour or form; it is the means of making people feel truth and beauty through their senses. And the common people cannot understand art! Then must we suppose that they have no sense of truth and beauty? Have we not already been obliged to recognize that the best of human emotion belongs to them? And if the mass of the people really possess every noble emotion, and if our so-called art cannot touch their hearts and their minds, where is the fault? It cannot be in the people; it must be in the art.

This leads to another question—is it really true that what we have been calling great art appeals to the best emotions of mankind? It cannot be true, Tolstoy boldly answers. If it were true, then the people would be touched

by it. They are not touched by it; they do not understand it; they do not like it. That is proof positive that it does not appeal to noble emotions. Then what does it appeal to? At this point of the essay Tolstoy's criticism is most telling and most terrible, though weakened by occasional mistakes. What we have been calling art, he says, appeals to sensualism and lust; but the peasant is chaste. He does not care for pictures of naked women, nor statues of nudity in any form; neither does he care for stories or poems suggesting sensuality. Sensualism is really weakness; the perfectly strong man cannot be a sensualist—his life is too normal and too natural; if you like, he is too good an animal to be unchaste. Most animals are chaste. But Western art, Greek art, Italian art, French art, has been through all these centuries unchaste, appealing only to the sex-instincts of the beholder. There are exceptions, no doubt, but in this way of considering the meaning of art we must consider the dominant tone. I am afraid that Tolstoy is quite right about that. I do not think that any one can controvert him.

Next, let us take literature. The peasant cannot understand fine literature; it makes no appeal to him. He has a very simple literature of his own, full of beauty—touching songs and touching stories about human virtue, and our best critics acknowledge that any poet can obtain the best and truest inspiration from the literature of despised peasants. You cannot say that the peasant is incapable of feeling literary emotions—on the contrary, he can give it, he can teach it; in England he taught it to every English poet since the time of Walter Scott, and to many before that time. The very greatest of Scotch singers was a poor farmer. So we must acknowledge that a peasant is no stranger to the highest form of literary emotion. But our fine literature, our literature of educated men, cannot interest him at all. Therefore, the fault must be in the art, not in the peasant. So let us consider what is the nature of those noble emotions which our highest literary art is supposed to express and to teach.

Here again we have Tolstoy's terrible criticism. Our greatest plays are plays on the subject of crime, murder, lust, adultery, treachery, everything horrible in human nature. Our novels, for the great majority, are stories of social life written with a view to keeping the sexual feelings of the reader slightly excited. Our poems have been for hundreds of years, a great majority of them, about sexual love, or about a foolish passion of some kind. I am only expressing Tolstoy's view very briefly; it would surprise you to discover how he masses great names together in this condemnation, and how very right he seems to me to be in spite of it; and then he tells us, "You never can appeal to the honest mass of people, you never can touch their hearts, with stories of lust and crime and luxury. They are too good to find pleasure in such things."

I will not dwell upon his arraignment of modern music and other branches of art, because the above illustrations are strong enough. His conclusion is this: "If art be the means of expressing and conveying emotion, then the noblest art must be that which expresses and conveys the noblest form of emotion. Now the noblest emotions are emotions shared by all men; and true art should be able to appeal to all men, not to a class only. The proof that modern art is not great art, the proof that it is even bad art, is that the common people cannot understand it."

We now come face to face with two serious objections.

First, you may say that the reason common people cannot understand great art is simply this, that they are stupid and ignorant. How can they comprehend a great work of literature when they cannot understand the language of literature? They can read only very simple things; to read a great poem or a great work of fiction requires a knowledge of the language of the educated. Common people, not being educated, of course cannot understand.

Very bravely does Tolstoy face this objection. He answers that the so-called language of the educated ought not to be used in a great work of art. A great work ought

to be written in the language of the people, which is really the language of the country and of the nation, whereas the language of the educated is a special artificial thing, like the language of medicine, the language of botany, or the language of any special science. And he tells us that he thinks it selfish and wicked and unreasonable to make literature inaccessible to the people by writing it in a special idiom which the people cannot understand. Moreover, he says that the greatest books of the world have never been written in a special literary language, but in the common language of the common people. To illustrate this he quotes the great religious books and great religious poems, the Bible and the books of Buddhism which, in the time of their composition, must have been produced in the living tongue, not in a special language. What reason can possibly be offered except a reason of prejudice for making literature incomprehensible to the masses? It is no use to say that with common language you cannot express the same ideas which you are in the habit of expressing through literary language. If you think you cannot utter great thoughts in simple speech, that is because of bad training, bad habits, false education. The greatest thoughts and the deepest ever uttered, have been written in religious books and in the language of the people. In short, Tolstoy's position is that the whole system of literary education is wrong from top to bottom. And this statement is worth thinking about.

Let me give you a quotation, showing his views about the incomprehensibility of art :

“To say that a work of art is good, and that it is nevertheless incomprehensible to the majority of men, is just as if one were to say of a certain kind of food that it is good, but that the majority of mankind ought to be careful not to eat it. The majority of men, doubtless, may not like to eat rotten cheese or what is called in England ‘high’ game—that is, the flesh of game which has been allowed to become a little putrid—meat much esteemed by men of perverted taste ; but bread and fruits are only good when they

please the taste of the majority of mankind. And in the case of art it is just the same thing. Perverted art cannot please the majority of mankind; but good art should of necessity be something capable of pleasing everybody."

Now let me give you an interesting quotation which illustrates the degree to which what is now called great art seems unnatural to common people :

"Among people who have not yet become perverted by the false theories of our modern society, among artisans and among children, for example, nature has created a very clear idea of what deserves to be blamed or to be praised. According to the instincts of the common people and of children, praise rightly belongs only to great physical force"—as in the case of Hercules, of heroes, of conquerors—"or else to moral force"—as in the case of Sakya-Muni, renouncing beauty and power for the sake of saving man, or the case of Christ dying upon the Cross for our benefit, or as in the case of the saints and the martyrs. These ideas are ideas of the most perfect kind. Simple and frankly honest souls understand very well that it is impossible not to respect physical force, because physical force is a thing that of itself compels respect; and they also cannot help equally respecting moral force—the moral strength of the man who works for the sake of good; they feel themselves attracted toward the beauty of moral force by their whole inner nature. "These simple minds perceive that there actually exist in this world men who are more respected than the men respected for physical or moral force—they perceive that there are men more respected, more admired, and better rewarded than all the heroes of strength or of moral good, and this merely because they know how to sing, how to dance, or how to write poems. A peasant can understand that Alexander the Great or Genghis Khan or Napoleon were really great men; he understands that because he knows that any one of them would have been able to annihilate him and thousands of his followers. He can also understand that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ were great men,

because he feels and knows that he himself and all other men ought to try to be like them. But how is it that a man can be called great merely for having written poems about the love of woman? That is a thing which, by no manner of means, could he ever be made to understand."

Elsewhere he gives a still more amusing illustration. The common people, he says, are accustomed to look at statues of divinities, angels, saints, gods, or heroes. They understand quite well the reason for such images. But when they hear that a statue has been set up to honour a man like Baudelaire, who wrote poems of lust or despair, or when they hear of a statue set up in memory of a man who knew how to play the fiddle, that appears to them utterly monstrous. And perhaps it is.

I have thought of a second strong objection to Tolstoy's position, an objection which he himself has not dwelt on—a philosophical objection. It is customary now-a-days to consider superior intelligence as connected with a superior nervous system. Many persons, I am sure, would be ready to say that the common people cannot understand high art, because of the inferiority of their nervous system. Compared with educated and wealthy people, they are supposed to be dull, therefore incapable of feeling beauty. They live, in Europe at least, among miserable conditions of dirt and bad smells. How could they appreciate the delicate fine art of civilization? I say that many persons would argue in this way, but no clear thinker would do so. As a matter of fact, in modern Europe the best thinkers, the best artists, the best scholars, really come from the peasant class. Some farmers have been able with the greatest difficulty to give their children a better education than the average. Even in the great English universities some of the highest honours have been taken by men of this kind, proving as Spencer said long ago that the foundation of a strong mind is a strong body. I know what Tolstoy would say about the aesthetic refinement of the nervous system. He would simply say that what is called exquisite nervous sensibility

is nothing more than hyper-aesthesia—that is, a diseased condition of the nerves. But leaving this matter aside, let me seriously ask a question. Is a common peasant of the poorest class really insensible to beauty? Or what kind of beauty shall we take for a test? The European standard of art holds the perception of human beauty to be the highest test-mark of aesthetic ability. Is the common man, the most common and ignorant man of the people, insensible to human beauty? Is he less capable, for example, of judging the beauty of woman than the most accomplished of artists? Now I do not know what you will think of my statement; but I do not hesitate for a moment to say that the best judge of beauty in the world is the common man of the people. I do not mean that every man of that class is better than others; but I mean that the quickest and best judges of either a man or a woman are the very same persons who are the quickest and best judges of a horse or a cow.

For after all, what we call beauty or grace in the best and deepest sense, represents physical force, with which the peasant is much better acquainted than we are. He is accustomed to observing life, and he does it instinctively. Beauty means a certain proportion in the skeleton which gives the best results of strength and of easy motion in the animal or the man. Suppose again that we consider the body apart from beauty; what does it mean? It means the economy of force; that is, a body should be so made that the greatest possible amount of strength and activity is obtained with the least possible amount of substance. To say that a man accustomed to judge an animal cannot judge a human being is utter nonsense. Such a man, in fact, is the best of all judges, and seldom makes a mistake. Now history of course has curious instances of the recognition of this fact by great princes. In the time of the greatest luxury of the Caliphs of Bagdad, when the Prince wished to find a perfectly beautiful woman to be his companion, he did not invariably go to the governors of provinces or to the houses

of the nobility in search of such a woman. He went to the wild Arabs of the desert, to the breeders of horses, and asked them to find the girl for him. A memorable example is that of Abdul Malik, the fifth Caliph of the house of Ommayad; he asked a common horse trader how to choose a beautiful woman, and the man at once answered him, "You must choose a woman whose feet are of such a form, etc."—naming and describing every part of the body and its best points exactly as a horse-trader would describe the best points of a horse. The Caliph was astonished to discover that this rude man knew incomparably more about womanly beauty than all his courtiers and his artists. The fact is that familiarity with life, with active life, gives the best of all knowledge in the matter of beauty and strength. Once in America I had a curious illustration of what such familiarity can accomplish in another way. At a certain meeting of men from many parts of the country, there came into the assembly a common man of the poorest class who could tell the exact weight of any one in the assembly. You must remember that every man was fully dressed. All agreed to pay him something for proof of his skill, for it is very difficult to tell the weight and strength of a man in Western clothes. Well, the man took a little box, put it on the ground, and asked each person present to step over it. As each person stepped, he cried out the weight; and the weight was almost exactly as announced in every case. Afterwards I asked him how he did this extraordinary thing. He answered, "When you lift your leg to step over the box, I can see the size and line of the front muscle of the thigh, and from that I can tell any man's weight." There is a good example of what natural observation means.

But to return, in conclusion, to the subject of this essay. I think it will give you something to think about; and certainly it confirms the truth of one thing which I have often asserted, that the sooner Japanese authors will resign themselves to write in the spoken language of the people, the better for Japanese literature and for the general dis-

semination of modern knowledge. I think this book is a very great and noble book; I also think that it is fundamentally true from beginning to end. There are mistakes in it—as, for instance, when Tolstoy speaks of Kipling as an essentially obscure writer, incomprehensible to the people. But Kipling happens to be just the man who speaks to the people. He uses their vernacular. Such little mistakes, due to an imperfect knowledge of a foreign people, do not in the least affect the value of the moral in this teaching. But the reforms advised are at present, of course, impossible. Although I believe Tolstoy is perfectly right, I could not lecture to you—I could not fulfil my duties in this university—by strictly observing his principles. Were I to do that, I should be obliged to tell you that hundreds of books famous in English literature are essentially bad books, and that you ought not to read them at all; whereas I am engaged for the purpose of pointing out to you the literary merits of those very books.

CHAPTER XII

THE HÁVA-MÁL

OLD NORTHERN ETHICS OF LIFE

Then from his lips in music rolled
The Havamal of Odin old,
With sounds mysterious as the roar
Of billows on a distant shore.

(The Saga of King Olaf. VI.)

PERHAPS many of you who read this little verse in Longfellow's "Saga of King Olaf" have wished to know what was this wonderful song that the ghost of the god sang to the king. I am afraid that you would be very disappointed in some respects by the "Havamal." There is indeed a magical song in it; and it is this magical song especially that Longfellow refers to, a song of charms. But most of the "Havamal" is a collection of ethical teaching. All that has been preserved by it has been published and translated by Professors Vigfusson and Powell. It is very old—perhaps the oldest northern literature that we have. I am going to attempt a short lecture upon it, because it is very closely related to the subject of northern character, and will help us, perhaps better than almost anything else, to understand how the ancestors of the English felt and thought before they became Christians. Nor is this all. I venture to say that the character of the modern English people still retains much more of the quality indicated by the "Havamal" than of the quality implied by Christianity. The old northern gods are not dead; they rule a very great part of the world to-day.

The proverbial philosophy of a people helps us to understand more about them than any other kind of literature.

And this sort of literature is certainly among the oldest. It represents only the result of human experience in society, the wisdom that men get by contact with each other, the results of familiarity with right and wrong. By studying the proverbs of a people, you can always make a very good guess as to whether you could live comfortably among them or not.

Froude, in one of his sketches of travel in Norway, made the excellent observation that if we could suddenly go back to the time of the terrible sea-kings, if we could revisit to-day the homes of the old northern pirates, and find them exactly as they were one thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, we should find them very much like the modern Englishmen—big, simple, silent men, concealing a great deal of shrewdness under an aspect of simplicity. The teachings of the "Havamal" give great force to this supposition. The book must have been known in some form to the early English—or at least the verses composing it (it is all written in verse); and as I have already said, the morals of the old English, as well as their character, differed very little from those of the men of the still further north, with whom they mingled and intermarried freely, both before and after the Danish conquest, when for one moment England and Sweden were one kingdom.

Of course you must remember that northern society was a verry terrible thing in some ways. Every man carried his life in his hands; every farmer kept sword and spear at his side even in his own fields; and every man expected to die fighting. In fact, among the men of the more savage north—the men of Norway in especial—it was considered a great disgrace to die of sickness, to die on one's bed. That was not to die like a man. Men would go out and get themselves killed, when they felt old age or sickness coming on. But these facts must not blind us to the other fact that there was even in that society a great force of moral cohesion, and sound principles of morality. If there had not been, it could not have existed; much less could the

people who lived under it have become the masters of a great part of the world, which they are at the present day. There was, in spite of all that fierceness, much kindness and good nature among them; there were rules of conduct such as no man could find fault with—rules which still govern English society to some extent. And there was opportunity enough for social amusement, social enjoyment, and the winning of public esteem by a noble life.

Still, even in the “Havamal,” one is occasionally startled by teachings which show the darker side of northern life, a life of perpetual vendetta. As in old Japan, no man could live under the same heaven with the murderer of his brother or father; vengeance was a duty even in the case of a friend. On the subject of enemies the “Havamal” gives not a little curious advice:

A man should never step a foot beyond his weapons; for he can never tell where, on his path without, he may need his spear.

A man before he goes into a house, should look to and espy all the doorways (*so that he can find his way out quickly again*), for he can never know where foes may be sitting in another man’s house.

Does not this remind us of the Japanese proverb that everybody has three enemies outside of his own door? But the meaning of the “Havamal” teaching is much more sinister. And when the man goes into the house, he is still told to be extremely watchful—to keep his ears and eyes open so that he may not be taken by surprise:

The wary guest keeps watchful silence; he listens with his ears and peers about with his eyes; thus does every wise man look about him.

One would think that men must have had very strong nerves to take comfort under such circumstances, but the poet tells us that the man who can enjoy nothing must be both a coward and a fool. Although a man was to keep watch to protect his life, that was not a reason why he should be afraid of losing it. There were but three things

of which a man should be particularly afraid. The first was drink—because drink often caused a man to lose control of his temper; the second was another man's wife—repeatedly the reader is warned never to make love to another man's wife; and the third was thieves—men who would pretend friendship for the purpose of killing and stealing. The man who could keep constant watch over himself and his surroundings was, of course, likely to have the longest life.

Now in all countries there is a great deal of ethical teaching, and always has been, on the subject of speech. The "Havamal" is full of teaching on this subject—the necessity of silence, the danger and the folly of reckless talk. You all know the Japanese proverb that "the mouth is the front gate of all misfortune." The Norse poet puts the same truth into a grimmer shape: "The tongue works death to the head." Here are a number of sayings on this subject:

He that is never silent talks much folly; a glib tongue, unless it be bridled, will often talk a man into trouble.

Do not speak three angry words with a worse man; for often the better man falls by the worse man's sword.

Smile thou in the face of the man thou trustest not, and speak against thy mind.

This is of course a teaching of cunning; but it is the teaching, however immoral, that rules in English society to-day. In the old Norse, however, there were many reasons for avoiding a quarrel whenever possible—reasons which must have existed also in feudal Japan. A man might not care about losing his own life; but he had to be careful not to stir up a feud that might go on for a hundred years. Although there was a great deal of killing, killing always remained a serious matter, because for every killing there had to be a vengeance. It is true that the law exonerated the man who killed another, if he paid a certain blood-price; murder was not legally considered an unpardonable crime. But the family of the dead man would very seldom

be satisfied with a payment; they would want blood for blood. Accordingly men had to be very cautious about quarrelling, however brave they might personally be.

But all this caution about silence and about watchfulness did not mean that a man should be unable to speak to the purpose when speech was required. "A wise man," says the "Havamal," "should be able both to ask and to answer." There is a proverb which you know, to the effect that you cannot shut the door upon another man's mouth. So says the Norse poet: "The sons of men can keep silence about nothing that passes among men; therefore a man should be able to take his own part, prudently and strongly." Says the "Havamal": "A fool thinks he knows everything if he sits snug in his little corner; but he is at a loss for words if the people put to him a question." Elsewhere it is said: "Arch dunce is he who can speak nought, for that is the mark of a fool." And the sum of all this teaching about the tongue is that men should never speak without good reason, and then should speak to the point strongly and wisely.

On the subject of fools there is a great deal in the "Havamal"; but you must understand always by the word fool, in the northern sense, a man of weak character who knows not what to do in time of difficulty. That was a fool among those men, and a dangerous fool; for in such a state of society mistakes in act or in speech might reach to terrible consequences. See these little observations about fools:

Open handed, bold-hearted men live most happily, they never feel care; but a fool troubles himself about everything. The niggard pines for gifts.

A fool is awake all night, worrying about everything; when the morning comes he is worn out, and all his troubles are just the same as before.

A fool thinks that all who smile upon him are his friends, not knowing, when he is with wise men, who there may be plotting against him.

If a fool gets a drink, all his mind is immediately displayed.

But it was not considered right for a man not to drink, although drink was a dangerous thing. On the contrary, not to drink would have been thought a mark of cowardice and of incapacity for self-control. A man was expected even to get drunk if necessary, and to keep his tongue and his temper no matter how much he drank. The strong character would only become more cautious and more silent under the influence of drink; the weak man would immediately show his weakness. I am told the curious fact that in the English army at the present day officers are expected to act very much after the teaching of the old Norse poet; a man is expected to be able on occasion to drink a considerable amount of wine or spirits without showing the effects of it, either in his conduct or in his speech. "Drink thy share of mead; speak fair or not at all"—that was the old text, and a very sensible one in its way.

Laughter was also condemned, if indulged in without very good cause. "The miserable man whose mind is warped laughs at everything, not knowing what he ought to know, that he himself has no lack of faults." I need scarcely tell you that the English are still a very serious people, not disposed to laugh nearly so much as are the men of the more sympathetic Latin races. You will remember perhaps Lord Chesterfield's saying that since he became a man no man had ever seen him laugh. I remember about twenty years ago that there was published by some Englishman a very learned and very interesting little book, called "The Philosophy of Laughter," in which it was gravely asserted that all laughter was foolish. I must acknowledge, however, that no book ever made me laugh more than the volume in question.

The great virtue of the men of the north, according to the "Havamal," was indeed the virtue which has given to the English race its present great position among nations,—the simplest of all virtues, common sense. But common sense means much more than the words might imply to the Japanese students, or to any one unfamiliar with English

idioms. Common sense, or mother-wit, means natural intelligence, as opposed to, and independent of, cultivated or educated intelligence. It means inherited knowledge; and inherited knowledge may take even the form of genius. It means foresight. It means intuitive knowledge of other people's character. It means cunning as well as broad comprehension. And the modern Englishman, in all times and in all countries, trusts especially to this faculty, which is very largely developed in the race to which he belongs. No Englishman believes in working from book learning. He suspects all theories, philosophical or other. He suspects everything new, and dislikes it, unless he can be compelled by the force of circumstances to see that this new thing has advantages over the old. Race-experience is what he invariably depends upon, whenever he can, whether in India, in Egypt, or in Australia. His statesmen do not consult historical precedents in order to decide what to do: they first learn the facts as they are; then they depend upon their own common sense, not at all upon their university learning or upon philosophical theories. And in the case of the English nation, it must be acknowledged that this instinctive method has been eminently successful. When the "Havamal" speaks of wisdom it means mother-wit, and nothing else; indeed, there was no reading or writing to speak of in those times:

No man can carry better baggage on his journey than wisdom.
There is no better friend than great common sense.

But the wise man should not show himself to be wise without occasion. He should remember that the majority of men are not wise, and he should be careful not to show his superiority over them unnecessarily. Neither should he despise men who do not happen to be as wise as himself:

No man is so good but there is a flaw in him, nor so bad as to be good for nothing.

Middling wise should every man be; never overwise. Those who know many things rarely lead the happiest life.

Middling wise should every man be; never overwise. No man should know his fate beforehand; so shall he live freest from care.

Middling wise should every man be, never too wise. A wise man's heart is seldom glad, if its owner be a true sage.

This is the ancient wisdom also of Solomon: "He that increases wisdom increases sorrow." But how very true as worldly wisdom these little northern sentences are! That a man who knows a little of many things, and no one thing perfectly, is the happiest man—this certainly is even more true to-day than it was a thousand years ago. Spencer has well observed that the man who can influence his generation, is never the man greatly in advance of his time, but only the man who is very slightly better than his fellows. The man who is very superior is likely to be ignored or disliked. Mediocrity cannot help disliking superiority; and as the old northern sage declared, "the average of men is but moiety." Moiety does not mean necessarily mediocrity, but also that which is below mediocrity. What we call in England to-day, as Matthew Arnold called it, the Philistine element, continues to prove in our own time, to almost every superior man, the danger of being too wise.

Interesting in another way, and altogether more agreeable, are the old sayings about friendship: "Know this, if thou hast a trusty friend, go and see him often; because a road which is seldom trod gets choked with brambles and high grass."

Be not thou the first to break off from thy friend. Sorrow will eat thy heart if thou lackest the friend to open thy heart to.

Anything is better than to be false; he is no friend who only speaks to please.

Which means, of course, that a true friend is not afraid to find fault with his friend's course; indeed, that is his solemn duty. But these teachings about friendship are accompanied with many cautions; for one must be very careful in the making of friends. The ancient Greeks had a terrible proverb: "Treat your friend as if he should become

some day your enemy ; and treat your enemy as if he might some day become your friend." This proverb seems to me to indicate a certain amount of doubt in human nature. We do not find this doubt in the Norse teaching, but on the contrary, some very excellent advice. The first thing to remember is that friendship is sacred : "He that opens his heart to another mixes blood with him." Therefore one should be very careful either about forming or about breaking a friendship.

A man should be a friend to his friend's friend. But no man should be a friend of his friend's foe, nor of his foe's friend.

A man should be a friend with his friend, and pay back gift with gift ; give back laughter for laughter (to his enemies), and leasing for lies.

Give and give back makes the longest friend. Give not overmuch at one time. Gift always looks for return.

The poet also tells us how trifling gifts are quite sufficient to make friends and to keep them, if wisely given. A costly gift may seem like a bribe ; a little gift is only the sign of kindly feeling. And as a mere matter of justice, a costly gift may be unkind, for it puts the friend under an obligation which he may not be rich enough to repay. Repeatedly we are told also that too much should not be expected of friendship. The value of a friend is his affection, his sympathy ; but favours that cost must always be returned.

I never met a man so open-hearted and free with his food, but that boon was boon to him—nor so generous as not to look for return if he had a chance.

Emerson says almost precisely the same thing in his essay on friendship—showing how little human wisdom has changed in all the centuries. Here is another good bit of advice concerning visits :

It is far away to an ill friend, even though he live on one's road ; but to a good friend there is a short cut, even though he live far out.

Go on, be not a guest ever in the same house. The welcome becomes wearisome if he sits too long at another's table.

This means that we must not impose on our friends; but there is a further caution on the subject of eating at a friend's house. You must not go to your friend's house hungry, when you can help it.

A man should take his meal betimes, before he goes to his neighbour—or he will sit and seem hungered like one starving, and have no power to talk.

That is the main point to remember in dining at another's house, that you are not there only for your own pleasure, but for that of other people. You are expected to talk; and you cannot talk if you are very hungry. At this very day a gentleman makes it the rule to do the same thing. Accordingly we see that these rough men of the north must have had a good deal of social refinement—refinement not of dress or of speech, but of feeling. Still, says the poet, one's own home is the best, though it be but a cottage. "A man is a man in his own house."

Now we come to some sentences teaching caution, which are noteworthy in a certain way:

Tell one man thy secret, but not two. What three men know, all the world knows.

Never let a bad man know thy mishaps; for from a bad man thou shalt never get reward for thy sincerity.

I shall presently give you some modern examples in regard to the advice concerning bad men. Another thing to be cautious about is praise. If you have to be careful about blame, you must be very cautious also about praise.

Praise the day at even-tide; a woman at her burying; a sword when it has been tried; a maid when she is married; ice when you have crossed over it; ale, when it is drunk.

If there is anything noteworthy in English character to-day it is the exemplification of this very kind of teaching.

This is essentially northern. The last people from whom praise can be expected, even for what is worthy of all praise, are the English. A new friendship, a new ideal, a reform, a noble action, a wonderful poet, an exquisite painting—any of these things will be admired and praised by every other people in Europe long before you can get Englishmen to praise. The Englishman all this time is studying, considering, trying to find fault. Why should he try to find fault? So that he will not make any mistakes at a later day. He has inherited the terrible caution of his ancestors in regard to mistakes. It must be granted that his caution has saved him from a number of very serious mistakes that other nations have made. It must also be acknowledged that he exercises a fair amount of moderation in the opposite direction—this modern Englishman; he has learned caution of another kind, which his ancestors taught him. “Power,” says the “Havamal,” “should be used with moderation; for whoever finds himself among valiant men will discover that no man is peerless.” And this is a very important thing for the strong man to know—that however strong, he cannot be the strongest; his match will be found when occasion demands it. Not only Scandinavian but English rulers have often discovered this fact to their cost. Another matter to be very anxious about is public opinion.

Chattels die; kinsmen pass away; one dies oneself; but I know something that never dies—the name of the man, for good or bad.

Do not think that this means anything religious. It means only that the reputation of a man goes to influence the good or ill fortune of his descendants. It is something to be proud of, to be the son of a good man; it helps to success in life. On the other hand, to have had a father of ill reputation is a very serious obstacle to success of any kind in countries where the influence of heredity is strongly recognized.

I have nearly exhausted the examples of this northern wisdom which I selected for you; but there are two subjects

which remain to be considered. One is the law of conduct in regard to misfortune; and the other is the rule of conduct in regard to women. A man was expected to keep up a brave heart under any circumstances. These old Northmen seldom committed suicide; and I must tell you that all the talk about Christianity having checked the practice of suicide to some extent, cannot be fairly accepted as truth. In modern England to-day the suicides average nearly three thousand a year; but making allowance for extraordinary circumstances, it is certainly true that the northern races consider suicide in an entirely different way from what the Latin races do. There was very little suicide among the men of the north, because every man considered it his duty to get killed, not to kill himself; and to kill himself would have seemed cowardly, as implying fear of being killed by others. In modern ethical training, quite apart from religious considerations, a man is taught that suicide is only excusable in case of shame, or under such exceptional circumstances as have occurred in the history of the Indian mutiny. At all events, we have the feeling still strongly manifested in England that suicide is not quite manly; and this is certainly due much more to ancestral habits of thinking, which date back to pagan days, than to Christian doctrine. As I have said, the pagan English would not commit suicide to escape mere pain. But the northern people knew how to die to escape shame. There is an awful story in Roman history about the wives and daughters of the conquered German tribes, thousands in number, asking to be promised that their virtue should be respected, and all killing themselves when the Roman general refused the request. No southern people of Europe in that time would have shown such heroism upon such a matter. Leaving honour aside, however, the old book tells us that a man should never despair.

Fire, the sight of the sun, good health, and a blameless life,—these are the goodliest things in this world.

Yet a man is not utterly wretched, though he have bad health, or be maimed.

The halt may ride a horse; the handless may drive a herd; the deaf can fight and do well; better be blind than buried. A corpse is good for naught.

On the subject of women there is not very much in the book beyond the usual caution in regard to wicked women; but there is this little observation:

Never blame a woman for what is all man's weakness. Hues charming and fair may move the wise and not the dullard. Mighty love turns the son of men from wise to fool.

This is shrewd, and it contains a very remarkable bit of esthetic truth, that it requires a wise man to see certain kinds of beauty, which a stupid man could never be made to understand. And, leaving aside the subject of love, what very good advice it is never to laugh at a person for what can be considered a common failure. In the same way an intelligent man should learn to be patient with the unintelligent, as the same poem elsewhere insists.

Now what is the general result of this little study, the general impression that it leaves upon the mind? Certainly we feel that the life reflected in these sentences was a life in which caution was above all things necessary—caution in thought and speech and act, never ceasing, by night or day, during the whole of a man's life. Caution implies moderation. Moderation inevitably develops a certain habit of justice—a justice that might not extend outside of the race, but a justice that would be exercised between man and man of the same blood. Very much of English character and of English history is explained by the life that the "Havamal" portrays. Very much that is good; also very much that is bad—not bad in one sense, so far as the future of the race is concerned, but in a social way certainly not good. The judgment of the Englishman by all other European peoples is that he is the most suspicious, the most reserved, the most unreceptive, the most unfriendly, the coldest-hearted,

and the most domineering of all western peoples. Ask a Frenchman, an Italian, a German, a Spaniard, even an American, what he thinks about Englishmen; and every one of them will tell you the very same thing. This is precisely what the character of men would become who had lived for thousands of years in the conditions of northern society. But you would find upon the other hand that nearly all nations would speak highly of certain other English qualities — energy, courage, honour, justice (between themselves). They would say that although no man is so difficult to make friends with, the friendship of an Englishman once gained is more strong and true than any other. And as the battle of life still continues, and must continue for thousands of years to come, it must be acknowledged that the English character is especially well fitted for the struggle. Its reserves, its cautions, its doubts, its suspicions, its brutality—these have been for it in the past, and are still in the present, the best social armour and panoply of war. It is not a lovable nor an amiable character; it is not even kindly. The Englishman of the best type is much more inclined to be just than he is to be kind, for kindness is an emotional impulse, and the Englishman is on his guard against every kind of emotional impulse. But with all this, the character is a grand one, and its success has been the best proof of its value.

Now you will have observed in the reading of this ancient code of social morals that, while none of the teaching is religious, some of it is absolutely immoral from any religious standpoint. No great religion permits us to speak what is not true, and to smile in the face of an enemy while pretending to be his friend. No religion teaches that we should “pay back leasing for lies.” Neither does a religion tell us that we should expect a return for every kindness done; that we should regard friendship as being actuated by selfish motives; that we should never praise when praise seems to be deserved. In fact, when Sir Walter Scott long ago made a partial translation of the “Havamal,”

he thought himself obliged to leave out a number of sentences which seemed to him highly immoral, and to apologise for others. He thought that they would shock English readers too much.

We are not quite so squeamish to-day; and a thinker of our own time would scarcely deny that English society is very largely governed at this moment by the same kind of rules that Sir Walter Scott thought to be so bad. But here we need not condemn English society in particular. All European society has been for hundreds of years conducting itself upon very much the same principles; for the reason that human social experience has been the same in all western countries. I should say that the only difference between English society and other societies is that the hardness of character is very much greater. Let us go back even to the most Christian times of western societies in the most Christian country of Europe, and observe whether the social code was then and there so very different from the social code of the old "Havamal." Mr. Spencer observes in his "Ethics" that, so far as the conduct of life is concerned, religion is almost nothing and practice is everything. We find this wonderfully exemplified in a most remarkable book of social precepts written in the seventeenth century, in Spain, under the title of the "Oraculo Manual." It was composed by a Spanish priest, named Baltasar Gracian, who was born in the year 1601 and died in 1658; and it has been translated into nearly all languages. The best English translation, published by Macmillan, is called "The Art of Worldly Wisdom." It is even more admired to-day than in the seventeenth century; and what it teaches as to social conduct holds as good to-day of modern society as it did of society two hundred years ago. It is one of the most unpleasant and yet interesting books ever published—unpleasant because of the malicious cunning which it often displays—interesting because of the frightful perspicacity of the author. The man who wrote that book understood the hearts of men, especially the bad side. He was a gentleman

of high rank before he became a priest, and his instinctive shrewdness must have been hereditary. Religion, this man would have said, teaches the best possible morals; but the world is not governed by religion altogether, and to mix with it, we must act according to its dictates.

These dictates remind us in many ways of the cautions and the cunning of the "Havamal." The first thing enjoined upon a man both by the Norse writer and by the Spanish author is the art of silence. Probably this has been the result of social experience in all countries. "Cautious silence is the holy of holies of worldly wisdom," says Gracian. And he gives many elaborate reasons for this statement, not the least of which is the following: "If you do not declare yourself immediately, you arouse expectation, especially when the importance of your position makes you the object of general attention. Mix a little mystery with everything, and the very mystery arouses veneration." A little further on he gives us exactly the same advice as did the "Havamal" writer, in regard to being frank with enemies. "Do not," he says, "show your wounded finger, for everything will knock up against it; nor complain about it, for malice always aims where weakness can be injured. . . . Never disclose the source of mortification or of joy, if you wish the one to cease, the other to endure." About secrets the Spaniard is quite as cautious as the Norseman. He says, "Especially dangerous are secrets entrusted to friends. He that communicates his secret to another makes himself that other man's slave." But after a great many such cautions in regard to silence and secrecy, he tells us also that we must learn how to fight with the world. You remember the advice of the "Havamal" on this subject, how it condemns as a fool the man who cannot answer a reproach. The Spaniard is, however, much more malicious in his suggestions. He tells us that we must "learn to know every man's thumbscrew." I suppose you know that a thumbscrew was an instrument of torture used in old times to force confessions from criminals. This advice means nothing

less than that we should learn how to be able to hurt other men's feelings, or to flatter other men's weaknesses. "First guess every man's ruling passion, appeal to it by a word, set it in motion by temptation, and you will infallibly give checkmate to his freedom of will." The term "give checkmate" is taken from the game of chess, and must here be understood as meaning to overcome, to conquer. A kindred piece of advice is "keep a store of sarcasms, and know how to use them." Indeed he tells us that this is the point of greatest tact in human intercourse. "Struck by the slightest word of this kind, many fall away from the closest intimacy with superiors or inferiors, which intimacy could not be in the slightest shaken by a whole conspiracy of popular insinuation or private malevolence." In other words, you can more quickly destroy a man's friendship by one word of sarcasm than by any amount of intrigue. Does not this read very much like sheer wickedness? Certainly it does; but the author would have told you that you must fight the wicked with their own weapons. In the "Havamal" you will not find anything quite so openly wicked as that; but we must suppose that the Norsemen knew the secret, though they might not have put it into words. As for the social teaching, you will find it very subtly expressed even in the modern English novels of George Meredith, who, by the way, has written a poem in praise of sarcasm and ridicule. But let us now see what the Spanish author has to tell us about friendship and unselfishness.

The shrewd man knows that others when they seek him do not seek "him," but "their advantage in him and by him." That is to say, a shrewd man does not believe in disinterested friendship. This is much worse than anything in the "Havamal." And it is diabolically elaborated. What are we to say about such teaching as the following: "A wise man would rather see men needing him than thanking him. To keep them on the threshold of hope is diplomatic; to trust to their gratitude is boorish; hope has a good memory, gratitude a bad one"? There is much more of

this kind; but after the assurance that only a boorish person (that is to say, an ignorant and vulgar man) can believe in gratitude, the author's opinion of human nature needs no further elucidation. The old Norseman would have been shocked at such a statement. But he might have approved the following: "When you hear anything favourable, keep a tight rein upon your credulity; if unfavourable, give it the spur." That is to say, when you hear anything good about another man, do not be ready to believe it; but if you hear anything bad about him, believe as much of it as you can.

I notice also many other points of resemblance between the northern and the Spanish teaching in regard to caution. The "Havamal" says that you must not pick a quarrel with a worse man than yourself; "because the better man often falls by the worse man's sword." The Spanish priest gives a still shrewder reason for the same policy. "Never contend," he says, "with a man who has nothing to lose; for thereby you enter into an unequal conflict. The other enters without anxiety; having lost everything, including shame, he has no further loss to fear." I think that this is an immoral teaching, though a very prudent one; but I need scarcely tell you that it is still a principle in modern society not to contend with a man who has no reputation to lose. I think it is immoral, because it is purely selfish, and because a good man ought not to be afraid to denounce a wrong because of making enemies. Another point, however, on which the "Havamal" and the priest agree, is more commendable and interesting. "We do not think much of a man who never contradicts us; that is no sign he loves us, but rather a sign that he loves himself. Original and out-of-the-way views are signs of superior ability."

I should not like you to suppose, however, that the whole of the book from which I have been quoting is of the same character as the quotations. There is excellent advice in it; and much kindly teaching on the subject of generous acts. It is a book both good and bad, and never stupid. The

same man who tells you that friendship is seldom unselfish, also declares that life would be a desert without friends, and that there is no magic like a good turn—that is, a kind act. He teaches the importance of getting good will by honest means, although he advises us also to learn how to injure. I am sure that nobody could read the book without benefit. And I may close these quotations from it with the following paragraph, which is the very best bit of counsel that could be given to a literary student :

Be slow and sure. Quickly done can be quickly undone. To last an eternity requires an eternity of preparation. Only excellence counts. Profound intelligence is the only foundation for immortality. Worth much costs much. The precious metals are the heaviest.

But so far as the question of human conduct is concerned, the book of Gracian is no more of a religious book than is the "Havamal" of the heathen North. You would find, were such a book published to-day and brought up to the present time by any shrewd writer, that western morality has not improved in the least since the time before Christianity was established, so far as the rules of society go. Society is not, and cannot be, religious, because it is a state of continual warfare. Every person in it has to fight, and the battle is not less cruel now because it is not fought with swords. Indeed, I should think that the time when every man carried his sword in society was a time when men were quite as kindly and much more honest than they are now. The object of this little lecture was to show you that the principles of the ancient Norse are really the principles ruling English society to-day; but I think you will be able to take from it a still larger meaning. It is that not only one form of society, but all forms of society, represent the warfare of man and man. That is why thinkers, poets, philosophers, in all ages, have tried to find solitude, to keep out of the contest, to devote themselves only to the study of the beautiful and the true. But the prizes of life are not to be obtained in solitude, although the prizes of thought can only

there be won. After all, whatever we may think about the cruelty and treachery of the social world, it does great things in the end. It quickens judgment, deepens intelligence, enforces the acquisition of self-control, creates forms of mental and moral strength that cannot fail to be sometimes of vast importance to mankind. But if you should ask me whether it increases human happiness, I should certainly say "no." The "Havamal" said the same thing,—the truly wise man cannot be happy.

CHAPTER XIII

BERKELEY

SOME knowledge, however slight, of the great eighteenth century thinker, George Berkeley, ought to be of some use to the student of English literature, who is obliged to be also a student of English thought. He belongs, both by his literary qualities and his philosophical powers, to the very first place among the men of his age; and this would be a sufficient reason to make him the subject of a separate lecture. Besides, at this time, when the charge of materialism is being foolishly made by many thoughtless people against the rising generation of Japan, and the tendency of our time is said to be towards the destruction of all religion, it is especially important that every student should know the relation between Berkeley and the great oriental philosophers whom Berkeley never read. Exactly the same charges were brought against the views of this great man that have since been brought against other thinkers too profound for the ignorant to understand. Every one who does not express his assent to commonplace ideas about the nature of man and of the universe, is likely to be thought either irreligious or heretical. Berkeley had to meet this kind of opposition, and he met it after a fashion that still commands the respect of thinkers, but necessarily calls forth the ridicule of ignorant people. Even Byron, liberal as he was in other matters, proved too shallow to appreciate the greatness of Berkeley, as he showed by the jesting lines

When Bishop Berkeley said "there was no matter,"

And proved it—'t was no matter what he said.

(Don Juan, xi, i)

But on the contrary, what Berkeley said proved to be of the very greatest importance to western thought; and he must

be considered as a most valuable factor in the development of English philosophy.

Let us first say something about his life; for personally he was one of the most charming men that ever lived—who never made an enemy, and secured, not merely the friendship, but the adoration of men the most jealous and the most irritable of the time. Pope, who had so few friends, said that Berkeley possessed “every virtue under heaven.” The terrible Swift worshipped him. Addison and Steele thought him worthy of all admiration. Nor was he thus loved only in his own country, but even on the continent, where he travelled.

Berkeley was born in Ireland in 1685, and educated at the best schools there, finishing his course at the famous Trinity College of Dublin, of which he became M. A., tutor, fellow, and Professor of Greek, in addition to holding an important office in the direction of the university. Here his mind was formed, first by the study of Locke, afterwards by the study of Plato. At the university he wrote his first works. Resigning his position, and going to London, he at once became a universal favourite in the best society by reason of his amiability, his great learning, and, last, not least, his remarkable beauty; for he was one of the handsomest men of his age. We next hear of him, after a course of travel in Europe, appointed to the church dignity of Dean of Derry, a very lucrative position. Then we hear of him before the English Parliament, arguing so eloquently on the advantages of founding an ideal university in the West Indies, or at least in the Bermuda Islands, that the Parliament forgot its common sense and voted twenty thousand pounds towards the establishment of the imagined institution. Afterwards the project was wisely abandoned; if it had not been, it would have proved, like the university of Tennyson’s “Princess,” only a beautiful dream. The incident is worth mentioning simply to show how Berkeley could fascinate and charm men by his manner and by his earnestness. As for himself, he determined to go to America

in any event. Perhaps he wanted to be left alone, in order to study, and felt that America was the best place for this, because in England or Ireland society wanted him—wanted to pet him, caress him, to make him rich, to give him great positions of honour which would have allowed him no opportunity to think or to write. He went to America in 1729, to the neighbourhood of Rhode Island, where he remained for three years. Even there he interested himself in education; and he was one of the first to assist in the prosperity of the now famous Yale College. After returning to England, he hoped to obtain the quiet which he needed, and expressed his wish to live in some very retired place. King George II loved him, and sent him word that he must become a bishop whether he liked it or not, but that otherwise he might live wherever he pleased. In 1753 he died one of those painless and beautiful deaths to which we give the name of euthanasia. The whole of his life was without blame of any sort, and few men have been so universally regretted.

Now we shall turn to the subject of this man's philosophy. His great work was the destruction of materialism. Since the day of Berkeley, there has been no real materialism among thinkers. He made that impossible. He made mistakes undoubtedly; but he also made great discoveries—which may not seem discoveries to you, because Berkeley's views had been anticipated by thousands of years in India, but which were very new to Englishmen in the time when he made them.

What materialism did he destroy? Let us consider what materialism means. In the first place, it may be argued that we know the world only as matter, and that everything which we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste is matter. This can be granted, provisionally. Then it can be argued that we know nothing about mind except in its relation to matter; that we have no evidence of an immaterial man or ghost; that all phenomena can be explained by material facts. This, again, may be provisionally accepted. Granting

that we know, outside of ourselves, nothing but matter, there can be very little question as to what becomes of religious faith. For a long time in England and in France cultivated men had been content with this position. They never suspected that they were stopping short in their investigation. Eighteenth century scepticism rested upon the assumption that everything must be explained by matter and by the forces inherent in matter. But it was rather startling to be asked all of a sudden, "What is matter? What do you know about it?"

Even while a student at the university, Berkeley had perceived that if you carry out the materialistic argument to its full conclusion, materialism itself must disappear. The great strength of the materialistic argument was that men should rely for evidence of any belief upon the testimony of their senses. Nobody had then seriously questioned the value of the testimony of the senses, except Locke, about whom we shall have more to say presently. Berkeley was the first to deny boldly all the testimony of the senses, while Locke denied only a part of it; and this position of Berkeley is, in the main, very powerfully sustained by the science of our own time. To quote Huxley's words, the great discovery of Berkeley was "that the honest and rigorous following up of the argument which leads us to materialism, invariably carries us beyond it." In short Berkeley proved to the world, as Schopenhauer would say, that under every physical fact there is a metaphysical fact.

Before Berkeley, Locke had been examining the theory of sensation, and had been treating it after a fashion decidedly remarkable for the eighteenth century. A short quotation will serve to show what I mean. He says: "Flame is denominated hot and light; snow, white and cold; and manna, white and sweet, from the ideas they produce in us; which qualities are *commonly thought* to be the same in these bodies; that those ideas are in us, the one the perfect resemblance of the other as they are in a mirror; and it would by most men be judged very extravagant if one

should say otherwise. And yet he that will consider that the same fire that at one distance produces in us the sensation of warmth, does at a nearer approach produce in us the far different sensation of pain, ought to bethink himself what reason he has to say that this idea of warmth, which was produced in him by the fire, is actually in the fire; and his idea of pain which the same fire produced in him in the same way, is not in the fire. Why are whiteness and coldness in snow, and pain not, when it produces the one and the other idea in us; and can do neither but by the bulk, figure, number, and motion of its solid parts?"¹

Locke thus shows very clearly his conviction that impressions received through the senses have little or no resemblance to that which causes them. Modern science tells us the same thing,—and tells it to us much more positively than Locke does. I quote from Professor Huxley: "No similarity exists, nor indeed is conceivable, between the cause of the sensation and the sensation." But you will observe that Locke makes a distinction. He speaks of bulk, figure, and motion, as real, although pain, colour, etc., exist only in the mind. The fact is that Locke had not gone nearly so far as modern science. He went only half way. He made a distinction between what he called the primary and secondary qualities of matter. The secondary qualities according to Locke would have been colour, sound, smell, taste, warmth, cold, etc.; and these he said had no existence outside of the mind. But the primary qualities he believed to exist outside of the mind. These were extension, figure, solidity, motion, rest, and number. Now we come to the great difference between him and Berkeley. Berkeley said that even these primary qualities had no existence outside of the mind. In the sense that he meant, he is unquestionably right, so far as contemporary science is authoritative. At least we must put the fact as positively as Huxley puts it,—that the existence of what Locke called primary qualities is utterly inconceivable in the absence of a thinking mind.

1. Locke, *Human understanding*, Book II, chap. viii, §§ 14, 15.

It is, however, one thing to say that we can know nothing of ultimate reality, and another thing to say that the ultimate reality of matter does not exist. But Berkeley said it. He took the bold position that nothing exists except mind. Here science partly supports him, but not exactly in the way that he would have wished. That mind and matter are both but different phases of a single reality is as boldly stated by Herbert Spencer as it was by Berkeley, but upon other premises. Spencer will not tell you that matter has no existence. He says only that it is known to us merely as phenomenon, and that it cannot consequently be really cognizable, as to its ultimate nature, by the senses. But the difficulty which Berkeley less successfully attempted to avoid by simply denying all reality, Spencer meets by laying down what he calls the truth of "transcendental realism," — that is, of a reality in phenomena which we must believe in without being able to understand. Nevertheless it should not be supposed that even here Berkeley and Spencer are in very strong opposition, because Spencer says that "the test of reality is persistence." And as nothing phenomenal in the universe is eternally persistent, all things are unreal in the sense of being impermanent. A cloud is real; but it is transitory; and its reality is thus only a phenomenal reality. In short, we must understand Spencer's position to be that except as phenomenon the universe is unreal. We know of it only as the result of a play of forces.

Berkeley first put forth his views in an essay called "Essay towards a New Theory of Vision." This little book was written to prove the unreality of sight, to show that we see in the mind only what we imagine to be outside of the mind. The essay might have been called "On the Illusion of Sight." In a subsequent work entitled "Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" he extended this theory of illusion to the other senses — hearing, touch, taste, smell. In his third and greatest book, "Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous," he proclaimed his whole position—that nothing exists outside of the mind. All that we

imagine we perceive by the senses, we perceive really within the brain only; and we have no proof of any reality outside of ourselves in the material sense. What we call the universe exists only, in the same way, in the mind of God; and what we know or feel is only the influence of His power upon ourselves.

Being a Christian, Berkeley could not go any further than this. And even this was going rather far—because if you follow out Berkeley's reasoning to its conclusion, the result is pantheism. Again it never occurred either to Berkeley himself, or to those with whom he argued, that the same reasoning might be used to prove the non-existence of mind. Berkeley said to the materialists: "You declare that there is nothing but matter and motion; now I shall prove to you that you know nothing of matter or of motion, and that you cannot give any evidence to me that they exist." But had there been upon the other side a reasoner of equal power, that man might have answered: "Very well; but if all things exist only in the mind of God, we ourselves also are but shadows within that mind, and have no real existence."

We see at once that Berkeley could not have ventured to sustain such a position as that. He had already proclaimed the existence of souls, indivisible and immortal. This declaration was nothing more than a declaration of faith. It was not philosophy and it was in strong contradiction to his views elsewhere expressed. But no one thought of attacking him with his own weapons until a much more recent time. In our own day Spencer has torn to pieces some of his reasoning, and other scientific men have pointed out his mistakes. Nevertheless one half of his philosophy remains, and will always remain, unassailable.

To find the other half we must go to the East. Hundreds of years before Berkeley, a great Indian thinker had thought out everything that Berkeley had thought, but had also thought much more. He did not stop at the question of soul. He declared matter non-existent, and the

universe a dream; but, much more consistent than Berkeley, he declared also that the matter perceiving the dream was equally unreal.

“Strange,” exclaims Huxley, “that Gotama should have seen more deeply than the greatest of modern idealists.” He might also have said, “Strange that, without any knowledge of modern science, he should have seen quite as deeply as the greatest psychologists of the nineteenth century!”

The difference between Berkeley and the founder of the Buddhist religion was only the difference imposed upon Berkeley by his religious training. Could we imagine a meeting of the two men, and the conversation between them, we might suppose that the Indian teacher would say to the English bishop: “You have great perceptions of truth; but it is a one-sided truth. You have not yet obtained the supreme enlightenment. Matter, indeed, has no existence; but neither has what you have been imagining to be mind. The mind, which you call soul, is quite as unreal as matter. It is only a mass of sensations, volitions, ideas, as impermanent as the dew on the morning grass. All that you call soul is impermanent; and all that you call knowledge springs from some form of touch, and touch itself is an illusion. There is but one reality behind all this; but you never will be able to perceive that reality until you learn that soul ‘indivisible and immortal,’ as you call it, does not exist, and could not possibly exist. Come and be my disciple.”

One of the most astonishing texts of the Buddhist literature, that which declares that all knowledge springs from touch, has been first fully confirmed by western science within our own century. I am referring to the actual discovery that the senses — sight, hearing, taste, and smell — have all been developed from the skin. The eye, the ear, the tongue, even the brain itself have been proved to grow and evolve from an unfolding of the body’s covering. Thus, everything of sensation, and therefore of knowledge, originally sprang indeed from touch. And now if we accept, as

we must, the statement that touch itself is illusion in the meaning of Berkeley, we find that the position of the eastern teacher is incomparably stronger than that of the eighteenth century idealist. But upon one point, and that the most important ethically, the two are one. There is but a single reality, transcending all human knowledge, and human life and conduct must be regulated in a code with such perceptions as we can obtain of the only true and everlasting law. The antagonism of the two systems is really only in minor details; in the deeper thoughts of both there is absolute harmony — only it must again be pointed out that the greater mind was not the European.

And what is the latest position of modern science on the subject of human knowledge? We have really advanced no whit further than the position taken by Berkeley and by Descartes. Descartes said that we know a great deal more about mind than we do about matter; and summing up all the modern evidence in relation to the nature of things, Huxley declares that the more elementary study of sensation justifies Descartes' position, that we know more of mind than we do of body; that the immaterial world is a firmer reality than the material. Nevertheless the same writer is obliged to declare that it is merely a question of comparative ignorance, for coming to the ultimate question, we cannot conceive either of a substance of mind nor of a substance of matter; and the phenomena called by either name are essentially impermanent. All human knowledge applied to the question of ultimate reality, amounts to absolutely nothing.

Now the greatness of Berkeley's intellect is proved by the fact that he reasoned out all this when he was only a student at the university, and in an age when science was only beginning. Even if we cannot grant that his brain was equal to the magnificent Indian brain that saw further and deeper thousands of years before him, we must at least acknowledge him one of the greatest of European minds. He achieved a great deal in preparing the way for the

larger thought of future generations. Hume took up and developed and fixed for all time some of his best thought; then came the great evolutionary school with a new philosophy, and marvellously developed sciences to complete, not only what Hume had left undone, but to go back also to Berkeley, and test his reasoning, and find it among the greatest achievements of the human intellect. Again in a merely ethical way Berkeley did a great service. He prevented free thought from becoming shallow, just as much as he supported Christian beliefs. In fact more so. Naturally he wished to attack free thinking, without which there could have been no great religious progress; but he really did it a service. After him no great thinker could affect materialism in the sense that it had been affected previously. We still have the word materialism, loosely applied by uneducated people to any opinions at variance with a belief in orthodox dogma; but the materialism of the seventeenth century—the real materialism, involving a belief in matter as reality—shrivelled up and vanished from the time that Berkeley struck it. It was not a belief worth regretting, for it would have kept the human mind within very narrow limits, somewhat as winter-ice confines and checks the flowing water. The work of Berkeley was like a generous thaw, freeing the European intellect from old trammels, and hastening its progress toward the larger thought of the present time.

To literature Berkeley's service was chiefly that of aiding the cultivation of an exquisite taste. He wrote English of great simplicity and clearness, through his ambition to imitate as far as possible the beautiful strength and lucidity of Plato; and he brought into English something very much resembling the fine quality of the Greek philosopher.

CHAPTER XIV

VICTORIAN PHILOSOPHY

THE GREAT THINKERS—TOTAL TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN THOUGHT BY NEW KNOWLEDGE

ALL literature progresses by undulations—by a series of actions and reactions—not by a steady flow; and not the least interesting phases of its history are those which represent the exhaustion of an impulse. Such exhaustion is due to a variety of causes in almost every case; but the chief cause is most often that talent has made out of a subject all that it is capable of making. Thereafter comes a period of stagnation during which critics theorize a great deal about the absence of genius. We have such a period to-day. The silence is broken by scarcely two or three voices, and these are small. Mr. Gosse has a very interesting theory about the hush of all the bird voices of great range in the forest of literature. In one of his poems he even attributes the silence to overscholarship.

In these restrained and painful times
Our knowledge petrifies our rhymes.

* * * * *

If we could dare to write as ill
As some whose voices haunt us still,
Even we, perchance, might call our own
Their deep enchanting undertone.

We are too diffident and nice,
Too learned and too over-wise,
Too much afraid of faults to be
The flutes of bold sincerity.

[*Impression*]

Of course there is something in this view of the situation. Very few of our great poets, or of the great poets of any country have been great scholars; and a thorough knowledge of the best that has been done is apt to make the scholar afraid to do even what he is capable of. But I do not think that even the author of the above lines would seriously assure us that this is the cause of the present stagnation,—except in a very small degree. The explanation is simple enough. The higher literature is always, whatever the subject be, a reflection of life,—that is a reflection of the emotional and intellectual feelings and conceptions of a given period. And this means that it expresses, directly or indirectly, a certain philosophy. There can be no literature of any fine quality which is not supported either by some kind of philosophy, or by what takes the place of philosophy in certain ages,—namely religion. I think you will find in the general history of literary evolution that periods of non-production are very often coincident with the destruction or the change of a religious belief. And this is the meaning of the state of the higher literature at the close of the Victorian era. Life can no longer be reflected in the old way, because Western humanity has obtained a totally new conception of life, and has been obliged to abandon much of its older religion and all of its philosophy. No intellectual change ever occurred in the Occident of such a vast and penetrating kind as that which has occurred within the last fifty years.

Quite recent, is it not? In less than a human life time all our ideas have been changed. You of the Far East, receiving just at the best time the best knowledge of the West, do not often reflect that this knowledge is just as new in the West as it is to you. If we start from the year 1850, the middle of the century, we start too soon. In 1850 the seeds of the new knowledge were ripening; but the blossom was not thought of;—even the sprout had scarcely pierced above the soil. The great changes to which I am referring chiefly took place between the years 1860 and 1870,

—a decade so near to us that it is almost like yesterday. Before that time the great work of the great poets had been done;—the triumphs of Tennyson and Browning and Swinburne and Rossetti had all been won. The Victorian era had done its best in literature,—Carlyle, Ruskin, Froude,—all the great essayists and prose-writers had made their reputations. But the last quarter of the century is almost silent, so far as the higher literature is concerned. And the principal meaning of this silence is that all men's beliefs have been more or less affected by the most tremendous shock which the Western mind ever received. Poets cannot sing; thinkers have nothing to say in regard to emotional life;—that life is still shuddering with the great vibration of the new knowledge. Except George Meredith, of whom I spoke to you in a former lecture, no other poet seems to have opened his lips upon the subject which most agitates the mind of the age.

Perhaps some of you may be surprised at the lateness of the dates which I have just mentioned; for some of you certainly know that Darwin was born in 1809, Spencer in 1820, and Huxley in 1825,—that is they all belong by apposition to the first quarter of the century. But the work of none of these men appeared until the middle of the century; and the bulk of it appeared still later. Spencer spoke first; but chiefly through scientific reviews. The "First Principles" appeared only complete in 1862. Darwin's "Origin of Species" was printed in 1859. Huxley's powerful book "Man's Place in Nature" appeared in 1863. So you see that all this is very modern. Now between 1860 and 1870 the most important part of Spencer's philosophy,—namely "First Principles", "Psychology" and "Biology",—was issued. The best of Darwin's work and of Huxley's had been translated into many languages. Wallace had printed his works upon the geographical distribution of species; Bates had printed his all valuable essays upon "protective mimicry"; Galton had published his treatises upon heredity; Lubbock and Tylor had made their contribution to anthropology; a

new geology, a new paleontology, a new botany, and a new chemistry had been established. If I seem to be detaining you rather long on the subject of this decade, remember that I am reminding you not of a mere intellectual movement belonging to one country, but of an intellectual movement that passed over all Europe like a tidal wave during those ten years. Germany, especially, with her immense machinery of scholarship and her liberal spirit accepted the new thoughts, and developed the new ideas with a subtlety of perception and a precision of detail even surpassing that of most of the English scientists. Notice, for example, the great work of Haeckel. France followed, more reservedly, but with extraordinary results,—which have affected all departments not only of her educational system but of her matchless literature. And Italy had signalized her place in the new march of mind by researches in evolutionary psychology which have not been equalled in any other country. I need say nothing about the immense scientific progress made in America under the stimulus of the new ideas. It will be enough to remind you that the whole Western world since 1860 has practically accepted the new philosophy in all its intellectual centres, has reconstructed education to a great extent in consequence; and that a professor of philosophy recently declared, with indubitable truth, that any work of history, or science written from another standpoint than that of evolutionary philosophy is certain to be forgotten within a few years,—no matter how great the ability of the man who writes it.

Now I think that the same remark might be applied, with some qualifications, to future literature of the best class. This is the reason of the hush that has come over literature. Every great mind feels that in order to live, its product must represent the thought of the new era; but to master that thought will certainly take some time. Moreover the period of emotional confusion is not yet over. Only the young generation now growing up can hope to obtain the full intellectual benefit of the work of the century. Before

this can happen, means will have to be found for the digestion and assimilation of the prodigious mass of facts which have been accumulated. The ultimate result in literature must be something entirely new and strange, both in poetry and in prose. Perhaps you will live to see it. Let me now try to interest you in a brief account of the simpler principles of the new thought, and of their meaning in a literary relation. Probably no word is so familiar to your ears as the word "evolution"; but I doubt whether many of you know that this word, in its present signification, was invented first by Herbert Spencer. And among the hundreds of professors and the myriads of writers now busy in expounding, either scientifically or popularly, the principles of the new philosophy, its English founder alone represents for us the system in its totality, — so that we may best look to him for a full view of the changes in modern human thought.

A queer fact about the great founders of evolutionary philosophy, is that not a single one of them followed the profession for which he was intended. Spencer, who was never sent to any school, but chiefly educated at home, studied civil engineering and actually followed that profession until the age of 25; occasionally writing for the reviews, papers upon economics and other matters in which he displayed mathematical and logical abilities of an astonishing kind. His natural tendencies forced him eventually to give up engineering, and he found opportunities to exercise his best talents by becoming a writer, or rather an editor, of "The Economist". He had, luckily for the world, a small fortune which enabled him to live independently providing that his habits remained very simple. In the course of his studies of economics and of sociology the idea of a new system of philosophy first occurred to him and caused him to turn his mind in directions previously neglected, or but little explored. It was through mathematical studies of the highest order that he first perceived a cosmic fact, long recognized in Oriental philosophy but not known in any definite form

to Western science,—namely the alternate apparition and disparition of the Universe. He was the first who placed the nebular hypothesis of Laplace upon so solid a foundation of scientific knowledge that it ceased to be a theory and became, with some necessary modifications, a recognized fact. Presently there developed in his mind the conviction that the laws producing a universe of suns and worlds, the law producing life and thought, and all other laws must be, in their general relation, united as operating causes; and this was the beginning of the still greater perception that all laws may be reduced philosophically into one formula,—that formula of evolution which, as worded by Spencer, contains the story of the whole universe within the space of two or three lines. On this he resolved to devote the rest of his life to the composition of a new system of philosophy,—calculating, that according to his health and capacity, he would be able to live long enough to complete it. I like to mention this fact to you, because it represents a very rare and beautiful example of supreme self-denial. He must have known that his views would be received with so much opposition that he could never hope to gain even a fair hearing for them while he lived; and in order to do that work at all that he would have to live very simply, to remain unmarried, to withdraw from society, and to give all his time, health, and strength to the production of his system. Moreover that system signified nothing less than a co-ordination of all positive human knowledge—a synthesis of everything known into classified order. This meant, of course, more reading than any human being could accomplish in a single life time;—therefore much help would be necessary, and costly help of a high scientific order. But he never shrank from difficulties—not even when attacked by brain disease;—not even when he found that his little capital was in danger, and that he might never be able to publish the work even should he succeed in writing it. For ten or fifteen years none of his books paid the cost of publishing them; but his courage and perseverance at last

obtained their reward; and later he began to receive a fair income from the principal volumes, already published. Some day, the printed story of his troubles will read like a wonderful romance. At present, sufficient to say that after 36 years in spite of ill health and in spite of every possible obstacle, the colossal undertaking was fully completed, and the reputation of the philosopher as well as of his books, established for all time in all the countries of Europe.

It has been said that in regard to ultimate questions—the questions of Why, Whither, and Whence—the post-Darwinian generation is no wiser than the pre-Darwinian. This is true; but we see that a totally new conception of the Universe and of life has been forced upon the West since Spencer and the great group of scientific men who supported him began their work. Synthetizing all knowledge regarding the universe, Spencer represented the 19th century with the facts—

That all forms, from the atom to the Universe, are evolved and again dissolved according to one vast law,—the law of Evolution.

That the substance of all life, or at least the bases of all life, whether animal or vegetable, is one.

That the line between animal and vegetable life, long supposed to exist, cannot be established; that a line between animate and inanimate substance cannot be clearly established;—for the difference between what we call living and not-living is never a difference of *kind*, but only a difference of degree.

That the mind of man or any creature, is an evolution just as the body is, and apparently depends altogether upon the development of the nervous system,—the proof of which is that any human thought, no matter how lofty or how complex, can be reduced by psychological analysis into elements of simple sensation.

That sensation itself, nevertheless, remains and must always remain utterly incomprehensible.

That Matter, Motion, Space, and Time are also utterly incomprehensible.

That finally, so far as the present knowledge permits us to judge, Matter and Force, Substance and Mind, are but different modes or manifestations of one eternal and unchangeable reality. Reality is estimated by permanence; but according to this estimation we find that nothing in the universe, nor even the universe itself, is permanent. Thus although there is a relative Realism about phenomena, we must consider all forms as passing manifestations of some power which man will never be able to understand anything about so long as he remains in the condition of man.

I have given you here only a few general truths out of a multitude, just to show you how great the change that such convictions must produce in the minds of men accustomed to believe in old forms of dogma, religious dogma. You must have observed that these scientific opinions represent a kind of Monism,—that is the doctrine of all things being one. The difference between this and other kinds of Monism is partly that it is based entirely upon scientific facts, and partly that what are called mysteries in purely religious philosophy are here to a great extent replaced by scientific processes and laws. To come to this point at which I have been wishing to arrive, I shall say now that Spencer's exposition of his philosophy in the first volume of the series, offers a remarkable analogy with a profound philosophy of the East which Spencer probably had never studied at the time of writing that book. Monism, in some of its forms, is not regarded with disfavour by the best religious thinkers of the West; and the synthetic philosophy was at first well received even by cultivated believers. Since that time the principles of this philosophy, almost as we find them in Spencer's first volume, have become part of the conviction of the educated classes in every part of Europe; but in subsequent volumes the system excited much displeasure and opposition. The work on Biology, which revolutionized the science of medicine was gracefully accepted; but with the

greatest of all the works, the Psychology is still the subject of bitter controversy in intellectual circles. There were two points upon which this discussion began. I need scarcely say the first was the practical denial of the existence of an individual soul—I say, “practical denial” because the system absolutely allows no room for a soul theory. But even psychologists willing to accept this part of the new teaching, revolted at theories of a still more Oriental kind than anything to be found in the Monism of the “First Principles”. Spencer boldly stated that many of the enigmas of sensation and thought had nothing to do with the present life of the person experiencing the sensation or the thought;—the riddles were to be read only in the light of heredity. Instinct and intuition were not of the individual except as inheritances from past lives. Instinct was actually memory of past lives—composite memory, or as Spencer more scientifically calls it “organic memory”. This theory, the most interesting of all of Spencer’s theories, and wonderfully supported by the researches of Galton and others, brings the system of the “synthetic philosophy” into line with Oriental philosophy at almost every important point. Yet the system was reached, I need hardly say, through independent researches and through convictions entirely based upon scientific facts. Up to the present Spencer’s theories in “Psychology” have received powerful support, often partial only, but also always sympathetic, from such eminent men as Bain, Sully, Galton, and a few other Englishmen of science; but there is a powerful force opposed to these. In France his best expositor has been Ribot; but perhaps the most enthusiastic of his advocates has been the German G. M. Schneider. I may conclude by saying that with the exception of part of the “Psychology”, and that portion of the “Sociology” dealing with religious questions, the philosophy of Spencer has been generally accepted as the ultimate philosophy.

Of course it is not my province to give you lectures on philosophy, but only lectures on literature; and I shall make

therefore only such remarks about the new philosophy as will serve to show its relation to literature. Already you will understand that this new philosophy must have given to all creative literature a very powerful shock, because it brought into Western society a completely new conception of life—life being the natural subject of literature. But in saying that the philosopher as well as the philosophy has affected literature, I do not mean to say that Spencer established any new form of style. His own style is, indeed, as perfect as severe English can be—no man in the critical world has ever been able to find fault with him. It is a style of strong simplicity, without any ornament whatever, and it seldom rises to the level of rhetorical beauty, as it happens to do in the closing pages of the first volume of the “Psychology”. It is also enormously condensed. There is more thought in one page of Spencer than there is in twenty-five pages of Hartmann or Schopenhauer; but this makes Spencer extremely hard reading. Those who complain of his style are only those who cannot follow his thought. The style is very easy; but the thought is very difficult, and no author requires to be read so slowly. It is not, therefore, by any individual style that Spencer’s writings have affected English literature. He has affected it in quite another way. He has given new meanings and new values to thousands of words, which will probably continue hereafter to be used only in the special senses which he first attached to them. No man who reads Spencer with the ideas of the 18th century can understand him at all without long preparation. The expansion of scientific knowledge has resulted in very much more than giving us hosts of new words; it has also changed the meanings of multitudes of old words. Any person who studies Spencer even enough to master one of the volumes must always therefore be influenced by that study;—unconsciously every serious page that he writes thereafter will show this influence. The English press, and even still more perhaps the American press, has been strongly influenced by Spencerian literature. As a matter of fact

there are very few sincere students of Spencer in America; but almost every young man of education, who is able to write about political economy or sociological matters, reads just enough of Spencer on those subjects to strengthen his own vocabulary, and the result is perceptible in the reading of newspapers and magazines.

The influence of Huxley has also been considerable, — but in quite another way. He is, next to Spencer, the most interesting figure of the great Three. Like Spencer he adopted a profession for which he was never intended; but he did not have the other man's advantages in the form of a small income. He began life quite penniless. His own inclination had impelled him to become what Spencer became — a civil engineer; — the fact is interesting because showing in both men a special development of the same faculties. But he found that his means would not allow him to adopt that profession. He therefore studied medicine instead, and graduated at quite an early age, without having received anything of what could be called "higher education". It is one thing to become a doctor by diploma, and quite another thing to become a doctor by practice and opportunity. The most gifted of young doctors might easily starve to death in London if without influence or money. Huxley felt that he could never sit down in a doctor's office and wait for patients to come to him. He could not afford it. The same difficulty would have faced him even in the country towns. The profession was over-crowded. So he went very sensibly to the Naval Office and requested employment as a surgeon on some of Her Majesty's ships. He was fortunate enough to obtain it; and at a later day he was sent out with a vessel on a scientific expedition. In other words he enjoyed the same opportunity that was given to Darwin. During the voyage he studied hard, and made an extraordinary number of observations and investigations in natural history; occasionally writing and sending home papers to different scientific journals. When he came back after three years' absence, he found that some of his work had been printed,

and had greatly interested scientific men. Then he took the very bold step of resigning from the Navy, and seeking employment in London. Almost contrary to his expectations he was successful, but in quite another way from that which he had imagined possible. He was offered a professorship of paleontology,—a subject to which he had not given special attention, and did not feel himself quite justified in attempting to teach. All his knowledge of paleontology was a knowledge obtained by personal observation only—and he did not then know that observation is the best of all teachers. But he had no time to hesitate. Such an opportunity might never again come to him. He accepted the chair, filled it with extraordinary success, and thus began the most brilliant scientific career of any Englishman of the nineteenth or indeed of any preceding century. For, remember that it was a career of almost purely practical science. The young doctor was destined to become perhaps the greatest paleontologist of his time, certainly the greatest authority upon the whole great range of natural history and comparative anatomy, also an authority upon physical geography and physical science in a great number of difficult branches, lecturer at numbers of Universities, a recipient of University degrees, although he had never been a University graduate, President of the British Association, and socially a person of immense influence as well as high distinction. Probably, among men of science, no career has ever been more successful than his. Although he often said that he had no time to make money and never even tried to make money, yet he died worth £95,000—all of its money that came to him almost without effort. His efforts, his real efforts, were all in the direction of science, of education, of political and social reform. Although he spent many years of his life in opposing theology, and in denouncing Christian superstitions, yet he was buried with all honour in Westminster Abbey; for even his clerical enemies admired his sincerity, and recognized his greatness. Although he never professed to be either a man of letters

or a critic, no living Englishman had greater influence in literary criticism when he chose to make it. Probably he would have been great in any profession which he might have adopted. Nobody fifteen years ago could even have imagined this terribly practical man of science a poet;—yet, when Tennyson died, it was Huxley who was commissioned to write the commemorative poem; and he wrote a grand one. His own epitaph is very interesting;—for it shows how vast a change had come over religious thought to permit of such an epitaph even above the tomb of Huxley:—

And if there be no meeting past the grave,
If all is darkness, silence, yet 't is rest.
Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
For God still giveth His beloved sleep.
And if eternal sleep He wills,—so best!*

Huxley was greater than Darwin—greater by knowledge, by power and quickness of intellect and by a gigantic capacity for synthesis, second only to that of Spencer. It was he who forced the Darwinian theory, through all opposition, into general acceptance, notwithstanding the warnings of his friends that he would ruin himself. No man was ever less afraid of public opinion; and the result of his courage was invariably success. Undoubtedly a weaker man would have been ruined; but there was something about Huxley that fascinated even the Bishops and Cardinals whom he put to rout, and compelled them to shake hands with him after the argument. Even in opposing *popular* movements—which is always much more dangerous to do than it is to oppose opinions held only by the cultivated, Huxley never hurt himself. For example, when that fanatical movement called the Salvation Army was at its height in England, Huxley, almost alone, had the courage to denounce the whole undertaking through the columns of *The Times*, with the result of turning away from the coffer of this

* This epitaph was composed by Mrs. Huxley.

society a very large amount of charitable money. Even at the time of his death he was engaged upon a controversy.

Naturally the controversies do not represent that part of Huxley's work which is likely to be of enduring interest. It is worthy of study chiefly as illustrative of a perfect mastery of logic and of the writer's immense range of knowledge. He had read and thoroughly grasped, in the originals, not only the old classic philosophers, but also the fathers of the church, and often proved himself to know the latter much better than the best of his theological antagonists. But we should be more interested in his scientific essays, and in those of philosophical papers which were not provoked by controversy—such as the wonderful "Evolution and Ethics", in which he gives us a condensed statement of all important forms of religious theory in their relation to scientific knowledge. As a philosopher he has had an immense influence. He revived the study of Hume and Berkeley, by placing the truths which those great thinkers enunciated upon a strong scientific foundation, and by eliminating their errors. It was Huxley also who first called attention, in a scientific way, to the possible value of Buddhist philosophy. And, generally speaking, no man has given to students more admirable advice about the methods and the values of philosophical study. This was one of the greatest benefits which he conferred upon young thinkers, in the course of his many lectures on the subject of education.

As for his own philosophy, I think that we must consider him rather as a great teacher and expounder, than as the founder or father of a system. But we may say something about his philosophical position. It was he who gave to the word "agnostic" that meaning which made it so famous in our own days—although it is a word likely to go out of fashion very soon, because there has been too much of what is called "ism" attached to it. When Huxley first used it, it was new, and then very useful. Huxley really elevated doubt into a kind of religion. Nearly all religions

teach faith—teach what we must believe without proof. Huxley's teaching was exactly opposite of this. He declared that it was the highest duty of every honest man to doubt everything which could not be proved. In his delightful autobiography, referring to his own Christian name of Thomas, he says that he never could understand how it was that his parents had bestowed upon him the name of that particular apostle "with whom he had always felt most sympathy". You know that Saint Thomas, the Apostle, is so famous for doubting, that he is always spoken of as "the doubting apostle". Nevertheless Huxley's doubts were of a profoundly religious kind. Science had compelled him to lose faith in dogma, but it had rather deepened and widened his religious feeling than diminished it. Dogmas seem to him worthless only because they were not true, and because the reality of the mystery of the Universe was infinitely more worthy of reverence than anything which dogma had ever dreamed of. No man was ever more severe upon shallow scepticism—that form of unbelief which is too ignorant to give a reason for its unbelief. And no man was less a materialist; for even Spencer has not shown the incomprehensibility of matter in so startling and powerful way as Huxley has done. Neither a spiritualist nor a materialist—refusing to affirm and refusing to deny without knowledge,—Huxley has nevertheless bequeathed us something to think about in that famous sentence where he says that nobody who "has stood alone with his dead before the abyss of the Eternal" could utter, in regard to ultimate things, a merely negative criticism.

The literary influence of Huxley is quite peculiar. In the first place we have a wonderful style to deal with—a style incomparably simple and strong even when dealing with the most abstruse and the most scientific propositions. It has been long the admiration of English writers; yet Huxley never really developed it. He had no time to rewrite, to correct, to finish and polish his work;—he threw it out raw, yet raw as it is, it is wonderful. Knowing his

history, his lack of literary training, his frightfully busy life, —his amazed friends naturally inquired of him, “Where did you get that style?” He answered frankly, “From *The Leviathan* of Hobbes”. And, in fact Huxley’s style has many points in common with the admirable style of the great philosopher of the 17th century. Of course Hobbes could not have expressed the thoughts of Huxley with the language of the Restoration; but in matters of simple logic Hobbes was the only English writer who could be called Huxley’s rival. Otherwise, remember that Hobbes was a very small mind compared to Huxley; —Hobbes had no mathematical capacity whatever, made atrocious blunders when he attempted to meddle with mathematics, and never could have been a very great man of science. But he was, for his time, a very strong thinker, and a matchless writer; and Huxley showed excellent literary judgment in his perception of the literary value attaching to Hobbes.

In the second place, Huxley showed the world how valuable a simple colloquial form of expression may be for the teaching of the most difficult and complicated subjects. He used the technical style only when addressing experts or writing on some specialism for a purely scientific publication. But when he spoke to his pupils, or to the public—either as a lecturer or as an essayist—he made his language as simple as possible. He often talks to the reader just as familiarly as you would do in the course of an intimate conversation; and much of the charm of his style is given by this encouraging familiarity. He could hold an audience breathlessly interested; but he talked to them as plainly as he would have talked to his own children. No great man of science had successfully done this before; but Huxley did it even when preparing his famous manuals for students. No books are more simply written than his manual of physiology and his manual of physiography—even fairy-tales are not more familiar in their style than some of the best pages of those two books—yet they remain the best of their kind in the language. Take even those deeper essays on “The

Metaphysics of Sensations”, and “Sensations and Sensory Organs”,—the style of them strikes you as being that of a man talking to you, not of a man writing.

I should say therefore that Huxley has a very important relation to Victorian literature, not only by his style but even still more by his method. Future men of science must learn to imitate his example, and to convey their instruction in the simplest language possible. The old-fashioned method of writing books for students in so technical a manner that the reader must look at a dictionary every few minutes, is now practically dead; and it was Huxley who killed it.

We have not yet spoken about Darwin. I have put him last of the trio, simply because this lecture is upon literature, and Darwin’s influence upon literature has been altogether indirect. He did very much to affect modern thought; but, unlike Spencer or Huxley, we could not call him a very great writer. If not very great, he was nevertheless very good;—his “Voyage of the Beagle” remains, with the sole exception of Humboldt’s “Travels”, the best simple volume of travels ever written. Nevertheless he cannot be said to have developed anything very peculiar or even noble in literary composition. There are other relations in which we must consider him. Like Spencer and like Huxley, he was obliged to become a famous man of science contrary to both the wishes of his family and his own expectation. His father first sent him to a grammar school, where he acknowledged that he did not learn anything. He was considered to be a stupid boy, with a dirty habit of collecting insects and putting them in boxes—beetles, worms, and other creeping things which disgusted his teacher. The master of the school, a stupid man, wrote home to Darwin’s father something very unpleasant about the boy’s way of amusing himself; and his father was inclined to believe the master. As soon as possible Darwin was sent to the Edinburgh University, with strict orders to study medicine, and to stop collecting spiders and beetles, etc. He tried very hard to obey; but the sight of blood made him sick, and he could

not bear the dissecting room. He therefore at last notified his father that it was simply impossible for him ever to become a doctor. Therefore his father ordered him to become a clergyman. This project met with an obstacle of quite an unexpected kind. The lad was as truthful as he was tender-hearted; and he felt obliged to report that, after an examination of the dogmas, etc. he could not quite conscientiously become a clergyman. So his father was for a while in despair. The father was all the more anxious because the young man was naturally inclined to sporting, and to frequenting wine-parties. He continued to press upon his son the advantages of a clerical life, and so far succeeded that at last Charles showed signs of yielding. He was subsequently sent to Cambridge; and his father looked forward to his entering the church. Darwin's future was, however, determined by his university friendships. Among the students pursuing scientific courses there were several who felt a strong sympathy with Darwin's inborn love of natural history, who became his earnest friends, and who influenced his studies. These were, nevertheless, studies rather of observation than of books. He was always, even in the grounds of the university, hunting for curious insects; and there is a funny story about one of his adventures in this line. One day upon an old tree he saw three beetles each of a kind which he had never seen before. He caught one in his left hand and one in his right hand—thus he had both hands occupied; but the third beetle was running away very fast. In his anxiety to catch it, he put the beetle which he held in his right hand into his mouth, so as to have that hand free. But the beetle immediately squirted into his mouth some acrid secretion that burnt his tongue horribly, so that he was obliged to spit it out; and the two beetles escaped. This is a very good instance of the recklessness of enthusiasm. He passed through Cambridge in the ordinary way,—not showing any great brilliancy in the regular course of studies, but endearing himself to his friends and always continuing his researches in natural

history. It was then that one of his fellow students obtained for him the opportunity that was to make him famous. The English Government was sending that ship *Beagle* on an exploring expedition to South America, and a naturalist was wanted to accompany the expedition. Darwin was recommended by his university friend, and was given the chance after some hesitation. The cause of the hesitation was a very curious one. The commander of the ship had studied the old false science of physiognomy, after the teaching of Lavater; and he observed that Darwin had a small flat nose. He thought that nobody having a small flat nose could possess enough energy and determination to do the work required for the *Beagle* expedition. How much he was mistaken, the world now knows. Of all the scientific workers of the 19th century, there is certainly not one who laboured more incessantly, and who achieved a greater amount of work than Charles Darwin. The events of the voyage are related in the most delightful book of travel ever written in English; but there is only one fact of Darwin's experience that requires especial mention here. Thousands who have heard of Darwin's discovery do not know how that discovery happened to be made. It was made, or rather suggested, by the reading of the book of Malthus, "On Population". Malthus had long before Darwin proclaimed the existence of that law of struggle for existence between species, which prevents the earth from ever becoming populous beyond a certain limit. Remembering certain observations which he had made in South America and elsewhere, it occurred to Darwin that the existence of the ten millions of different species of animals and plants known to exist could be explained according to the survival of the fittest types in that struggle announced by Malthus. This led to the origin of the great book. But remember that only a man of enormous practical knowledge could have seen in this way to thus profit by the reading of Malthus. I need not dwell upon subsequent events in Darwin's career—such as the storm caused by his

next work "The Descent of Man"—and the conflict that raged around his name for many years subsequently. Darwin himself never took any part in the fight. Huxley and others did the fighting for him, while he himself, buried in study, scarcely noticed the tempest which he had raised. It would have been enough to frighten a weak man to death. Millions of people who had never read his books, who did not know anything about his theories, nevertheless mentioned his name with scorn and abuse. I remember when I was a little boy being told that a wicked man called Darwin had said that men came from monkeys and that the Bible was not true, and that such a man ought to be put either into prison or into a lunatic asylum. And yet in 1882, when Darwin died, he was buried beside Sir Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey, and his memory is honoured to-day by all classes of Englishmen.

Of course at quite an early time in his scientific career, Darwin was obliged to give up all idea of becoming a clergyman. He could not believe in the old religion any more. But he never attempted to combat the religious prejudices of his time in any direct way. He tried to leave metaphysical questions entirely alone. His mind was not at all of the same kind as Huxley's. Huxley was from childhood essentially inquisitive about truth and essentially aggressive in fighting for it. When Huxley was only seven years old, he surprised people by asking this terrible question: "What would become of things if they lost their qualities?" Take a stone, for example. Subtract from the stone its qualities of colour, hardness, brittleness, weight, resistance, etc.—and what becomes of the stone? Of course there is no stone. We know of things only through their qualities—through the effects which those qualities produce upon our senses. When a child of seven years old is able to ask such a question as this we may be sure that child will make himself heard of in the world. Darwin had no mental brilliancy of this kind;—his greatness was that of an incomparable worker, tireless in experiment, and capable

of synthetizing the facts. How he worked is a wonderful thing to think about—and sometimes not less amusing than wonderful. When he wrote his notes about Earth-worms, for example, he experimented everyday with his worms in order to discover their capacity of sensation;—he played music over the pots in which he kept them, and sounded a trombone above them in order to find out if they could hear. When his first child was born, he was never tired of making experiments in regard to the development of the little creature's capacities. And all this, which would have seemed ludicrous in the case of ordinary men, was done by Darwin with such sincerity and such good effect and to such excellent purpose, that the reading of it is one of the most agreeable pleasures possible to obtain from the perusal of any scientific document. The variety not less than profundity of Darwin's results is astonishing,—for his researches embrace Geology, Paleontology, Botany, Physiognomy, almost every branch of natural history, besides special studies of a sort which no one had attempted before him. Even if he had written nothing but the last volume which he gave to the public, he would still deserve a very high place in science; for that volume teaches us more about the formation of soil than any other single work ever written.

Whatever influence Darwin has upon literature, is as I have said before, chiefly due to the effect which he produced upon the thought of the century. When you oblige men to think in new ways, you oblige them indirectly to make use of new words. This he has done; and besides this he invented, out of necessity, a very considerable number of scientific phrases which have come into everyday use, and most of which are now so familiar that we utter them without remembering who first invented them. "Survival of the fittest", "Sexual selection", "Mutability of species" etc. are now in everybody's mouth;—it was he who first gave them the meanings which, as scientific sentences, they possessed.

Besides these three great men, there was a very large force of thinkers who aided the great work of scientific and

philosophical transformation which marks the latter half of the 19th century. I cannot dwell upon them — they are too numerous; but remember that they include such shining names as those of Tyndall, who first boldly denied the old distinction between the Organic and the Inorganic,—declaring that “the genius of Newton was potential in the fires of the sun”;—Maudsley, greatest of English thinkers in the department of practical psychology—physiological psychology, who placed the science of medicine upon the basis which Spencer had prepared for it;—Galton, who may be said even to have created several new sciences by his extraordinary researches upon the great questions both of physical and of mental heredity, upon the nature and transmission of genius, upon the results of race-crossing, and even upon the curious but startling subject of finger-marks;—Wallace, who discovered the law of the origin of species almost simultaneously with Darwin, who revolutionized modern knowledge also in regard to what we call geological geography, and in regard to the geographical distribution of species (a greater researcher and thinker, but unfortunately less strong minded than his larger contemporaries; for, in his old age, he allowed himself to drift into the superstition called Spiritualism);—Bates, who gave us revelations most extraordinary and the most valuable on the subject of what is called the “protective mimicry” of insects and animals;—these are but a few names out of a legion. All have had their share in changing the whole character of modern thought; but the three first named are, of course, the great masters.

Now you will have observed that each of these three was a man brought up according to the older fashions of thinking, obliged by circumstances to adopt a career different from that for which he had been intended, and successful only in the face of the most extraordinary difficulties and oppositions. All of the three were originally instinctively religious men, who abandoned dogmas only because of new knowledge, and love of truth and noble spirit of self-sacrifice

compelled them to do so. Practically they rang the death-knell of the old Christian beliefs. And nevertheless even the Christian churches have recognized their greatness and their sincerity of purpose. Two of them have been buried in Westminster Abbey. The third yet lives and writes; but there can scarcely be any doubt that when Herbert Spencer dies, he too will have his niche of honour in Westminster Abbey, probably with an epitaphic recognition of his greatness as the mightiest genius that the English mind has ever produced.

And all this signifies a very great deal. It signifies even upon the part of the churches, the acknowledgement that human thought has been, in Europe at least, entirely changed, and that it must continually change more and more with every generation hereafter while mental development continues. All of the old barriers set up by dogmatic faith have been broken down. The future is to be a new era of thought, a new era of philosophy. The ultimate questions must, indeed, remain for us as dark as ever—unless we should be able at some enormously remote time to develop new senses. The indications are that in the immediate future Western and Eastern thought will cease to be in opposition, and that a combination is very likely to occur between the fundamental truth of Oriental philosophy and of Occidental science. Should this come about, we might expect the inauguration of what might be called a new universal religion—a religion of humanity, not in the sense of Comte (which was an impossible dream), but in that ethical signification which would represent the unification of all that is best in human knowledge and experience. Whatever may happen, one thing must be perfectly obvious to the student of literature,—namely, that the highest literature is about to be totally transformed as an expression of human thought. When the new poetry and the new fiction appear—the poetry and the fiction that shall reflect the wisdom and the emotion of the 20th century—we may be sure that they will prove totally unlike anything in the past of Western literary art.

CHAPTER XV

THE NEW ETHICS

BEFORE leaving the subject of these latter-day intellectual changes, a word must be said concerning the ethical questions involved. Of course when a religious faith has been shaken to its foundation, it is natural to suppose that morals must have been simultaneously affected. The relation of morals to literature is very intimate; and we must expect that any change of ideas in the direction of ethics would show themselves in literature. The drama, poetry, romance, the novel, all these are reflections of moral emotion in especial, of the eternal struggle between good and evil, as well as of the temporary sentiments concerning right and wrong. And every period of transition is necessarily accompanied by certain tendencies to disintegration. Contemporary literature in the West has shown some signs of ethical change. These caused many thinkers to predict a coming period of demoralization in literature. But the alarm was really quite needless. These vagaries of literature, such as books questioning the morality of the marriage relation, for example, were only repetitions of older vagaries, and represented nothing more than the temporary agitation of thought upon all questions. The fact seems to be that in spite of everything, moral feeling was never higher at any time in Western social history than it is at present. The changes of thought have indeed been very great, but the moral experience of mankind remains exactly as valuable as it was before, and new perceptions of that value have been given to us by the new philosophy.

It has been wisely observed by the greatest of modern thinkers that mankind has progressed more rapidly in every other respect than in morality. Moral progress has not been

rapid simply because the moral ideal has always been kept a little in advance of the humanly possible. Thousands of years ago the principles of morality were exactly the same as those which rule our lives to-day. We cannot improve upon them; we cannot even improve upon the language which expressed them. The most learned of our poets could not make a more beautiful prayer than the prayer which Egyptian mothers taught to their little children in ages when all Europe was still a land of savages. The best of the moral philosophy of the nineteenth century is very little of improvement upon the moral philosophy of ancient India or China. If there is any improvement at all, it is simply in the direction of knowledge of causes and effects. And that is why in all countries the common sense of mankind universally condemns any attempt to interfere with moral ideas. These represent the social experience of man for thousands and thousands of years; and it is not likely that the wisdom of any one individual can ever better them. If bettered at all it cannot be through theory. The amelioration must be effected by future experience of a universal kind. We may improve every branch of science, every branch of art, everything else relating to the work of human heads and hands; but we cannot improve morals by invention or by hypothesis. Morals are not made, but grow.

Yet, as I have said, there is what may be called a new system of ethics. But this new system of ethics means nothing more than a new way of understanding the old system of ethics. By the application of evolutionary science to the study of morals, we have been enabled to trace back the whole history of moral ideas to the time of their earliest inception, — to understand the reasons of them, and to explain them without the help of any supernatural theory. And the result, so far from diminishing our respect for the wisdom of our ancestors, has immensely increased that respect. There is no single moral teaching common to different civilizations and different religions of an advanced stage of development which we do not find to be eternally

true. Let us try to study this view of the case by the help of a few examples.

In early times, of course, men obeyed moral instruction through religious motives. If asked why they thought it was wrong to perform certain actions and right to perform others, they could have answered only that such was ancestral custom and that the gods will it so. Not until we could understand the laws governing the evolution of society could we understand the reason of many ethical regulations. But now we can understand very plainly that the will of the gods, as our ancestors might have termed it, represents divine laws indeed, for the laws of ethical evolution are certainly the unknown laws shaping all things—suns, worlds, and human societies. All that opposes itself to the operation of those universal laws is what we have been accustomed to call bad, and everything which aids the operation of those laws is what we have been accustomed to think of as good. The common crimes condemned by all religions, such as theft, murder, adultery, bearing false witness, disloyalty, all these are practices which directly interfere with the natural process of evolution; and without understanding why, men have from the earliest times of real civilization united all their power to suppress them. I think that we need not dwell upon the simple facts; they will at once suggest to you all that is necessary to know. I shall select for illustration only one less familiar topic, that of the ascetic ideal.

A great many things which in times of lesser knowledge we imagined to be superstitious or useless, prove to-day on examination to have been of immense value to mankind. Probably no superstition ever existed which did not have some social value; and the most seemingly repulsive or cruel sometimes turn out to have been the most precious. To choose one of these for illustration, we must take one not confined to any particular civilization or religion, but common to all human societies at a certain period of their existence; and the ascetic ideal best fits our purpose. From very early times, even from a time long preceding any

civilization, we find men acting under the idea that by depriving themselves of certain pleasures and by subjecting themselves to certain pains they could please the divine powers and thereby obtain strength. Probably there is no people in the world among whom this belief has not had at some one time or another a very great influence. At a later time, in the early civilizations, this idea would seem to have obtained much larger sway, and to have affected national life more and more extensively. In the age of the great religions the idea reaches its acme, an acme often represented by extravagances of the most painful kind and sacrifices which strike modern imagination as ferocious and terrible. In Europe asceticism reached its great extremes, as you know, during the Middle Ages, and especially took the direction of antagonism to the natural sex-relation. Looking back to-day to the centuries in which celibacy was considered the most moral condition, and marriage was counted as little better than weakness, when Europe was covered with thousands of monasteries, and when the best intellects of the age deemed it the highest duty to sacrifice everything pleasurable for the sake of an imaginary reward after death, we cannot but recognize that we are contemplating a period of religious insanity. Even in the architecture of the time, the architecture that Ruskin devoted his splendid talent to praise, there is a grim and terrible something that suggests madness. Again, the cruelties of the age have an insane character, the burning alive of myriads of people who refused to believe or could not believe in the faith of their time; the tortures used to extort confessions from the innocent; the immolation of thousands charged with being wizards or witches; the extinction of little centres of civilization in the South of France and elsewhere by brutal crusades—contemplating all this, we seem to be contemplating not only madness but furious madness. I need not speak to you of the Crusades, which also belonged to this period. Compared with the Roman and Greek civilizations before it, what a horrible Europe it was! And yet the thinker

must recognize that it had a strength of its own, a strength of a larger kind than that of the preceding civilizations. It may seem monstrous to assert that all this cruelty and superstition and contempt of learning were absolutely necessary for the progress of mankind; and yet we must so accept them in the light of modern knowledge. The checking of intellectual development for hundreds of years is certainly a fact that must shock us; but the true question is whether such a checking had not become necessary. Intellectual strength, unless supported by moral strength, leads a people into the ways of destruction. Compared with the men of the Middle Ages, the Greeks and Romans were incomparably superior intellectually; compared with them morally they were very weak. They had conquered the world and developed all the arts, these Greeks and Romans; they had achieved things such as mankind has never since been able to accomplish, and then, losing their moral ideal, losing their simplicity, losing their faith, they were utterly crushed by inferior races in whom the principles of self-denial had been intensely developed. And the old instinctive hatred of the Church for the arts and the letters and the sciences of the Greek and Roman civilizations was not quite so much of a folly as we might be apt to suppose. The priests recognized in a vague way that anything like a revival of the older civilizations would signify moral ruin. The Renaissance proves that the priests were not wrong. Had the movement occurred a few hundred years earlier, the result would probably have been a universal corruption. I do not mean to say that the Church at any time was exactly conscious of what she was doing; she acted blindly under the influence of an instinctive fear. But the result of all that she did has not proved unfortunate. What the Roman and Greek civilizations had lost in moral power was given back to the world by the frightful discipline of the Middle Ages. For a long series of generations the ascetic idea was triumphant; and it became feeble only in proportion as men became strong enough to do without it. Es-

pecially it remodelled that of which it first seemed the enemy, the family relation. It created a new basis for society, founded upon a new sense of the importance to society of family morals. Because this idea, this morality, came through superstition, its value is not thereby in the least diminished. Superstitions often represent correct guesses at eternal truth. To-day we know that all social progress, all national strength, all national vigour, intellectual as well as physical, depend essentially upon the family, upon the morality of the household, upon the relation of parents to children. It was this fact which the Greeks and Romans forgot, and lost themselves by forgetting. It was this fact which the superstitious tyranny of the Middle Ages had to teach the West over again, and after such a fashion that it is not likely ever to become forgotten. So much for the mental history of the question. Let us say a word about the physical aspects of it.

No doubt you have read that the result of macerating the body, of depriving oneself of all comfort, and even of nourishing food, is not an increase of intellectual vigour or moral power of any kind. And in one sense this is true. The individual who passes his life in self-mortification is not apt to improve under that régime. For this reason the founder of the greatest of Oriental religions condemned asceticism on the part of his followers, except within certain fixed limits. But the history of the changes produced by a universal idea is not a history of changes in the individual, but of changes brought about by the successive efforts of millions of individuals in the course of many generations. Not in one lifetime can we perceive the measure of ethical force obtained by self-control; but in the course of several hundreds of years we find that the result obtained is so large as to astonish us. This result, imperceptibly obtained, signifies a great increase of that nervous power upon which moral power depends; it means an augmentation in strength of every kind; and this augmentation again represents what we might call economy. Just as there is a science of political

economy, there is a science of ethical economy ; and it is in relation to such a science that we should rationally consider the influence of all religions teaching self-suppression. So studying, we find that self-suppression does not mean the destruction of any power, but only the economical storage of that power for the benefit of the race. As a result, the highly civilized man can endure incomparably more than the savage, whether of moral or physical strain. Being better able to control himself under all circumstances, he has a great advantage over the savage.

That which is going on in the new teaching of ethics is really the substitution of a rational for an emotional morality. But this does not mean that the value of the emotional element in morality is not recognized. Not only is it recognized, but it is even being enlarged — enlarged, however, in a rational way. For example, let us take the very emotional virtue of loyalty. Loyalty, in a rational form, could not exist among an uneducated people ; it could only exist as a feeling, a sentiment. In the primitive state of society this sentiment takes the force and the depth of a religion. And the ruler, regarded as divine, really has in relation to his people the power of a god. Once that people becomes educated in the modern sense, their ideas regarding their ruler and their duties to their ruler necessarily undergo modification. But does this mean that the sentiment is weakened in the educated class ? I should say that this depends very much upon the quality of the individual mind. In a mind of small capacity, incapable of receiving the higher forms of thought, it is very likely that the sentiment may be weakened and almost destroyed. But in the mind of a real thinker, a man of true culture, the sense of loyalty, although changed, is at the same time immensely expanded. In order to give a strong example, I should take the example not from a monarchical country but from a republican one. What does the President of the United States of America, for example, represent to the American of the highest culture ? He appears to him in two entirely different capacities. First

he appears to him merely as a man, an ordinary man, with faults and weaknesses like other ordinary men. His private life is apt to be discussed in the newspapers. He is expected to shake hands with anybody and with everybody whom he meets at Washington; and when he ceases to hold office, he has no longer any particular distinction from other Americans. But as the President of the United States, he is also much more than a man. He represents one hundred millions of people; he represents the American Constitution; he represents the great principles of human freedom laid down by that Constitution; he represents also the idea of America, of everything American, of all the hopes, interests, and glories of the nation. Officially he is quite as sacred as a divinity could be. Millions would give their lives for him at an instant's notice; and thousands capable of making vulgar jokes about the man would hotly resent the least word spoken about the President as the representative of America. The very same thing exists in other Western countries, notwithstanding the fact that the lives of rulers are sometimes attempted. England is a striking example. The Queen has really scarcely any power; her rule is little more than nominal. Every Englishman knows that England is a monarchy only in name. But the Queen represents to every Englishman more than a woman and more than a queen: she represents England, English race feeling, English love of country, English power, English dignity; she is a symbol, and as a symbol sacred. The soldier jokingly calls her "the Widow"; he makes songs about her; all this is well and good. But a soldier who cursed her a few years ago was promptly sent to prison for twenty years. To sing a merry song about the sovereign as a woman is a right which English freedom claims; but to speak disrespectfully of the Queen, as England, as the government, is properly regarded as a crime; because it proves the man capable of it indifferent to all his duties as an Englishman, as a citizen, as a soldier. The spirit of loyalty is far from being lost in Western countries; it has only changed in character, and it

is likely to strengthen as time goes on.

Broad tolerance in the matter of beliefs is necessarily a part of the new ethics. It is quite impossible in the present state of mankind that all persons should be well educated, or that the great masses of a nation should attain to the higher forms of culture. For the uneducated a rational system of ethics must long remain out of the question; and it is proper that they should cling to the old emotional forms of moral teaching. The observation of Huxley that he would like to see every unbeliever who could not get a reason for his unbelief publicly put to shame, was an observation of sound common sense. It is only those whose knowledge obliges them to see things from another standpoint than that of the masses who can safely claim to base their rule of life upon philosophical morality. The value of the philosophical morality happens to be only in those directions where it recognizes and supports the truth taught by common morality, which, after all, is the safest guide. Therefore the philosophical moralist will never mock or oppose a belief which he knows to exercise a good influence upon human conduct. He will recognize even the value of many superstitions as being very great; and he will understand that any attempt to suddenly change the beliefs of man in any ethical direction must be mischievous. Such changes as he might desire will come; but they should come gradually and gently, in exact proportion to the expanding capacity of the national mind. Recognizing this probability, several Western countries, notably America, have attempted to introduce into education an entirely new system of ethical teaching—ethical teaching in the broadest sense, and in harmony with the new philosophy. But the result there and elsewhere can only be that which I have said at the beginning of this lecture,—namely, the enlargement of the old moral ideas, and the deeper comprehension of their value in all relations of life.

CHAPTER XVI

EVOLUTIONAL THOUGHT IN THE VICTORIAN POETS

.....They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;—

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
 Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

(In Memoriam, cxvii.)

This is Tennyson's most famous utterance upon the subject of this essay ; and the last lines of it have been repeatedly quoted not only by the celebrated essayists of our own time, but also by the great leaders of science more

than once. It represents very fairly, within a great space, the general idea of evolution as material and moral progress. I think you remember in "The Princess" the statement of the same fact is given in the imaginary lecture of Lady Psyche. Fragments of the same idea will be found in many other poems by Tennyson. But the above is much the most important, and please to observe how guarded it is. The poet is very careful to say that this is believed by others: he does not venture to declare that he believes it himself. In the second poem entitled "Locksley Hall" Tennyson would seem even less inclined to give his sanction to the new theories than he was in the time of his youth and the prematurity of his intellectual strength. He does not deny;—and yet he doubts.

“Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,
Sway’d by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well be grateful for the sounding watch-word ‘Evolution’ here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

(Locksley Hall Sixty Years After. ll. 193—200)

Powerfully influenced as he was by the Science of his time, Tennyson’s natural tendencies were religious and moral rather than scientific. And, besides, the new knowledge came to him rather late,—not in the time of his student life, but in the time of his maturity as a master of verse. Everything of importance in the foundation of the new philosophy was laid down between the years of 1855 and 1870. And there were even then several suggestions of the new thinking which much shocked men of deeply religious feeling. It is very interesting to observe to what

degrees the Victorian poets were affected by these changes in scientific teaching. But before we go any further let us glance at those difficulties which must have presented themselves even to minds quite as liberal as the mind of Tennyson.

The fundamental position to consider is the position of science in regard to the question "What is Matter?" On this subject the only definite answer can be that we know nothing of matter except as a combination of forces. The evolutionist Wallace—who in his old age has unfortunately taken to spiritualism—boldly proclaimed at an early day that matter was mind. This, being a probable statement, need not be discussed here;—it is worth remarking only, because of its likeness to Eastern theories on the same subject. There is, however, one aspect of the question latterly treated by science which is extremely interesting. It is the theory that all kinds of matter are but different combinations of one original substance,—in other words that all the elements have been formed and differentiated out of some primordial undifferentiated element. Evolutional chemistry cannot be fully discussed here; but it is just now of the most astonishing interest; and although the evolutional matter cannot yet be fully established as a fact, scientific men are inclined to think that it will be eventually accepted just as the Nebular Hypothesis has been accepted. Remember, however, that this does not touch the mystery of atoms, further than so far as it suggests combination. What the atom is? No scientific man can tell; and many scientific men are inclined to believe that what we think of as atom does not exist. The force or forces we are aware of; but of the ultimate nature of the atom we do not know anything at all. In one of the systems of Indian philosophy there is a theory that reminds us of this suggestion of modern chemistry. The theory that atoms combine in a kind of arithmetical progression—two atoms of four, four of eight, eight of sixteen ultimates, etc. No poet has yet touched this question in England, for it is comparatively new.

Next to the mystery of matter naturally comes the mystery of life. Evolutional theories upon this subject are also of rather late date, — being due to discoveries of comparatively recent times. I am not speaking of the large conceptions of Herbert Spencer, who as early as the middle of the century, declared mind and matter to be only different passing manifestations of one reality. I mean theories about how life begins. In the first period of the new science it was only accepted as probability, that, when upon the surface of a cooling planet certain chemical combinations occur, then the very simplest form of living substance makes its appearance; and that from this simplest form all other forms have gradually been evolved. To-day this is generally believed, but much more definite facts have been brought to bear upon the theory. We cannot positively say that matter is dead to-day; we cannot speak of “dead matter.” The living rises out of the apparently not living. Therefore the apparently not living cannot be lifeless. The very latest chemical researches have amazed the men who made them. They acknowledge that it is impossible to draw the line between life and matter. Vast things are suggested by this mystery. But it has not yet appealed to the poets. The astronomical part of evolution has been accepted everywhere; and with it the general explanation of the law of development. When I say everywhere, I only mean in the scientific circles of all countries. The older religious sects reject the entire system; and the more liberal religious sects accept it only more or less partially. This part of the evolutional philosophy has principally affected the poets. There are only a few poetical thinkers of the age who have not been influenced by it to a marked degree in their writings. Even the theory of moral development—that man’s conscience has been gradually evolved like everything else—has been very earnestly favoured by the poets — principally this theory seems to afford a strong incentive effort. But there are certain reservations. These reservations are especially noticeable in the field of psychology.

Evolutional psychology—the theory of the development of mind out of the simplest forms of sensation—is particularly Spencer's; and it is particularly the cause of the opposition that has been made to his teaching, and of the reaction that has been latterly created against it. Even the theory of the growth and development of religion might have been forgiven him by the liberal churches; but the theory that the human mind itself has been evolved by infinite degrees out of a speck of colourless matter no bigger than the point of a pin, could not be easily forgiven. It is quite true that he has pointed out how the mystery remains, even granting this theory; for nothing can explain sentiency, which is the basis, so far as we can know, of all thought. From that point of view there could be nothing very irreligious in the system,—were it not for one thing, namely, that the system strikes especially at the western idea of the individual human soul. What is to become of the idea of an immortal personality within each man, if we are to believe that every mind has grown up slowly out of one ultimate mystery? And further more, Mr. Spencer has been accused of teaching doctrines resembling those of eastern philosophy. He has taught that there is such a thing as organic memory, and that individuality remains under the influence of all the past existence out of which he came. This looks like a scientific confirmation of the doctrines of Metempsychosis, of Preexistence,—of Karma,—and of a great many things that Christianity holds in horror. What is going to become of the belief in free will, if such a doctrine is to be accepted? These are questions that the churches have been asking; and they will certainly continue to resist the teaching of evolutional psychology until they have no more strength to fight against it. I cannot imagine that this system will have much chance of being taught in the University for a long time to come. It is too subversive to all the doctrines upon which the Christian religion has been based.

Nevertheless a few bold minds have found their way to

reconcile the new psychology with earnest faith. They have made for themselves sort of a half Christian Pantheism, or I might say Mysticism. They are willing to regard the inner nature of man as part of the infinite, passing through forms of millions of kinds to reach superior zones of being. The question is how far will the Churches recognize such men as Christian? Very probably if asked about the matter, they would not be recognized at all. Not to be recognized as a Christian in Western society is rather unfortunate for a young man — unfortunate for any man who cannot make himself quite independent of conventions. But there are curious indulgences. If you keep to the upper regions of thought in your poetry — to those loftier intellectual zones that are too cold for common minds to reach; then what you say will probably pass — without criticism. The poet is saved like eagle or condor by flying miles above the region of common minds. George Meredith has done this. He, and he alone, is the one great poet of the evolutionary philosophy even in the domain of the new psychology. But he is quite safe: for the majority of readers cannot understand him and the theologians will not quarrel with published utterances that cannot reach the mass of the people. Indeed many theologians have persisted in regarding Meredith as really a Christian Mystic;—they have been reading meanings in him which he never expressed. As I have lectured several times upon his poems I need not quote from him in this connection—you will remember how deeply he has gone into the teachings of New Thought.

These two poets Tennyson and Meredith have chiefly shown the new influence. Rossetti, a singular exception, never pays any attention whatever to the scientific discoveries of his time. You will find much mystical beauty in his thoughts, but not even the shadow of an evolutionary conviction. You will find, however, some indications of the new studies scattered through the longer poems of Browning. I might cite, for example, that passage in “Bishop Blougram’s Apology” where the bishop explains, or attempts

to explain, the origin of virtue, of modesty, according to the evolutionary hypothesis. Elsewhere Browning has made many suggestions, but never, in such sort as to show personal sympathy with the deeper facts of the new philosophy. As for the minor poets, we could not expect to find much of importance in this direction; and, as for the purely evolutionary poets—especially those women like Mathilde Blind and Constance Naden, who have attempted to put the Spencerian philosophy into verse, I can only say that they are verse makers, not real poets. The fact is that in literature the influence of the new philosophy becomes important only when the giants take it up: and it is rather to be regretted that small verse makers should attempt anything in a new direction unless they can manage to be supremely original—which is not so easy.

Briefly summarizing, the evidence indicates, we find, that the profounder aspects of the new philosophy—those of its teachings or suggestions relating to the nature of mind, the destiny of mankind, and the mystery of life in itself—have been fully expressed by only one English poet of the period. Many have been tinted by the new ideas; but scarcely any have been dyed through and through with the new intellectual colour. I do not think that this is surprising; for the science of which I speak has not yet had time to create wide-spread intellectual changes in literary life. But I may mention that Prof. Dowden has predicted that the poetry of the next century will very probably be poetry quite as expressive of the new ideas as is the poetry of Mr. Meredith in our own day.

CHAPTER XVII

GRANT ALLEN

THERE died last October a most remarkable man who enjoyed the privilege of considerable distinction both in science and in literature. He was perhaps unequalled as a popularizer of science; and he was certainly unequalled in versatility. I mean Grant Allen. This man has had his influence on English thought—you will often find references to him. You will find that the religious and conservative publications generally try to belittle him,—to suggest that he was only a novelist and a man of letters. But on the other hand, you will find him highly spoken of by Herbert Spencer, by Bain, the author of “The Emotions and the Will”, by James Sully, a psychologist of great eminence, and by men of science at large. The reason that Grant Allen has not been given as large a place is merely because he had new ideas, and offended the churches and offended English prejudices. Of course you know that it is almost impossible to express new ideas in England without offending prejudice of some kind; and if the prejudice happens to be religious the opposition and the abuse become very strong. Had Allen been a rich man, he could have laughed at all this. It is not good to preach new ideas in England unless you are rich. Nearly all the great names of the evolutionary philosophy represent men independent of money, and therefore independent of society. Darwin was comfortably rich; Spencer was always independent. So were Wallace, Maudsley, and the great mathematicians and chemists who availed themselves of their knowledge to the encouragement of new philosophy. Huxley was poor; and if he had not been a man of immense intellectual power and of very strong constitution, he never could have succeeded. Now Grant Allen had something of the same kind of talent as Huxley, though

in a much less degree; but he did not have Huxley's tough body and iron nerves. The English nation tried to keep him in a condition of dependence—would have starved him to death if they could. As a matter of fact he seems to have died from overwork. But he has left his mark upon the thought of the time; and he has influenced literature forcibly in certain directions. Altogether I think he is well worth being the subject of a lecture; for there is no man of the same class whom I could more warmly recommend you to read.

Grant Allen was born in Canada in the year 1848; and was educated in Canada until he reached the age of 14. He was then sent to England, and eventually to Oxford University. There he distinguished himself very greatly—obtaining several different honours. Being poor he had to choose a profession early, and he attempted very successfully that of a teacher. He was Master of Composition at Brighton College for some years; then he was made Professor of Literature in the Government College at Jamaica (West Indies), and very shortly after he was appointed President of the college. Thus everything looked very favourable for him; but suddenly the English government decided to discontinue its support of the Jamaica University. Grant Allen returned to London; and he could not wait for years in order to obtain another equally good position. He had to do something; and he tried to support himself by authorship. He was a trained man of science—loving science even more than literature; and he was a disciple of Herbert Spencer. His first wish was to live by writing scientific books. He wrote a number of them,—all of which are very good of their kind, and all of which attracted considerable attention from persons of culture. These books, however, could not bring him an income sufficient to live upon. The cultured classes are not numerous enough to make scientific writings a good source of revenue. So, to his life-long regret, he was obliged to give up science and to write novels and stories for a living. After obtaining considerable success

by the production of about twenty remarkable novels, he issued a series of historical guide books, — the best of their kind ever made. In the midst of this success, death struck him down. I must tell you, however, that at no time did he actually give up scientific study. When he was first obliged to write stories he tried to write only scientific stories; and he would never have written any others if this class of literature could have been made really popular. And just before his death he issued a large volume of philosophy, "The Evolution of the Idea of God". The book was altogether in advance of the time, and aroused a good deal of religious prejudice. But it is a good book; and no impartial person can read it without profit.

Now I want to tell you something about a very curious work which this man produced. He wrote about ten volumes of scientific essays of the most extraordinary interest and most original conception. Perhaps the best known of these is his volume entitled "The Colour-Sense", — because it was published in the English and Foreign Philosophical Library. This was followed by "Physiological Æsthetics", — perhaps the most original of all his productions. Besides these I may quote the titles of "The Evolutionist at Large" "Colin Clout's Calendar", "Post-Prandial Philosophy", "Falling in Love, with other Essays on More Exact Branches of Science," "The Evolution of the Idea of God". Besides this mass of purely scientific work, he wrote the best life of Darwin in existence. A volume entitled "Strange Stories" might also be added to the list, for all these stories are all, or nearly all, scientific stories. As for his other class of production, perhaps it is enough to say that he wrote some twenty novels of which "The Woman who Did" made a great sensation and something of a scandal both in America and England. All the novels are good, but they do not rise to the highest rank of fiction. They were simply clever, interesting and likely stories written to make money. Therefore our literary consideration of Grant Allen cannot include a commentary upon most of his novel writing: we must consider him

chiefly as a philosopher and an essayist. Here he is great.

His greatness lies in one direction only,—but a very important one: in scientific imagination of the constructive kind. Famous discoveries in all branches of science have been made by the use of this faculty. Its best expression is in the essay; and the whole of Grant Allen's scientific works are collections of essays written in a style of great clearness and force. The papers upon the colour-sense are not mere explanations of the meaning of colour; they are attempts to teach us how and why the sense of colour was developed in man and in the animal kingdom. You must have heard that there is a theory to the effect that the power to perceive different colours was not in ancient times what it is now;—some people suppose that red was the first colour that could be perceived; then yellow; then green; lastly blue. Without adopting this theory, the author of the book in question not only establishes the relations of each colour to human necessity, but he also presents some new hypotheses which make one think, and which still receive very favourable scientific consideration. But it is in "Physiological *Æsthetics*"—really a fine development of Spencer's chapter on *Æstho-Physiology*;—that the power of scientific imagination is best shown. The book is a series of essays upon the meaning of pleasure and pain, and upon the reason of agreeable and disagreeable sensations of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. This is a most delightful book; and it was in this book that Spencer himself recognized some true discoveries in regard to evolutionary physiology. We smell a flower, for example, and we like the odour. But why do we like it—why should it be agreeable? We see a colour that pleases us, or we see a colour that disgusts us. For the reason of the disgust we need little explanation; but why should we like one colour more than another? Or take the question of sound. One kind of sound may be, although low, very disagreeable; another, although equally low, very pleasant. But why? No person before Grant Allen had made any attempt to answer

these questions in detail, — although Spencer had indicated how they might be answered. Since the appearance of Grant Allen's book, however, a German physiologist named G. M. Schneider has published several books upon the subject. He has only, however, carried out Grant Allen's theories upon a large scale. The two volumes entitled "Colin Clout's Calendar" and "The Evolutionist at Large" include essays upon an immense variety of common subjects considered in an astonishing new way. The first book is chiefly about plants; and represents the application of evolutionary philosophy to botany. Why should one kind of flower have six petals, another only five? Why should some flowers be of one colour, some of several different colours? Why should such a blossom as that of the daisy have a great number of petals, arranged like rays? These questions are the subjects of the essays, and they are admirably answered. The great lesson of these two books on botany was to teach people how much more interesting wild flowers are than cultivated flowers. Garden flowers such as roses, pinks, tulips, never again seem interesting after a scientific study of the wild flowers; for you recognize that the garden flowers are really unnatural monsters, created by man, whereas every wild flower has a wonderful story to tell to the scientific eye. And another charm of these books is that they are not written in technical language; no botanical names are given—because the object is to explain a general law, not to classify or to tire the memory. Besides, there are very curious essays upon the special senses of insects, upon the instincts of birds, upon the habits of such creatures as ants or spiders, which we see everyday, and think we know; but which the writer teaches us that we do not know. Perhaps the above four books include the very best of the shorter essays; but the other volumes mentioned are certainly very instructive. The "Post-Prandial Philosophy" deals considerably with social facts;—the explanation of certain kinds of character as belonging to certain classes of society and why; the book entitled "Falling in Love" is a miscel-

lany including sociological, historical, paleontological, and other essays. It is not too much to say that the author has written upon about one hundred different scientific subjects, — always interesting and sometimes like a genius. The whole worth of what he has done cannot, however, be estimated now. New discoveries may confirm some of his opinions and may prove others to be false, but whatever mistakes he may have fallen into he must be regarded as one of the few men of the time who was able to give new thoughts to everybody who could read them. These new thoughts have suggested a great deal to other men of letters. From that plan many small men have learned how to write a good scientific story; for his own scientific stories are among the best of their kind; they were collected together under the title of “Strange Stories,” and they show as much a variety in a certain way as the scientific essays did. A delightful habit of this writer was to take up a theory about the future man, the golden age to come, and then scientifically pull it to pieces. For example you will remember a theory that in a perfect state of society a deformed or weakly child should not be allowed to live. Prof. Huxley proved the folly of this theory some years ago; but Grant Allen taught the fact in the form of a story. He says, “Let us suppose the state of society that you imagine and now consider the consequence of the law.” After reading the “Child of the Phalanstery” you do not wish to hear any more of the theory. Possessing a fine gift of irony the writer of these stories was a good deal misunderstood by very dull people. For example, no intelligent mind was ever in the least offended by “The Woman who Did”, but a great many stupid people were offended by it because they could not understand the splendid irony of the whole story. They took it seriously. The story is about a young girl, graduate of Girton College, and a University student, both of whom have absorbed some of the wild notions about social reform that were circulated some years ago. For example, they have got it into their heads that the marriage

laws are not necessary; and that they should try to set a good example by living together as man and wife without any law. Grant Allen's story only shows the natural and terrible consequences of such a decision in English society. After reading that book, I think the wildest advocates of abolition of the marriage laws are likely to remain silent for 100 years.

CHAPTER XVIII

BEYOND MAN

IT seems to me a lecturer's duty to speak to you about any remarkable thought at this moment engaging the attention of western philosophers and men of science,—partly because any such new ideas are certain, sooner or later, to be reflected in literature, and partly because without a knowledge of them you might form incorrect ideas in relation to utterances of any important philosophic character. I am not going to discourse about Nietzsche, though the title of this lecture is taken from one of his books; the ideas about which I am going to tell you, you will not find in his books. It is most extraordinary, to my thinking, that these ideas never occurred to him, for he was an eminent man of science before writing his probably insane books. I have not the slightest sympathy with most of his ideas; they seem to me misinterpretations of evolutionary teachings; and if not misinterpretations, they are simply undeveloped and ill-balanced thinking. But the title of one of his books, and the idea which he tries always unsuccessfully to explain,—that of a state above mankind, a moral condition "beyond man," as he calls it,—that is worth talking about. It is not nonsense at all, but fact, and I think that I can give you a correct idea of the realities in the case. Leaving Nietzsche entirely alone, then, let us ask if it is possible to suppose a condition of human existence above morality,—that is to say, more moral than the most moral ideal which a human brain can conceive? We may answer, it is quite possible, and it is not only possible, but it has actually been predicted by many great thinkers, including Herbert Spencer.

We have been brought up to think that there can be

nothing better than virtue, than duty, than strictly following the precepts of a good religion. However, our ideas of goodness and of virtue necessarily imply the existence of the opposite qualities. To do a good thing because it is our duty to do it, implies a certain amount of resolve, a struggle against difficulty. The virtue of honesty is a term implying the difficulty of being perfectly honest. When we think of any virtuous or great deed, we cannot help thinking of the pain and obstacles that have to be met with in performing that deed. All our active morality is a struggle against immorality. And I think that, as every religion teaches, it must be granted that no human being has a perfectly moral nature.

Could a world exist in which the nature of all the inhabitants would be so moral that the mere idea of what is immoral could not exist? Let me explain my question more in detail. Imagine a society in which the idea of dishonesty would not exist, because no person could be dishonest, a society in which the idea of unchastity could not exist, because no person could possibly be unchaste, a world in which no one could have any idea of envy, ambition or anger, because such passions could not exist, a world in which there would be no idea of duty, filial or parental, because not to be filial, not to be loving, not to do everything which we human beings now call duty, would be impossible. In such a world ideas of duty would be quite useless; for every action of existence would represent the constant and faultless performance of what we term duty. Moreover, there would be no difficulty, no pain in such performance; it would be the constant and unending pleasure of life. With us, unfortunately, what is wrong often gives pleasure; and what is good to do, commonly causes pain. But in the world which I am asking you to imagine there could not be any wrong, nor any pleasure in wrong-doing; all the pleasure would be in right-doing. To give a very simple illustration—one of the commonest and most pardonable faults of young people is eating, or drinking, or sleep-

ing too much. But in our imaginary world to eat or to drink or to sleep in even the least degree more than is necessary could not be done; the constitution of the race would not permit it. One more illustration. Our children have to be educated carefully in regard to what is right or wrong; in the world of which I am speaking, no time would be wasted in any such education, for every child would be born with full knowledge of what is right and wrong. Or to state the case in psychological language — I mean the language of scientific, not of metaphysical, psychology — we should have a world in which morality would have been transmitted into inherited instinct. Now again let me put the question: can we imagine such a world? Perhaps you will answer, Yes, in heaven — nowhere else. But I answer you that such a world actually exists, and that it can be studied in almost any part of the East or of Europe by a person of scientific training. The world of insects actually furnishes examples of such a moral transformation. It is for this reason that such writers as Sir John Lubbock and Herbert Spencer have not hesitated to say that certain kinds of social insects have immensely surpassed men, both in social and in ethical progress.

But that is not all that it is necessary to say here. You might think that I am only repeating a kind of parable. The important thing is the opinion of scientific men that humanity will at last, in the course of millions of years, reach the ethical conditions of the ants. It is only five or six years ago that some of these conditions were established by scientific evidence, and I want to speak of them. They have a direct bearing upon important ethical questions; and they have startled the whole moral world, and set men thinking in entirely new directions.

In order to explain how the study of social insects has set moralists of recent years thinking in a new direction, it will be necessary to generalize a great deal in the course of so short a lecture. It is especially the social conditions of the ants which has inspired these new ideas; but you

must not think that any one species of ants furnishes us with all the facts. The facts have been arrived at only through the study of hundreds of different kinds of ants by hundreds of scientific men; and it is only by the consensus of their evidence that we get the ethical picture which I shall try to outline for you. Altogether there are probably about five thousand different species of ants, and these different species represent many different stages of social evolution, from the most primitive and savage up to the most highly civilized and moral. The details of the following picture are furnished by a number of the highest species only; that must not be forgotten. Also, I must remind you that the morality of the ant, by the necessity of circumstance, does not extend beyond the limits of its own species. Impeccably ethical within the community, ants carry on war outside their own borders; were it not for this, we might call them morally perfect creatures.

Although the mind of an ant cannot be at all like the mind of the human being, it is so intelligent that we are justified in trying to describe its existence by a kind of allegorical comparison with human life. Imagine, then, a world full of women, working night and day, — building, tunnelling, bridging, — also engaged in agriculture, in horticulture, and in taking care of many kinds of domestic animals. (I may remark that ants have domesticated no fewer than five hundred and eighty-four different kinds of creatures.) This world of women is scrupulously clean; busy as they are, all of them carry combs and brushes about them, and arrange themselves several times a day. In addition to this constant work, these women have to take care of myriads of children, — children so delicate that the slightest change in the weather may kill them. So the children have to be carried constantly from one place to another in order to keep them warm.

Though this multitude of workers are always gathering food, no one of them would eat or drink a single atom more than is necessary; and none of them would sleep for

one second longer than is necessary. Now comes a surprising fact, about which a great deal must be said later on. These women have no sex. They are women, for they sometimes actually give birth, as virgins, to children; but they are incapable of wedlock. They are more than vestals. Sex is practically suppressed.

This world of workers is protected by an army of soldiers. The soldiers are very large, very strong, and shaped so differently from the working females that they do not seem at first to belong to the same race. They help in the work, though they are not able to help in some delicate kinds of work—they are too clumsy and strong. Now comes the second astonishing fact: these soldiers are all women—amazons, we might call them; but they are sexless women. In these also sex has been suppressed.

You ask, where do the children come from? Most of the children are born of special mothers—females chosen for the purpose of bearing offspring, and not allowed to do anything else. They are treated almost like empresses, being constantly fed and attended and served, and being lodged in the best way possible. Only these can eat and drink at all times—they must do so for the sake of their offspring. They are not suffered to go out, unless strongly attended, and they are not allowed to run any risk of danger or of injury. The life of the whole race circles about them and about their children, but they are very few.

Last of all are the males, the men. One naturally asks why females should have been specialized into soldiers instead of men. It appears that the females have more reserve force, and all the force that might have been utilized in the giving of life has been diverted to the making of aggressive powers. The real males are very small and weak. They appear to be treated with indifference and contempt. They are suffered to become the bridegrooms of one night, after which they die very quickly. By contrast, the lives of the rest are very long. Ants live for at least three or four

years, but the males live only long enough to perform their solitary function.

In the foregoing little fantasy, the one thing that should have most impressed you is the fact of the suppression of sex. But now comes the last and most astonishing fact of all: this suppression of sex is not natural, but artificial—I mean that it is voluntary. It has been discovered that ants are able, by a systematic method of nourishment, to suppress or develop sex as they please. The race has decided that sex shall not be allowed to exist except in just so far as it is absolutely necessary to the existence of the race. Individuals with sex are tolerated only as necessary evils. Here is an instance of the most powerful of all passions voluntarily suppressed for the benefit of the community at large. It vanishes whenever unnecessary; when necessary after a war or a calamity of some kind, it is called into existence again. Certainly it is not wonderful that such a fact should have set moralists thinking. Of course if a human community could discover some secret way of effecting the same object, and could have the courage to do it, or rather the unselfishness to do it, the result would simply be that sexual immorality of any kind would become practically impossible. The very idea of such immorality would cease to exist.

But that is only one fact of self-suppression, and the ant-world furnishes hundreds. To state the whole thing in the simplest possible way, let me say the race has entirely got rid of everything that we call a selfish impulse. Even hunger and thirst allow of no selfish gratification. The entire life of the community is devoted to the common good and to mutual help and to the care of the young. Spencer says it is impossible to imagine that an ant has a sense of duty like our own,—a religion, if you like. But it does not need a sense of duty, it does not need religion. Its life is religion in the practical sense. Probably millions of years ago the ant had feelings much more like our own than it has now. At that time, to perform altruistic actions may

have been painful to the ant; to perform them now has become the one pleasure of its existence. In order to bring up children and serve the state more efficiently these insects have sacrificed their sex and every appetite that we call by the name of animal passion. Moreover they have a perfect community, a society in which nobody could think of property, except as a state affair, a public thing, or as the Romans would say, a *res publica*. In a human community so organized, there could not be ambition, any jealousy, any selfish conduct of any sort—indeed, no selfishness at all. The individual is said to be practically sacrificed for the sake of the race; but such a supposition means the highest moral altruism. Therefore thinkers have to ask, “Will man ever rise to something like the condition of ants?”

Herbert Spencer says that such is the evident tendency. He does not say, nor is it at all probable, that there will be in future humanity such physiological specialization as would correspond to the suppression of sex among ants, or to the bringing of women to the dominant place in the human world, and the masculine sex to an inferior position. That is not likely ever to happen, for reasons which it would take very much too long to speak of now. But there is evidence that the most selfish of all human passions will eventually be brought under control—under such control that the present cause of wellnigh all human suffering, the pressure of population, will be practically removed. And there is psychological evidence that the human mind will undergo such changes that wrong-doing, in the sense of unkindly action, will become almost impossible, and that the highest pleasure will be found not in selfishness but in unselfishness. Of course there are thousands of things to think about, suggested by this discovery of the life of ants. I am only telling the more important ones. What I have told you ought at least to suggest that the idea of a moral condition much higher than all our moral conditions of to-day is quite possible,—that it is not an idea to be laughed at. But it

was not Nietzsche who ever conceived this possibility. His "Beyond Man," and the real and much to be hoped for "beyond man," are absolutely antagonistic conceptions. When the ancient Hebrew writer said, thousands of years ago, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways," he could not have imagined how good his advice would prove in the light of twentieth century science.

CHAPTER XIX

ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF "SARTOR RESARTUS"

CARLYLE is in some respects the most important figure in nineteenth century literature. Remember, when I say this, that I am speaking of literature, as distinguished from science or scientific philosophy, or scientific writing of any kind. Carlyle is not the greatest English philosopher by any means; but he is the greatest literary philosopher of our times—I mean the nineteenth century. The philosopher as man-of-letters, the poet philosopher or essayist, is rather a rare figure in English literature. We have plenty of philosophers; indeed, I think that English philosophy is now the first in the world, though Germany and France may still refuse to acknowledge the fact. But we have had scarcely any literary personage who could be called a great philosophical influence, with the exception of Carlyle. Carlyle represents, though perhaps in a smaller way, in English literature what Goethe represents in German literature. Or, again, we might say that he represents in English literature something that Michelet represents in French literature—a great emotional power and influence created under the obsession of a single great idea. Emerson is another figure of this kind, the only one that America has produced. Now, philosophers of this literary class do not exactly make a new philosophy. They are emotional rather than logical thinkers; they do not so often find new truths for us as they make new applications of older truths. And if they do find a new truth sometimes, it is rather through feeling than through reasoning. But they exert more influence than the larger thinkers do—the pure philosophers—because they are more easily understood and more widely read. To a certain extent they help the progress of the higher philoso-

phy by interpreting it to the people, or at least such parts of it as they are willing to accept. Carlyle is especially a teacher of this kind. He presents in marvellous emotional speech many of the best thoughts of the greatest modern thinkers; and if he is one-sided, we must be still thankful for the form and the force of his message. This message is especially given in his "Sartor Resartus," and "Sartor Resartus" is a book which ought to be as well known to English students as Goethe's "Faust." It is likely to become so, at all events; every year it is being more and more read, every year new editions are being issued, and recently the book has been put forth in illustrated forms, with some eighty pictures. Because the expression is sometimes obscure, and because of the hard slow thinking that the book requires, it might have been ignored a few years ago in a course of university reading. But this is no longer possible. The book has become too great an influence, and we must bend ourselves to the task of comprehending it.

I think that the question of comprehending it, without assistance, depends very much upon the age and experience of the reader. My own experience was this; as a young man less than twenty years of age, I repeatedly tried to read the book and could not. I could not understand a single page of it. There were indeed sentences which dazzled and charmed my imagination, but I was not very sure what they meant. At the age of about twenty-five I tried to read the book again, with the same result; I could understand nothing, except what appeared to me somewhat religious in a narrow sense, and which therefore repelled me; for at that time I disliked everything religious very much indeed. But after reaching middle life, when I had read a great deal, and had been able to make some serious study of modern philosophy, I opened the book again, and every page was full not only of light but of lightning. Many times since I have re-read it, and each time it seems to me greater and wider and more astonishing. I shall now try to lecture about it in a general way; but the points upon

which I am particularly anxious to dwell are the points in harmony with eastern philosophy and nineteenth century science. Wherever the two unite, you will find the full power of Carlyle as a thinker—there he has touched everlasting truth.

The book is eccentrically arranged as well as eccentrically written; and before attempting a summary, please to keep clearly in mind the fact that it has three main divisions; also that the second or middle division, which is autobiography, is quite independent of the other two parts between which it is inserted. Unless you remember this, your notes may become somewhat confused. Nevertheless, after having thought a good deal about the plan of this lecture, I have decided that it will not do to separate the autobiography from the philosophy, nor to adopt any other arrangement than that of the author.

The name of the book means “the tailor repatched,” an extraordinary title, but not out of keeping with the extraordinary subject, which is the Philosophy of Clothes. And the meaning of the title becomes obvious before we read very far. To re-carpenter a carpenter or to re-tailor a tailor, means simply to do the man’s work over again better than it was done at first. We now can see that Carlyle wishes it to be understood that he is going to do over again something which has not previously been well done—and that something is the philosophy of clothes. Here I may observe that it seems to me the whole idea of the book from beginning to end was inspired by a single stanza of the great poet Goethe—

In Being’s floods, in Action’s storm
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!
Birth and Death,
An Infinite Ocean;
A seizing and giving
The fire of Living;
'Tis thus at the roaring loom of time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by.

This is the song of the Earth Spirit in "Faust," and it really contains the germ of all the philosophy in "Sartor Resartus," though only in potential form. The meaning of course is that the phenomenal universe is only the visible garment of the invisible infinite—a thought quite Buddhist in itself, and also quite true as a scientific fact, considering the mystery of matter. Nearly all the great thoughts of the world are thus in harmony; it is only in small ideas that I can find disagreement.

At all events, whether my theory is right or wrong, the philosophy of clothes appears in the very first chapter of the book; but it is not put forth as Carlyle's own invention. He pretended that it was the translation of a curious German book, written by an unknown philosopher with the extraordinary name of Teufelsdröckh, and he made the style exactly resemble a literary translation from the German, adopting many of the literary methods of Richter for the sake of their curious beauty. This is why the style of "Sartor Resartus" seems to us at first sight so strange.

By way of introduction we are told that although there have been countless books written about cloth and silk and all other textures, the most important of all textures has not been written about—"the only real tissue, which man's soul wears as its outmost wrapper and overall." Does this mean the body as the garment of the soul? Yes, to a certain extent. But if so, why should the writer say that the subject has been overlooked by science, since there are hundreds of thousands of books about the body? Well, Carlyle's thought is this: much has indeed been written about the body, as form or otherwise, but not about the body as the garment of the soul, not about the body as the symbol of an infinite mystery. That is why the work already done on the subject is so unsatisfactory. The most wonderful relation of man, the relation that he bears to the universe and to the unknown powers that made the universe, is never considered at all as it should be considered. Yet to a thinking man the miracle is all about it: "that living flood,

holding the whole street, of all qualities and ages, knowest thou whence it is coming, whither it is going?” The ordinary man would answer, “Oh, those people are going home, or going to their business”; but the thinker’s question requires a much larger answer. The true answer is that they come out of an absolute mystery, out of eternity, like the world itself, and that although they may seem to be going back to their own homes only, they are really all of them going back into the infinite mystery out of which they came. And what are they? Can anybody answer? They are spirits made visible by a garment or dress of flesh which they wear. That is all we know. The force within, the force that moves and thinks within each of us, no philosopher could ever tell us what it is. It is manifested to the senses only by means of its dress. We have reason to suppose that it is a part of the universal force, the universal mystery, but that is all. Thus the mere sight of a man walking down the street is really one of the most extraordinary, one of the most mysterious, and one of the most unexplainable things in this world. Yet very few people ever think about the matter. Is it not worth thinking about? Carlyle says that it is—wherefore he has written this book; a book about the mystery of the universe considered as a garment, as a dress. Just as the man appears to our eyes only because of the body or flesh that he has, so the only Reality, the Soul of all things, has been made manifest to us through the material universe, which is the robe that it wears.

A robe, a dress, a covering of any sort for the body—what idea does it immediately suggest to you? You will think, even if you do not say, that the comparison does not at first sight seem satisfactory, because a dress is something that has often to be changed, something that wears out quickly and has to be thrown away. Yet if you will reflect for a moment that Time is only relative, you will recognize that the comparison is complete. The body of man is worn out quickly like his clothes, and has in the same way to be discarded. Death is our change of clothes,

nothing more. But this is not all; the comparison is excellent even as applied to the entire universe, with all the millions of suns and planets and moons belonging to it. All of them wear out, just as surely as a dress wears out; the whole universe must decay and disappear, to be succeeded by a new universe, by another shining garment for the infinite spirit. The comparison is not even new, though Goethe happened to put it in a somewhat new way; it is enormously old; it is in the Bible—

The heavens are the work of thy hands—they shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, *all of them shall grow old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.*

(*Psalms*, 102, 25-6)

Of course the Hebrew poet who wrote these magnificent verses did not know the universe as we know it to-day; he imagined the sky to be a solid arch or vault, and the lights of heaven to be like great lamps. But the beauty of what he said only continues to grow with time, because with all his limited knowledge he perceived in a dim way one eternal and tremendous truth,—the impermanency of all forms.

This is the real introduction to the book, or rather to the spirit of the book. We have then the first great statement, that all visible matter is but a garment or manifestation of the invisible; and that man's body itself is not a permanent reality, but only the symbol or covering of him. Yet the same thing might be said of the body of a horse, a cow, a fish, even a tree. All these too are but unreal symbols of one eternal reality. The great distinction between man and other animals or forms of life is that he has a double covering. Besides his body, the covering of all that is real within him, he has a second covering of clothes. Of course this is a fact that everybody knows; but how many think about it, and perceive what it really means?

In order to understand what it means, we must first try to imagine all humanity without clothes. It is scarcely possible to imagine a civilized society in which nobody wears any clothes. With grim humour, the author asks us to

imagine a naked minister addressing a naked house of parliament, or a reception at some royal court, at which everybody should be absolutely naked. Of course the mere idea is absurd. But why should it be absurd? It is not easy to answer at once. A correct answer would require a considerable amount of thinking, and it is the thinking about this problem which forms a considerable part of the book, and which leads us to consider many other problems of an equally deep and strange kind.

Clothes, or clothing, the philosopher calls the Foundation of Society; he means of course that without clothes there could be no civilization of a high degree. He asks us how could one even carry money about him if he had no clothing, no pockets. I am inclined to think that his views here, at least his illustrations, are a little extreme. As a matter of fact, naked societies have existed, in which certain simple moral and religious codes were fully developed—Polynesian societies, for example, and certain African societies. Very barbarous and simple forms of society they were; but they were certainly societies, governed by rules of conduct. Again as to the question of no pockets and no money, in these societies—or at least in some of them—what represented money was worn round the neck fastened to a string, or attached to the body in some other way. But we may accept, as a general statement, the author’s position that clothes are at least a foundation of true civilization; and that the present complicated forms of society could not very well exist without clothes,—even supposing the constitution of mankind able to bear all exposures to climate.

Carlyle accepts the evolutionary philosophy of clothes to a limited extent. Clothes began with the human desire for ornament. In those savage communities where clothes were not worn, it was at least the custom to decorate the body in some way or other; for example, the Polynesians tattooed themselves, and other peoples painted the body different colours. Eventually with the invention of the simplest industries of weaving, sewing, etc., garments of some kind

were found to suit the purpose of decoration better than paint or tattooing. But in some cases, as among races of hunters, the skins of wild animals would have been the first kind of clothes. And in some tropical countries, the first clothing would seem to have been leaves taken from certain trees, for there are still tribes using only this kind of clothing. Before the use of clothing there could scarcely have been any distinction of classes, no real aristocracy or nobility; universal nudity would have proclaimed too powerfully the general equality of all. But I think that Carlyle goes too far in suggesting that there would have been no distinction whatever. There would have still been the distinction of strength, of activity, of experience, and cunning; and these would have been quite sufficient to make a class of rulers or chiefs, obeyed by the rest, and trusted in time of danger. It would be altogether wrong to think that the invention of cloth was a sudden thing, and that it produced sudden changes in the character of mankind. All changes have been gradual, and all evolutions have been very slow. There is a large truth here suggested by Carlyle, that a very important relation exists between the development of clothing and the development of social distinctions. Each must have had a powerful influence upon the other.

Another point upon which I think Mr. Spencer would not have agreed with Carlyle is the declaration that modesty was developed by the use of clothes. The statement is rather sweeping. We have plenty of evidence that among peoples and communities accustomed to nakedness, peoples who live in very warm climates, modesty has been very considerably developed. Indeed, among almost unclad tribes, there are some more virtuous in regard to sexual matters than the most highly civilized races. I mention this fact because it is important that you should not be deceived by some of the extreme opinions of Carlyle. Modesty must have developed according to intelligence, rather than according to the evolution of clothing; but it is very probable that clothing has much assisted in developing the ideal and the

more delicate forms of the virtue. That is about as far as the modern thinker dare venture to go. Now, for the western nations at least, clothing has certainly a very large relation to habits of modesty, but I do not know that the hearts of the people are any purer because they happen to have more or less clothes. Very often the fact is the other way. At least, clothes have become not only the covering of the man, but the mask of his vices.

I have used the word mask — the subject of masks will presently be in order. It will introduce us to the third important point of the argument.

The second point is the relation between the development of society, of civilization, and clothes — the fact that social distinctions are indicated, if not made, by clothes in all countries; and that is a very important matter to think about. But why is it an important matter to think about? Because class distinctions cultivate in the first place self-respect, the honest pride of the man, the honest knowledge of his worth in relation to society at large. And this means also the development of effort, intellectual competition, indeed, competition of every kind through which a man can climb from a lower to a higher rank, and effort of every kind by which he can benefit his fellow men. In this sense Carlyle is quite right in speaking of clothes as the foundation of society, but you must not take his words too literally; here you may understand by “clothes,” class-distinctions and social differences, with all that they imply.

And now we come to the third point in the argument, the point about masks. All clothing is a mask, for the body at least. I have said that clothing, considered as a mask, often helps men to hide their vices, their faults, their deficiencies of all kinds. In other words, we might call clothing a sort of material falsehood, a kind of hypocrisy. But at this point you should stop and ask yourselves the questions, “Is naked truth always respectable? Is it even always good, from any point of view? May it not sometimes be very bad? And falsehood, is it always bad? Is it

not sometimes quite excusable? *Is it not sometimes good? Is it not sometimes not only good, but very good? Not only very good, but even divine?"*

The answers to these questions must depend a good deal upon your capacity for thinking—especially upon your capacity for thinking what falsehood means. It may mean many thousands of things. Truth may mean a great many thousand things. But I shall take, not out of Carlyle, a simple example. A person does you unintentionally a great wrong; and, as you understand that it was done by mistake, you pretend not to feel the injury at all, and you speak to the person who has injured you, as if nothing had happened. In this matter you are not acting quite truthfully; you are pretending to feel in a way that you cannot feel; you are acting falsely, or acting a falsehood. But from the moral point of view of all religions, you are acting nobly, kindly, generously. Any one of you can think of thousands of examples in daily life, in your own lives, in the lives of those you love most, in which things which are not true, and actions which are not true, are being constantly said or done for the kindest reasons and with the happiest results. But you can remember also a great many very unpleasant experiences in your lives, or in the lives of friends, caused by telling truth, caused by the truthful expression of hateful or resentful or envious feeling. I mean that you must have had a thousand proofs of the great fact that truth is often wickedness and that falsehood is often pure love and goodness.

A shallow thinker is very apt to imagine that the value of truth is altogether absolute and unquestionable. But, as a matter of fact, we cannot live in human society by truth—I mean, we cannot live and act according to our own feelings and opinions. Every one of us must sacrifice his feelings occasionally for the sake of other people; and you cannot do this, you cannot perform the ordinary duties of life, without pretending a little to be what you are not. All this life of ours, in every country, is governed by rules

that are often painful, tiresome, seemingly unjust, certainly difficult to obey; but we must obey them very cheerfully, so far as outward appearances are concerned. Every one of us must act a little, and must recognize that the world is indeed a great theatre, in which everybody must play a part, and must wear the mask of an actor, all for the good of the world and for the happiness of mankind.

Relatively speaking, nothing is so necessary to man as illusion, as the beautifully untruthful. Human ideals, human aspirations, have all been more or less based upon the impossible, the untrue. But how much good has been thus accomplished!

Now you will recognize the importance of the third point, of clothes as a means of hiding. Clothes are symbols of much more than rank or position; they are especially symbols of conventions. Conventions are false, in more respects than one. But society is founded upon conventions, is regulated by conventions, is policed by conventions, is protected by conventions, is evolved by conventions. The next best thing in this world to being good is to pretend to be good, to try to make people think that you are good. Why? Because the habit of trying to appear to be a little better than you are, really helps you at last to become better than you are. Now all the conventions of society represent a sort of universal discipline, by which all men and women are obliged to act as if they were a little better than they really can be. An ideal is set before them, like a lesson, and they have to learn that lesson, and try to obey its teaching; and as soon as the lesson has been very well learned, a new and harder lesson is given. Moral progress in this world has been very slow, indeed, compared with other kinds of progress; but such progress as we have really made has been accomplished by the wearing of the Clothes of Convention.

From this point you can already imagine what a variety of subjects the author is likely to touch upon — religion as one kind of clothing for the human mind, loyalty and self-

sacrifice as other kinds, military regulations and activities as yet other kinds. And treated according to his most magical though eccentric method, these dry subjects are made to blossom in a wonderful manner.

Here I think I have said enough regarding the first part of the book; we may now begin to look at the second part—the autobiographical part. It comes, this Book II., like an interruption into the midst of the argument about clothes—but in a most interesting way. For it is thus introduced in order that the reader may understand how the author arrived at these convictions about the mystery of life and the mystery of all things. Wisdom comes chiefly from pain; and he is going to tell us how through great sorrow he became wise.

The philosophical value of the biography lies in the fact that it represents the experience of a great number of intelligent and generous-hearted persons able to think deeply. It is not because Carlyle paints his own history, so much as because that history is the history of many men. Nevertheless, some of the purely personal parts of it have their personal interest. The autobiographer speaks of his parents and their poverty, of his life as a peasant's child, of the mingled bitterness and sweetness of those years passed in his native village. He attributes all that is good in his character chiefly to the early teachings of his mother—only a simple peasant woman, but full of goodness and full of faith. Later on he tells us that he learned very little either from his teachers at various schools or from his professors at the university; they could give him only dry facts; they did nothing for his soul, for the better part of his nature. The only person who did that for him, was his mother. But her teaching does not appear to have always been very gentle. He was severely restrained in many directions, and taught at an early age that truth which it is a misfortune to have to learn later in life. There is a sentence in the second chapter of the Book II. in which the author sums up this truth after a very original fashion. "Too early and

too thoroughly we cannot be trained to know that Would, in this world of ours, is as mere zero to Should, and for most part as the smallest of fractions even to Shall.” Substitute for “should,” the words “ought to” and for “shall” understand “purpose,” “future intention” or “desire”;—and understand for “would,” “wish”—then you will see how excellent a statement this is. Or if we take “shall” in the sense of “must,” still the meaning remains very striking; for even what we must do, is as nothing compared with what we ought to do. As for what we would do, what we wish to do, it is very seldom indeed that in this world we are allowed a chance to do it. The whole of the biography subsequently turns a good deal upon these maxims—illustrates them in powerful ways. The next striking discovery of the autobiographer was much later in life, at the university, perhaps,—the discovery that even untruth may have a very great value. “Probably,” he says, “Imposture is of sanative, anodyne nature, and man’s Gullibility not his worst blessing.”* Later on he explains this much more fully. What are called by religious people pious frauds, pious falsehoods, pious devices—what are called in Buddhism *Hoben*—illustrate this fact; and the whole of the philosophy of clothes is based upon it in Carlyle’s book. Whether in religion, or in politics, or in education, certain devices of not a really truthful, but nevertheless of an indispensable character, have been found to greatly assist progress. Of course such philosophical positions must be accepted with proper reservation, and must be acted upon with great moral caution. But the fact is a very important one, and a man who cannot learn it in his youth, is likely afterwards to make great mistakes in his struggle with the world. For example, the earnest, honest, strictly truthful man, who does not recognize the larger relations of life, is very apt to denounce in anger numbers of social conditions which he sees to be false, simply because they are false, without asking himself whether the false may not have, for the time being,

Pedagogy, Book II, chap. iii.

a certain value of truth. And what is the reason why the world has always refused to listen even to the greatest men who attacked religion on the ground that religion is not true? In spite of all arguments, humanity feels that even religious fables have their worth; and that it is wrong to attack them or ridicule them until they prove themselves to have become obstacles in the way of moral or intellectual development. We shall have to return to this subject later; it is treated very interestingly in the third part of the book.

But although, in learning these two things, the young man had learned much, he was destined to pass through many severe trials before he could learn any higher truths. He had yet to learn really to understand the lesson of life, and the meaning of the world. He learned it chiefly through the consequences of his first love-affair. Love being the most powerful of passions and emotions, it is the one through which a man can receive the greatest moral and mental pain. The story is very well told, and there is nothing at all extraordinary in its circumstances. The young university graduate, poor and without any great prospects before him, falls in love with the daughter of a rich house, who makes him believe that she returns his affection and will marry him. But, at an unexpected moment, he is clearly given to understand that he was foolish even to think of such a thing, that he is of inferior rank, that he is poor and therefore contemptible in the eyes of the girl's family, and that he must not make his appearance at the house any more. This is of course a severe blow both to the love and to the pride of the man, but a strong man must be able to bear blows like this without flinching. What makes it hard in this case, however, is an act of treachery that accompanies it. The man who is really responsible for the whole trouble, the man who really is guilty of cruelty, and who gets the girl and marries her, happens to be the best friend of the sufferer, his university friend, a rich student, who has the advantage of wealth and social position. So the jilted lover suffers at once in his love, in his pride, and in his

sense of friendship. His intellectual studies have further rendered his mind sceptical in religious matters; and with these misfortunes upon him, everything seems at once to crumble about him—love, ambition, religion, and friendship, all abandoned and disbelieved in. With a heart full of bitterness, and empty of faith in anything, he wanders about the world for a good many years, before he can recover some degree of wisdom. At last indeed it comes to him through further experience with pain, through a new sense of sympathy with the suffering of humanity in general; for pain teaches the sufferer how to understand pain in others. This is the experience of most generous minds; it is by their own suffering that they first really learn what the suffering of mankind is, and then they learn to think of the best way to answer the Riddle of Life. All religions have tried to answer that riddle; and although many religions appear to contradict each other in various ways, all of them agree upon one great truth, the truth of Pain as Duty. All religions teach suffering—tell us that the world is not a place of pleasure, but a place for suffering; and that not only should a man learn to bear pain, but he should even invite and welcome pain in certain ways. Thus the fundamental Religion of Religions is the religion of pain; and when a man discovers this great truth, whether he believes in doctrines and dogmas or not, he learns to respect every great form of religion, for there is this truth in all of them which is as old as the world, and doubtless eternal.

Eternal—because there is another truth to be learned, after having learned this one, which explains it. Without Evil there could be no Good. Good exists only as the result of the struggle against evil. The one is necessary to the other as shadow to light in the vision of a landscape.

And there is yet a third truth in which the autobiographer puts faith, and which he learned when learning the others. Happiness is impossible to man, because as a Form, or Individual, he is finite and limited in all his capacities, while the mysterious Life that wells up within him is a part

of the Infinite Being. Confined within the narrowest limits by his body, he remains infinite by his mind. Therefore nothing can possibly satisfy him. Give him the world for a plaything, give him a hundred worlds; after having had possession long enough to understand something about them, he would still be dissatisfied and want more. He would want the whole universe, and would even then not be satisfied. Religious philosophy here tells us how this dissatisfaction should be met. I understand that Buddhist philosophy teaches that it is our duty not to wish for anything finite or limited, but only for the infinite. Some Christian philosophy contains a kindred teaching—not quite so profound, I think, but equally good for religious purposes—that the ultimate Absolute, as a Person or God, is the only subject of holy wishing. For deep thinkers this disposition is not satisfactory, because Christianity insists upon this continuance of individuality after death and through all time as part of its doctrine; while oriental philosophy more rationally teaches the melting or merging of all individuality into the Absolute. Carlyle's position in "Sartor Resartus" is very close to oriental philosophy; and it is very beautiful in its way.

I do not think I need speak more here of the mere story of the autobiography, beautiful as it is; these are the principal points of interest in it. Let us sum them up again before turning to the third part of the book.

The first wisdom, after a mother's teaching, that a young man learns is usually learned through pain. But the first effect of great pain is to create a kind of selfish despair, to harden instead of to soften and expand character. Then, perhaps, comes a period of scepticism during which the young man believes in nothing—neither in love, nor in friendship, nor in religion, nor in honesty, nor in truth. More pain is necessary for one in this condition, and if he happen to be of a kind heart, it will certainly come. But new pain, terrible pain, will at last compel sympathy with the suffering of other men, and will force a person to think

about all human experience in relation to pain. As human experience of this kind is chiefly recorded by religion, such thinking will force a man to perceive that even if all religions are false in some small matters, they are all true in some very great matters; and then he has learned to respect religion. In like manner he learns to respect humanity, with all its sins and failings, because he understands now how bitter life is, and how bravely mankind have in all times borne the burden of it, and struggled successfully from lower to loftier states of being. Then finally he comes to know, by thinking, that man is limited and weak only in one direction. For the life within him is certainly part of one universal life; he has been through all the past; he is related, though indirectly, to all the present; he will be related, without any question, to all the future. And so in place of the religion that he lost, he wins a larger faith. Instead of the friendship that he lost, he gains a new feeling of friendship and of love for all humanity. Instead of the pleasure he lost, he obtains a new capacity to bear pain, and comprehends that only through pain can higher wisdom ever be gained. And finally, just as he has discovered that pain and evil are necessary, so he discovers that many things which at one time seemed to him falsehoods, defections, follies, are of incalculable value, and really form the outer husks, or masks, or visible garments, of invisible truth. This is the principal teaching of the biographical part of the book. But there is very much more in the book than I have been able thus to indicate to you. Every line of it is worth reading not once, but many times; and now we can turn back again to the philosophy of clothes, which is resumed in the third and last portion of the book.

The first chapter of the third part need not concern us in the present lecture, for it is introductory, and something in the nature of a digression. But the next chapter, on church-clothes, introduces us to one of Carlyle's most interesting theories. By church-clothes, you must not understand Carlyle to mean only the dresses worn by priests and

nuns, and so forth; he means all the outward symbolism of a religion as well — its buildings, images, paintings; also its ceremonies, its prayers and music, its incense; also even its traditions, doctrines, dogmas, laws, precepts. For all of these, together or singly, Carlyle does not consider to be Religion itself. Religion itself he thinks rather to be in the heart of man—I am using the word heart here in the sense of mind; and for such religion as this there is no temple large enough, not even the sky, or the whole hollow universe. But what men commonly call religion, the philosopher here calls only the outward signs and symbols of religion, only its garments, its clothes. All clothes must wear out, and be thrown away, to be replaced by new clothes. So all forms and doctrines of religion must change according to time and civilization, and be replaced by new forms and new doctrines. While garments are new and good and respectable, we must prize them; we do not neglect or show contempt for them until they are worn out and useless. So again with all outward religion. Necessarily the outward part of religion is not in itself any more true than the outer clothes of a man are truly a part of his own body. But they represent and cover truth. Whenever the outward forms of religion correspond with some inward moral truth, the religion endures. But when the truth is gone, then the clothes can be of no possible use at all. That is the time in which they must be thrown away. There is, however, a danger always in appearances, the danger of mistaking them for truth, or at least of imagining a truth behind them; for we never can see the absolute truth, and can only find its whereabouts through the appearances which cover it.

The same thing is true of the clothing of the military power. The military world, like the religions, has its trappings of splendid colour, its symbols of rank, and its machinery of force. But woe be to those entrusted with the defence of a nation, who mistake these appearances for reality. The forms remain when the body is dead, when

the spirit has vanished; and then a people may find themselves suddenly at the mercy of other peoples. For example, just before the great war with Germany, France appeared to be the greatest military power in the world; the appearances, the garments of militarism, were all there; but when the phantom was touched it crumbled down. There is a story by Edgar Poe, “The Masque of the Red Death,” which tells us about a suit of clothes and a mask walking solemnly through the midst of a ballroom, with nobody inside of them. Such a thing is an army without spirit, moral discipline, or real reserve of power. Such a thing was China, before her military phantom was blown to pieces by Japan. It is interesting to remember here that Carlyle was especially a historian, and his great histories, especially the history of the French Revolution, were all written from the standpoint of this philosophy of clothes. Yet you will find how very closely he touches the truth by reading the evidence of Taine and others in regard to the conditions of the monarchy before the Revolution became possible. There was the army and all forms of government, but they were all of them shams and masks.

Politics, domestic politics, afford the subject for some other chapters of the book in the same connection. You will perhaps be less interested in these chapters, since they relate especially to foreign conditions, to the state of the rich and poor in England and Ireland. I will only observe that the philosophy of clothes is equally applied to economical machinery, to the exterior facts of domestic government. Finally we have also chapters upon social shams—the conventions of extravagance in dress, extravagance in selfish deeds, extravagance in all kinds of luxury. But these chapters, too, treat particularly of the crying evils of English society, and need only be mentioned. The great value of the whole work is in its treatment of universals; and although truths of the universal class are to be found scattered through every page of the third part of the book, this part is less valuable and less useful to you than the

other two books. It is written particularly by way of appeal to English thinkers; the best part of the volume is that of which I have already given a summary.

Now for a few general considerations. I suppose that you have observed from the summary made that "Sartor Resartus" is a book of which the merit is largely in suggestion. It is a book written to make people think, rather than to teach them how to think; and its subject is the most important of all subjects—life, and the conduct of life. It is a book also calculated to correct a certain way of looking at great problems, great riddles, especially social riddles. Now many thousands of thousands of good men get through life very well with only a few simple ideas about right and wrong and duty; and they do not trouble themselves to think about the reason of things. It is indeed better that they should not; for it could only make them unhappy. But an ever-growing class of educated men cannot go through life in this innocent way; they are forced by duty or by other circumstances to think very profoundly, sooner or later, about the mystery of the universe. It is for such as these that the book is useful. It turns the thoughts to the best direction from which many problems can be studied. The statesman entrusted with the welfare of his people, the educator or religious teacher entrusted with the task of alleviating human sorrow or directing human efforts, the poet or man-of-letters whose mission is to teach the beautiful and cultivate the noble emotions or the generous idea—these are the men who cannot think about life in the old simple way. All must think about it in a larger fashion, in a fashion in accord with the present great expansion of human knowledge. And these classes of minds are largely furnished by the world's centres of learning; even here, the statesmen and teachers and men-of-letters of the future must come from the universities. I cannot help thinking that it is almost the duty of every university student, who feels capable of the feat, to read "Sartor Resartus," not once but many times. There are things in it with which he may not

be pleased; there are extravagances in it at which some practical philosophers may smile. But the worth of the reading is in its after-effect; it forces big thoughts, and compels the recognition of new aspects of common things. You might ask me whether works of pure philosophy, scientific philosophy, ought not to have the preference. I should say in answer that this would depend very much upon the mind of the student. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, practical science could not give you one element that you will find in this book—the emotional element. If a man has a very powerful imagination, as well as a very large sympathy, the study of science alone will give him everything that he needs. He can get the water of emotion out of any desert of dry facts. But such men are very rare; it usually happens that the scientific faculties are fully developed in unemotional minds, so that we find the scientific faculty to be usually associated with a certain hardness of character. This hardness eventually corrects itself to some degree through emotional experience, but it is nearly always there. The scientific student would do well, I think, not to take his science without a fair amount of emotional reading, such as may serve to keep the more generous faculties warm.

There is one part of the book that I think ought to interest you more than the philosophy of clothes itself—the part that deals with the author’s first painful experiences of life. I have given you a digest of this part. But there is one paragraph which I should wish to especially call your attention to in closing this lecture. It is the paragraph treating of the real obstacles to success in life.

Carlyle’s remark is this in substance: “Many people think that success in life, for a man of talent and energy, chiefly depends upon working patiently and steadily, acting honestly in all things, doing one’s very best in whatever one undertakes, and always performing one’s duty, when duty is required. This means a great deal—it means an almost perfect conduct of life. But a man who believes

that this is enough, is under a very great and very sad mistake. Unfortunately the obstacles in life which are really serious, are not to be overcome, either by energy or by one's own work, nor by honesty, nor by duty, nor by faith, nor by anything purely good. For these obstacles are the wickedness and the folly and the ignorance and the envy and the malice of other men." This is the substance of Carlyle's teaching; and I believe that you are all still too young to understand how large and how terrible is the truth that is behind this statement. Everybody with a good heart, who has been brought up in a good home, under the teaching of good parents, and afterwards of good instructors, is apt to enter the world with a high moral sense of duty, and an innocent faith in the goodness of his fellowmen. Of course his school life teaches him that there are great differences of character, that not all people are equally good. But there is yet no competition in schools of the sort that reveals the full depths, bad and good, of human nature. It is in the struggle of life that this is first fully learned, and the result is a very painful surprise. Instead of thinking that one has only to do one's duty, a young man soon finds himself obliged to think how he can do that duty. Presently he will find that it seems as if all society were in conspiracy against him, trying to prevent him from performing his duty. He learns that to be good in this world is a very difficult thing, a very difficult thing indeed, not because he feels within himself any difficulty about being good, but because other people make the difficulty for him. Almost daily he has to choose between his interests and his morals; almost daily he has to decide whether he will do what is wrong or do what is right; and this goes on for years and years and years, until every fibre of moral strength that is in him has been tested to the uttermost. He has to understand that the real world is but very imperfectly influenced by moral teachings in small matters; that everything is regulated by interest, by advantage. If he be very intelligent and far seeing, he may soon learn to accept things as they

are, without enquiring too much why they should be so, and without allowing himself to become angry about them. But no matter how intelligent he may be, he will discover that more than intelligence, and more than energy, and more than morality is necessary for him. He must not try to avoid trouble; he must be a fighter—that is, he must be able to oppose, to overcome, even to give pain when necessary, without caring about the consequences. It is not enough to be good—it is much more important, so far as success goes, to be strong; but the best kind of man is the man who is both good and strong, who knows how to be harsh and stern at certain times. All men cannot be all this; very few good men can be all this. Yet success greatly depends upon it; the higher the society, and the more intellectual the world in which a man's lot is cast, the more bitter and wicked the opposition that must be faced. In this country as yet social conditions have not reached by any means those extremes which they have reached in European societies, where the difficulties of success in life are simply tremendous, and every year increasing; but even here, I think, you will all recognize at some time or other that to be good and to work hard is by no means enough to get along with, and the battle is best won by the man able to meet moral obstacles with superior intelligence and with positive force. Self-respect, the respect that compels a man not to yield to what he believes to be wrong, no matter how great the power behind the wrong—this is the most important of possessions. Yet it does not always obtain its deserts; it must be an aggressive self-respect to get them. I remember a singular case in America where this kind of self-respect was not altogether successful. The man was a civil engineer employed by an immense railway company at a moderate salary. His prospects were bright; the directors liked him, his fortune was almost in sight. One day the chief director of the company ordered him to make plans for a railway construction upon a certain piece of ground. He went to the ground to study it, and came

back and said to the director, "We cannot use that ground in the way that you want—a space about two feet wide and about three hundred feet long belongs to other people." The director answered, "If we put the building up quickly, it will never be noticed until too late, and then we shall have the law in our favour." "But that would be stealing," the engineer answered, "and I will not do it." For this he was discharged; and the railroad company, being very influential, influenced nearly a dozen other railroad companies against him, so that he could not for more than ten years obtain any employment even in the United States as a railroad engineer. But at last, after long waiting and suffering, his case was heard of by men who could understand the real business value of such character; and he was placed in a position worthy of his talents.

Nevertheless, he will never be a rich man. He might have been rich, if he had not said no, when several hundred millions of dollars wanted him to say yes. I have no doubt that all of you will find yourselves, not once, but many times in life, asked to say yes, when you feel that you ought to say no. The reading of such a book as "Sartor Resartus" will perhaps at such a time materially help you with the "no." It is the "no" at last that makes the highest quality of human progress, both moral and material.

CHAPTER XX

NOTE UPON TOLSTOY'S "RESURRECTION"

BEFORE commencing another lecture on texts of any kind, we may relieve the monotony by a little talk about a wonderful book which all the world is talking about at the present time. Besides giving you special lectures on individual authors, I believe that it is also the lecturer's duty to talk to you occasionally about the great literary events of our own day—at least about such of them as appear to have any important moral or social signification. It is well that you should accustom yourselves during your university career to watch such literary events, and to make fairly correct estimates and judgments in regard to them, remembering that the thought of the future is made by the events of the present—in literary circles, at least.

In a preceding lecture on a book by Meredith, I insisted at some length upon the difficulty to be faced by every reformer—one might have added, by any man with a novel idea. Men of new ideas usually get into trouble. It is also possible to get into trouble by returning to ideas which are very old, but which being true, may be in antagonism to the notions of the time or to the existing tendencies in society. Count Tolstoy is an example of the latter fact. I spoke of him in a former lecture, regarding his great power as a novelist, but I was then referring to the work of his youth particularly. I want now to speak of the work of his old age. You will do well to remember that next to Turgueniev, he represents the highest literary art of Russia; and I am not sure but that he will eventually be judged even greater than Turgueniev. And speaking of Russian prose literature, remember that although small in quantity, its quality has not been surpassed by any other literature,

not even by the French. I do not mean to say that the Russian writers are masters of form as the French are; they cannot be that. But in the art of picturing human life, so as to bestir the best emotions of the reader, they really stand almost alone.

In his later years you know that the Count became very religious in his own way. He made a sort of Christianity of his own—a poetical kind of Christianity, which consisted in applying the teachings of Christ to the conduct of actual life. Perhaps you have read or heard that there are now in Russia a great many strange sects of Christians, who are giving the Government more trouble than the English and American Quakers gave to their respective governments in former centuries. You know what the Russian government is, and you know what it means there for a man to say, I am an anti-militarist. But there are thousands of men who persist in saying that to their government in Russia, year after year, and welcoming the punishment which follows. They believe that it is not Christian to declare war, to destroy life, and to wound others. And really the government cannot do anything with these men except to punish them. Thousands have been driven out of the country, but the number of sects continues to grow. This will give you an idea, but only a very small idea, regarding the new kind of Christianity existing in Russia. The brave author I am speaking of does not belong to the particular sects mentioned, though he has sympathy with them. He is a sect in himself. He has given away all his property to help the peasants who were formerly slaves upon his father's estate, and he has even written books of late years in order to devote the money obtained from their sale to charitable purposes. When he first began to abandon literature, many years ago, the great Turgueniev wrote to him and begged him, for the sake of Russian literature, to go back to fiction. For he has this one faculty to a greater extent than Turgueniev had, than almost any modern writer had—the dramatic faculty, the power to make hundreds of

different characters really think and move and speak in the pages of a book. But he did not give any heed to this generous advice at the time. Afterwards he wrote chiefly little short stories intended to illustrate moral facts. But now he has certainly returned to fiction, because he discovered that he had something new to say; and the result is really very astonishing. I should not declare that his last book is a greater piece of literary work than the novels of his young days; I should simply say that it is one of the most terrible and touching books ever written. Nothing else at all resembling it appeared during the century. In one sense you may call it a religious novel, but actually it is not a religious novel at all in relation to dogma or doctrine of any kind. It is simply the story of the influence of generous ideas upon the mind of a man who has done something wrong. The word "religious" concerns it only in the sense that moral feeling is religion. The result of writing that book is that Count Tolstoy has been excommunicated by the Orthodox Church as a blasphemmer and an infidel, as one who is not to be allowed the privilege of religious believers after his death, and as one for whose soul men are hereafter forbidden to pray. You will see that in Russia, at least, literature is not by any means free from religious interference as well as secular censorship. But really the offence of Count Tolstoy's book only happens to be that it is more Christian than Christianity. To try to improve a religious conception may be quite as dangerous socially as to attack it.

What is the subject of the novel? A young Russian nobleman, while still a university student, thoughtlessly seduces a servant girl in the house of his mother. He gives her a child. Afterwards he thinks that, as he is a nobleman, it is quite sufficient compensation for him to give her a present of one hundred rubles. Then he loses sight of her for a number of years, during which time he enjoys all the pleasures of life as much as possible and becomes as selfish and as hard as any other man of the world. Later

on he is summoned one day to the criminal court as a jurymen in order to decide upon the guilt or innocence of a prostitute who has been accused of murdering a man, or at least of poisoning him, for purposes of robbery. The woman is very beautiful; and her face immediately attracts the young nobleman's attention. Then what is his surprise to find that this is the same girl whom he had seduced years before in his mother's house. It was his fault that instead of becoming a happy wife she had become what he now saw before him. The accusation brought against her happened to be false, and he knows from positive evidence that it is a false charge, but the machinery of the Russian criminal court is still very imperfect, and he cannot obtain the acquittal of the woman. Although she is innocent, she is sentenced to Siberia.

Then as he heard the sentence he began to understand what the result of his own moral injustice to the girl had been—the total ruin of a life, the destruction of body and soul. And why had he done this? For mere selfish pleasure. Can he possibly atone for the wrong?

In one way he can partly atone to her. His moral duty now is, notwithstanding that he is a high nobleman and that she has become a public prostitute, convicted of murder—it is now his duty, he thinks, to go with her to Siberia, and to marry her, and to devote the rest of his life to the work of trying to make her a good woman.

Perhaps the element of the improbable will seem to some of you who have not read the book, to obtrude itself in this relation. Is it not a little absurd to imagine a nobleman thus willing to disgrace himself for a moral purpose which the nineteenth century can have no sympathy with, so far as society is concerned? In this country, perhaps the story seems almost unnatural; but it is not in the least unnatural to European readers. In fact, the eccentricities of English noblemen have furnished parallels in points of strangeness within the memory of living men. A generous nature, profoundly sympathetic, moved to remorse by the fullest recog-

dition of the consequences of a fault, and, moreover, religious in the best sense, would certainly be capable of attempting what the novelist describes. A good heart is capable of any sacrifice. But when you read the story, especially if you read it in the French translation, which is much superior in many respects to the English, you will have another reason to feel that the story is not improbable. I mean the recognition of the fact that it is not simply a story, but the record of a personal experience. The man who wrote that book did not imagine it; he saw and felt all that he narrates; he is telling us the history of his own faults and of his own efforts to atone for them.

One of the fine things said in an early chapter of the book, is that nobody who injures another human being can possibly learn the extent of that injury until he attempts to make compensation. The young nobleman of the novel encounters this truth from the start, learns with surprise the force and depth of it. It is all very well to be willing to do what is right, but the doing is not nearly so easy a matter as might be supposed. It looks a very simple thing to go to the woman, and to say to her, "Forgive me; be my wife; I am rich and influential, I can protect and make you happy." But when the man actually does this, he discovers that he is fighting against all society, all laws. He has, as a wrong-doer, been, without knowing it, working as a part of the great social machinery that crushes the weak for the benefit of the strong. Every seducer really helps the cruel and brutal forces of society by his treacheries. He is working for all that is selfish and bad in society. Society helps him to do the wrong, and afterwards it helps him to crush the victim into the silence and the obscurity of hopeless misery. But it will not help him to undo the wrong. Not at all. When he tries to do that, society turns upon him in the name of morality and in the name of common sense. He becomes then, for society, an enemy, a fool, a person no longer worthy of common respect.

So when the nobleman tries to rescue the woman from

her unhappy position, the world simply laughs at him, the law opposes him, and his friends regard him with scorn as one who would shamelessly disgrace the society to which he belongs. Even those officials who might be willing to help him, do not at all understand his motives. His only sympathizers are those who imagine that he is actuated by sensual passion; and it requires no little courage on his part to bear this variety of misapprehensions. And he has to bear it in extraordinary places under the most extraordinary circumstances. He is obliged to go to the officials of the prison and to explain to them that he wants to marry that woman who has been accused of murder; he must tell them also who he is—a prince, disgracing the race from which he sprang. He must associate with convicts and felons in the prisons, and submit to the horrible conditions there prevailing. He must bear every variety of insult. And, after all, the woman for whose sake he bears all this, utterly despises him—reproaches him, mocks him, refuses his help. All that he can hope for is to soften her resentment by patience and kindness. So he follows her to Siberia. He actually succeeds in having her sentence remitted, and sets her free from the prison. But then she refuses to marry him, and marries another man. That is the whole of the story in brief. The wonderful art is the analysis of the emotions of its characters, and the strange illustration which it affords of the possible result of a single selfish act, and of the tremendous difficulty in the way of repairing that act. There are several hundred figures in the story—real living figures—which must have been studies from life, and which are so very human that the reader forgets that he is reading about Russia. Characters are of the very same kind in every land. One cannot help thinking what a great dramatist Tolstoy might have been had he taken to that branch of literature.

So much for the literary facts of the book. That which has given offence is not concerned with the art of those pages. The offensive fact is that the author has dared to

preach essentially the Christian doctrine—the doctrine of human love as held by the ancient Christians, and after a manner antagonistic to the modern doctrinal and political Christianity of Russia. The censors who could find in such a book a reason for his excommunication must have been, nevertheless, determined from the first upon that course. For the alleged chief cause of the sentence is that Tolstoy spoke of Jesus Christ as being “only a man.” But though such be the doctrinal reason given, the resentment must have been caused by something else. And that something else was indeed a much more serious matter. It was nothing else than the manner in which the author shows that the great machinery of the Church is quite as often used to uphold injustice as to make for justice; and that there is, even among the aristocracy of the Church, a kind of political indifference to the essential duties of that Church. After all, the author has really effected his object better by getting excommunicated than he could have done in any other possible way.

In calling your attention to this very terrible and wonderful book, however, it is my duty as a follower of Spencer, to tell you that some of its social theories will not bear scientific consideration. In this respect the work is certainly defective. It is not true, for example, that the practice of perfect brotherly love throughout all classes of society—the abolishing of prisons, the abolition of criminal law—it is not true that any of these things are possible in the present state of humanity. Everywhere throughout the book we meet doubtful and startling half-truths—for example, the statement that most of the unhappiness of life is caused by approaching men for motives of interest only, without sympathy and without love. If you can really love men and deal with them only in the loving spirit, the author tells us, you will not be unhappy; but if you mingle with men, and do not love them, if you do business with them without love, then the most frightful misfortunes will result. This sounds beautiful, and there is a good deal of truth in

it, but by no means all the truth. The existing characters of men cannot be so changed, either by religious teaching or by education or law or by any other means, as to render such a policy of life even thinkable. And the book is full of utterances quite as remarkable and quite as illusive. But the defects which I have specified are after all, on the noble side; they do not really spoil the work in the least; and they make even men who cannot accept such teaching, who cannot help smiling at it, think in a generous way about matters which deserve the most careful consideration.

CHAPTER XXI

ON ROMANTIC AND CLASSIC LITERATURE, IN RELATION TO STYLE

IN the course of these lectures you will find me often using such words as “romantic” and “classic” — in relation either to poetry or to prose, — to expression or sentiment. And it is rather important that you should be able to keep in mind the general idea of the difference of the qualities implied by these adjectives. What is a romantic composition? — What is a classic or classical composition?

Details, explanations of these terms, I have already given in the course of other lectures, and details will not be necessary at present. It will be sufficient, quite sufficient, to remember that classic work, as regards any modern production, means work constructed according to old rules which have been learned from the classic authors of antiquity, the Greek and the Latin masters of literature. So that the very shortest possible definition of classical composition would be this: any prose or poetry written according to ancient rules, that is, ancient rhetoric. And, conversely, you might suppose romantic to mean any compositions not according to rhetoric, not according to the old rules. But this would be but partly true. Work done without regard to rules of any kind could scarcely be good literature, and European romantic literature really includes the best of almost everything in drama, in poetry, in fiction, and even in the essay. There have been rules observed, of course; when I tell you that Tennyson was romantic quite as much as Shakespeare was, you will see that absence of law does not signify romanticism.

To define exactly what is romantic in literature, would require a very exact understanding of what was up to our own time considered classic in English literature; for romantic

work has always been neither more nor less than a justifiable departure from the observance of accepted literary conventions. And to explain these conventions fully you would find a very tiresome undertaking—involving much lecturing about rhetorical forms and their origins. A better way to clear the field will be to define the romantic position thus:

It is right and artistic to choose whatever form of literary expression an author may prefer, provided only that the form be beautiful and correct.

The classical position represented extreme conservatism in literature, and might be thus put into a few words:

You have no right whatever to choose your own forms of literary expression, either in poetry or in prose. Experience has proved that the forms which we prescribe are the best, and whatever you have to say must be said according to our rules. If you do not obey those rules, you will be inflicting an injury upon your native language and your native literature; and for such an injury you cannot be forgiven.

The great mistake which the champions of classical feeling made in England, and indeed throughout modern Europe, was the mistake of considering language as something fixed and perfected, completely evolved. If any modern European languages were really perfect, or even so nearly perfect as the old Greek language has been, then indeed there might be some good reason for conservative rules. After any language has reached its perfect period, then it is threatened with decay from exterior sources; and at such a time measures may be taken with good reason to check such decay. But all European languages are still in the process of growth, of development, of evolution. To check that growth would have been the inevitable result of a triumph of classicism. You must imagine the classicist as saying to the romanticist, "Do not try to do anything new, because you cannot do anything better than what has already been done." And the romanticist answers, "What you want is to stop all progress. I know that I can do better, and I am

going to do it, in my own way." Of course the same literary division is to be found in every country, however little, whether of Europe or of the East. There will always be the conservative party, anxious to preserve the traditions of the past, and dreading every change that can affect those traditions—because it loves them, recognizing their beauty, and cannot believe that anything new could ever be quite so beautiful and useful. And everywhere there must be the romantic element, young, energetic, impatient of restraint, and all-confident of being able to do something much better than ever was done before. Strange as it may seem, it is only out of the quarrelling between these conflicting schools that any literary progress can grow.

Before going further, permit me to say something in opposition to a very famous Latin proverb,—*Medio tutissimus ibis**—"Thou wilt go most safely by taking the middle course."

In speaking of two distinct tendencies in literature, you might expect me to say that the aim of the student should be to avoid extremes, and to try not to be either too conservative or too liberal. But I should certainly never give you any such advice. On the contrary, I think that the proverb above quoted is one of the most mischievous, one of the most pernicious, one of the most foolish that ever was invented in this world. I believe very strongly in extremes, in violent extremes, and I am quite sure that all progress in this world, whether literary, or scientific, or religious, or political, has been obtained only with the assistance of extremes. But remember that I say "with the assistance of"—so I do not mean that extremes alone accomplish the end; there must be antagonism, but there must be also conservatism. What I mean by finding fault with the proverb is simply this,—that it is very bad advice for a young man. To give a young man such advice is very much like telling him not to do his best, but to do only half best,—in other words, to be half-hearted in his undertakings!

An old man with experience certainly learns how to

* Ovid *Metamorphosis*. ii. 137—Editor.

take a middle course through conviction and knowledge, not through prudence or caution. But this is practically impossible for the average young man to do with sincerity to himself. Without experience you cannot expect him to master strong prejudices, great loves and hates, admirations, repulsions. The old man can master all these, because he has had the practical opportunity of studying most questions from a hundred different sides. And also he has learned patience in a degree impossible to youth. And it is not the old men who ever prove great reformers; they are too cautious, too wise. Reforms are made by the vigour and the courage and the self-sacrifice and the emotional conviction of young men, who do not know enough to be afraid, and who feel much more deeply than they think. Indeed, great reforms are not accomplished by reasoning, but by feeling. And therefore I should say that nothing ought to be more an object with young scholars than the cultivation of their best feelings; for feelings are more important in their future career than cold reasoning. It is rather a good sign for the young man to be a little imprudent, a little extravagant, a little violent, in his way of thinking and speaking about those subjects in which he is most profoundly interested; and I should say that a young man who has no prejudice, no strong opinion, is not really a vigorous person either in mind or in body. Too much of the middle course is a bad sign.

And now let us apply the principle indicated, to literature. Literature is a subject upon which a young man of education should feel very strongly. Ought he to be a conservative, a classicist? Ought he to be a liberal, a romanticist? I should answer that it does not matter at all which he may happen to be; but he certainly ought to put himself upon one side or the other, and not to try anything so half-hearted as to take a middle course. No middle course policy ever accomplished anything for literature, and never will accomplish anything. But conservatism has done very much; and liberalism has done still more; and they have done it

by their continual contest for supremacy. In the end this contest is that which makes the true and valuable middle course. But no middle course—I mean, no system ever combining the best qualities of the two schools—could have grown out of a middle course policy, which simply means a state of comparative inaction.

As for the question, ought I to be romantic or conservative?—that can best be answered by one's own heart. How do you feel upon the matter? If you have a sincere admiration for the romantic side of literature, and sincere faith in its principles, then it is your duty to be romantic. If, on the other hand, you can feel more strongly the severe beauty of classic methods, and perceive the advantage to national literature of classic rules, —then it is your duty to be as classical as you can. In the course of time you will find that larger experience will make you much more tolerant, in either direction; but at the outset, it is much better to join one of the two camps. And you can do so with the full conviction that you will be serving literature, whichever side you sincerely espouse.

You know that in a steam engine there is a part of the machinery designed to check speed,—to prevent the structure from operating too rapidly. Without this governing apparatus, a steam engine would quickly break itself to pieces. Now, conservatism, classicism, has acted exactly in the way suggested. It has prevented changes from being too quickly made. It has prevented the machinery of literature from breaking to pieces. On the other hand, it could accomplish by itself very little good. As I said before, a long period of classic domination would mean literary stagnation. This is the story of conservatism in every European literature. Whenever it became supremely powerful, literature began to decay or to grow barren. But on the other hand the romantic tendency unchecked also leads to literary decadence. At first the romantic principle of liberty is exercised only within comparatively narrow limits. Presently, however, the more impatient and unsubmissive party in the liberals

desire to break down even the rules which they once hoped to maintain. Still later a violation of all rules is likely to become a temporary fashion. Eventually the nation, the public, become disgusted with the result, and a strong reaction sets in, putting the classical party into supreme power again. This tendency is very well exemplified by the present history of literature in France,—where a reaction has been provoked by the excesses of literary liberalism. In England also there are signs that a classic reaction is coming. Prose has decayed; poetry is almost silent; and when we find a decay of prose and a comparative silence of poetry, past experience assures us that a classical reaction is likely.

But when classicism returns after a long period of romantic triumph, it never returns in exactly the same form. After reinstatement, the classic spirit invariably proves to have gained a great deal by its last defeat. It returns as a generous conqueror—more liberal, more enterprising, more sympathetic than before. Again it exercises restraint upon choice of forms and modes of sentiment, but not the same restraint as formerly. So, too, we find romanticism gaining strength by each defeat. When it obtains control again after an interval of classic rule, it proves itself to have learned not a little from its previous mistakes; it is apt to be less extravagant, less aggressive, less indifferent to race-experience than before. In other words, every alternation of the literary battle seems to result in making the romantic spirit more classic, and the classic spirit more romantic. Each learns from the other by opposing it.

What I have thus far said, relates especially to European literature; and I am much too ignorant of Japanese literature to speak to you about it with any attempt at detail. But I may venture some general remarks justified by such inferences as may be drawn from the past history of literature in other countries. Whether there has been a true romantic movement in Japanese literature, I do not even know; but I am quite sure that such a movement must take

place sooner or later in the future, and that not once, but many times. I imagine that the movement would especially take the form of a revolt against the obligation of writing in the written language only, and perhaps against fixed forms and rules of poetical composition. I am quite sure that a revolt of some kind must happen,—that is, in the event of any great literary progress. And it is proper here that I should state how my sympathies lie in regard to European literature,—they are altogether romantic. The classical tendencies I think of as painfully necessary; but I have never been able to feel any sympathy whatever with modern classical literature in the strict sense of the word. Consequently, as regards any departure in future Japanese literature, I should naturally hope for a romantic triumph. I should like to hear of the breaking down of many old rules, and the establishment of many new ones. I should like to hear of some great scholar not afraid to write a great book in the language of the common people; and I should like to hear of attempts in the direction of the true epic and of the great romance in some new form of Japanese poetry. But, having said thus much, I only mean to express my frank sympathies. As to the question whether one should attempt or should not attempt a new departure in Japanese literature, there is very much to be said. Before anybody attempts to make a great change, it were well that he should be able to correctly estimate his own strength.

Suppose that we take, for example, the subject of writing in the colloquial language—let us say a great novel, a great drama, or a great work of a didactic description. It seems to me that the first question to ask oneself, as to the advisability of using the popular instead of the literary language, should be this:—“Am I able, by using the colloquial, to obtain much greater and better effects than I can by following the usual method?” If any young author, who has had a university training, can ask himself that question, and honestly answer it in the affirmative, then I think it

would be his duty to throw aside the old form and attempt to do something quite new. But unless a man is certain of being able to accomplish more in this way than he could accomplish in any other way, I should not encourage him to work in a new direction. The only reason for making great changes in any art is the certainty of improvement,—the conviction of new power to be gained. To attempt something new only with the result of producing inferior work were a very serious mistake, because such a mistake would react against the whole liberal movement, the whole tendency to healthy change. But if you have at any time a strong conviction that by breaking old rules you can effect new things of great worth, then it would be your duty without fearing any consequence to break the rules.

In Europe every romantic triumph has been achieved at a very considerable cost. Literature, like religion, like patriotism, must have its martyrs. Men must be ready to sacrifice their personal interests in order to bring about any great changes for the better. Immense forces have always been marshalled on the classic side in modern Europe. For example, first, the universities, which represent a tremendous power. Secondly, the religious element; for religion has always been necessarily conservative in Europe; and on the subject of literature, this conservatism has not been without good cause. And thirdly, I may remark that the nobility, the aristocracy, even the upper middle classes, have generally given their support to literary as well as to other kinds of conservatism.

And you can scarcely imagine what power, in a country like England, was formerly represented by the universities, the Church, and society. It really required extraordinary courage to oppose the judgment of these, even in so small a matter as literary style. I do not know whether in this country a literary innovator would have any corresponding opposition; but I am led to suppose that there is a very considerable strength of conservatism still ruling certain departments of Japanese literature, because I have been told,

when urging that certain things might be done with good results, that these things were contrary to custom. The fact itself would not be, I think, a sufficient reason for attempting nothing new. The super-excellent, the rare, the best of anything, is nearly always in some sort contrary to custom. But it is true that only the men of force, the giants, should break the customs. And that is why I believe that a conservatism like that of the English has been of very great value to literature in the past. The opposition which it offered to change was so great that only the most extraordinary man dared to break through. It is not an excuse to break a rule, that the rule is difficult to follow or tiresome to obey. As I have already said, it seems to me that a young man's convictions ought to make him either a conservative or a liberal in literature,—that he ought to be naturally either classical or romantic. But in declaring this, I do not mean that any one would be justified in following his literary tendencies to the extent of breaking rules merely for the production of inferior work. One may be romantic, for example, by taste, by sympathy, by feeling, without producing anything of which the evident weakness would not disgrace the school he represents.

And now I want to say something about western styles as represented by romantic and classic writers. According to the rules of classic rhetoric, style, to be cultivated, ought to be more or less uniform. Rules having been established for the construction and the proportion and the position of every part of a sentence, as well as of every part of a verse, one would presume that all who perfectly mastered and obeyed these rules would write in exactly the same way,—so that you could not tell the style of one man from the style of another.

If all men's minds were exactly alike, and all had studied classic rules, this would have really been the case throughout Europe at different periods of literary history. In the English classic age—I might say during the greater part of the eighteenth century, such uniformity did actually

obtain that we find it hard to distinguish the work of one writer from that of another, if we do not know the name of the author or the name of the book. Thousands and thousands of pages of prose were then produced by different men,—each page as much resembling every other as one egg or one pea might resemble all other eggs or all other peas; it also was so in poetry. Among the school of poets who used in that time the heroic couplet—that is, the rhymed ten syllable lines that Pope made fashionable—it requires a very clever critic to distinguish the work of one man from the work of another merely by studying the text itself.

I think that in France the results of classical uniformity became even more marked. Without a good deal of preliminary study you would find the work of the French classic poets very much alike in the use of the alexandrine—a verse as tiresome and as artificial as the heroic couplet of Pope. But the French prose of the classic age is much more uniform than the poetry—and much more uniform than English prose ever could be, for the English is less perfect than the French, and therefore less subject to the discipline of fixed rules. But you might take half a dozen pages of French prose written by each of fifty different authors, and you would find it very hard to distinguish one style from another. I do not mean to say that style does not exist in the personal sense. It does exist; but the differences are so fine, so delicate, that to the common reader there is no difference at all.

However, even under the severest discipline of classic rules, what we call style can always be detected by a trained critic. This is simply because there is something in the mind of each man so very different from that which is in the mind of every other man, that no two men could ever obey the same rule in exactly the same way. The judgment of each, the feeling of each, would move in a slightly different direction from every other. In the classic sense, strictly speaking, style has only the meaning of obedience to general rules, correctness, exactitude. But in the romantic

sense, this has nothing to do with style. To the romantic comprehension of style as we understand the term to-day, it was the particular differences by which the writing of one man could be distinguished from the writing of another that really signified. And in our own day literary style means personal character—means the individual quality of feeling which distinguishes every author's work. The romantic tendency is to accentuate and expand such differences, such individual characteristics; the tendency of classical discipline is to suppress them—at least to suppress them as much as possible. From this fact I think you will perceive one signification of romanticism,—one character of it which should command our utmost respect. Romanticism aims to develop personality; consciously or unconsciously the object of every school of romanticism has been to develop the individual, rather than to develop any general power of literary expression. Conservatism represses the individual as much as possible; and all classic schools in Europe have endeavoured to cultivate or maintain a general type of literary excellence at the expense of the individual.

So the question resolves itself into the question of Personality in literature. What is personality? It is that particular quality of character which makes each man or woman in this world different from all other men or women in the world. Individuality only means separateness; personality means very much more—all the distinctions in human nature of an emotional or an intellectual kind belong to personality. In the lowest ranks of life you find that the people are very much alike in their habits, thoughts, and emotions. Really there are personal differences, but they are not very strong. We say of these classes that personality has not much developed among them. Higher up the differences become much more definite and visible. In the intellectual classes personality develops to such a degree that uniformity of opinion is out of the question; here each man thinks and acts and feels differently from most of the rest. We can go still higher. In such classes

of select minds as are represented by professional philosophy, professional science, not to speak of art and music, the differences of personality are so great that you will not find any two professors of the same subject thinking in exactly the same way, and unity of opinion, upon any subject, becomes extremely difficult among them.

We therefore come to the conclusion that personality especially belongs to the higher ranges of intellectual culture and of emotional sensibility. I need not insist upon its importance to literature. The classic school has always championed impersonality; the romantic school has always been the highest expression of personality. And this is the reason why I think that it is quite legitimate to express my own preference and sympathy for the romantic tradition. It was this tradition which really produced every great change for the better in every literature. It was the school of Personality; and Personality in its highest forms, signifies Genius. Out of all the glorious names on the roll of European literature you will find that the vast majority are names of romanticists. I do not deny that there are some great English names and French names and German names representing classicism. But the romantic names only take the very highest rank in the history of these literatures. I might cite fifty names by way of illustration; but I imagine this would be unnecessary. Let me only remind you of what the nineteenth century represents in English literature. There is not a single poet of importance in it belonging to the classic school in the real sense of the word. The first group of great poets are all of them romantic,—Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey; Byron (classical in form at times, yet altogether romantic in feeling and expression), Shelley, and Keats; Tennyson, Swinburne, Rossetti, Browning,—even Matthew Arnold, in spite of classical training, yielded to romantic tendencies. Or go back to the eighteenth century—the very age of classicism. There you have indeed two great classic figures in poetry, Dryden and Pope; but I should doubt very much whether these could justly be

estimated at the level of Gray, Cowper, Burns, or in some respects of Blake. And a greater poetical influence than any of the classical school really wielded was exerted in the close of the century by the work of Scott, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Even among the writers of the early part of the nineteenth century the only poet of classical sympathies, Byron, is the only poet whose work seems likely to disappear from memory; and whatever of it may survive is certainly that part which shows least sympathy with classic tradition of any sort.

On the other hand, though the romantic spirit has produced almost all the great marvels of English literature, from Shakespeare onwards, and although there appears every possible reason for giving all our sympathies to it, since it represents supreme genius in its highest expression, it certainly has its dangers. The great genius can afford to dispense with any discipline which impedes its activity; it can be excused for the breaking of the rules, because it has something better to give in return for what it breaks. But not every man is a genius; half a dozen men out of a million represent perhaps the proportion. So that a great multitude of writers, without genius, even without marked ability of any kind, may do much mischief by following the example of genius breaking rules, without being able to atone for this temerity by producing anything of a respectable order. The fact is that thousands of young men in Europe want to be romantic merely because romanticism represents for them the direction of least resistance. Even to do anything according to classical rules requires considerable literary training and literary patience. And these men forget that the great romantics have mostly been men, who, although breakers of rule, could make new rules of their own. I mean that in Europe at present, both in France and in England, the romantic tendency is to throw all rules aside without reason, and without good results. The persons who wish to do this, mistake romance for self-license, and they can only succeed in bringing about a general degrada-

tion of literature. As that comes, it will evidently be almost a duty of every lover of good literature to help a classic reaction—because a classic reaction is the only possible remedy for literary decadence through license. On the other hand a romantic reaction is the only possible remedy when too much classic discipline has brought about a petrification or stagnation of literary utterance of emotion—as happened in the middle of the eighteenth century. So you will see that the same man might very consistently be at one period of his life in favour of classicism, and at another in favour of romanticism. You will understand clearly hereafter what is meant by those terms in a general way. And as for what they signify in the literature of your own country, you are much more competent to judge than I.

CHAPTER XXII

STUDIES OF EXTRAORDINARY PROSE

I

THE ART OF SIMPLE POWER : THE NORSE WRITERS

IN speaking upon the various arts of prose, I do not intend to confine the study especially to something in English literature. For it happens that we can get better examples of the great art of prose writing in other literatures than English,—examples, too, which will better appeal to the Japanese student, especially as some of them bear resemblance to the best work of the old Japanese writers. In English literature it is not very easy to find examples of that simplicity, combined with great vividness, which is to be found in the old Japanese narrative. But we can find this very often in the work of the Norse writers; and their finest pages, translated into the kindred English tongue, do not lose the extraordinary charm of the original.

Now there are two ways of writing artistic prose (of course there are many different methods, but all can be grouped under two heads), both depending a good deal upon the character of the writer. There is a kind of work of which the merit is altogether due to vivid and powerful senses, well trained in observation. The man who sees keenly and hears keenly, who has been well disciplined how to use his eyes and ears both with quickness and caution, who has been taught by experience the value of accuracy and the danger of exaggeration (exaggeration being, after all, only an incorrect way of observing and thinking),—such a man, if he can write at all, is apt to write interestingly. The very best examples of strong simple prose are pages written by the old Norsemen who passed most of their lives

in fighting and hunting. We have here the result of that training which I have above indicated. The man who knows that at any hour of the day a mistake may cost his life and the lives of his children, is apt to be a man of exact observation. He is also apt to be a man with excellent senses and good judgment; for the near-sighted or deaf or stupid could scarcely have existed in the sort of society to which the Norse writers belonged. And I imagine, so far as it is in my power to judge, that some of the old Japanese writers have given in their work evidence of the same faculties of perception and discrimination. To-day we have some living examples of European writers whose power depends entirely upon the same qualities. Modern writers of this kind are much less simple, it is true, than the writers whom we are about to consider; they have been educated in modern technical schools or universities, and their education has given to their work a certain colour never to be found in the ancient literature. But one or two writers have preserved in a most extraordinary way the best qualities of the old Norse writers, — modern Norsemen, or at least Scandinavians. I think that perhaps the best is Björnstjerne Björnson. We shall have occasion to speak of him again at another time.

The other method of writing artistic prose is more particularly subjective; it depends chiefly upon the man's inner sense of beauty, — upon his power to feel emotionally, and to express the emotion by a careful choice of words. Upon this phase of prose writing we need not now dwell; we shall take it up later on. Suffice to say that it does not at all depend upon the possession of well developed exterior senses, nor upon faculties of quick perception and discrimination; indeed, some of its greatest masters have been physically imperfect men, or helpless invalids.

Now let us take an example of the old Norse style of narrative. It dates back to the early part of the thirteenth century; and the subject is a fight in a little island on the coast of Iceland. There was trouble at the time about a

Christian bishop called Gudmund, who had been sent out there. Some determined to kill him, others resolved to stand by him,—and among the latter were two brave friends Eyjolf and Aron. The summary opens at the point where the bishop's party had been badly handled, and nearly everybody killed except the two friends. Aron, who was the weaker of the two, wanted to stay on the ground and fight until he died. Eyjolf was determined that he should not, so he played a trick upon him in order to save him. The whole story is told in the Sturlunga Saga. I hope you will be interested by this; because it seems to me remarkably like some incidents in old Japanese histories.

Eyjolf took his way to the place where Aron and Sturla had met, and there he found Aron sitting with his weapons, and all about were lying dead men, and wounded. Eyjolf asks his cousin whether he can move at all. Aron says that he can, and stands on his feet; and now they both go together for a while by the shore, till they come to a hidden bay;—there they saw a boat ready floating, with five or six men at the oars, and the bow to sea. This was Eyjolf's arrangement, in case of sudden need. Now Eyjolf tells Aron that he means the boat for both of them, giving out that he sees no hope of doing more for the Bishop at that time.

“But I look for better days to come,” says Eyjolf.

“It seems a strange plan to me,” says Aron; “for I thought that we should never part from Bishop Gudmund in this distress. There is something behind this, and I vow that I will not go, unless you go first on board.”

“That I will not, Cousin,” says Eyjolf, “for it is shoal water here, and I will not have any of the oarsmen leave his oar to shove her off; and it is far too much for you to go about with wounds like yours. You will have to go on board.”

“Well, put your weapons in the boat,” says Aron, “and I will believe you.”

Aron now goes on board, and Eyjolf did as Aron asked him. Eyjolf waded after, pushing the boat, for the shallows went far out. And when he saw the right time come, Eyjolf caught up a battle-axe out of the stern of the boat, and gave a shove to the boat with all his might.

“Good-bye, Aron,” says Eyjolf; “we shall meet again when God pleases.”

And since Aron was disabled with wounds and weary with loss of blood, it had to be even so; and this parting was a grief to Aron, for they saw each other no more.

Now Eyjolf spoke to the oarsmen, and told them to row hard, and not to let Aron come back again to Grimsey that day, and not for many a day, if they could help it.

They row away with Aron in their boat; but Eyjolf turns to the shore again, and to a boat-house with a large ferry-boat in it that belonged to the goodman (farmer) Gnuþ. And at the same nick of time he sees the Sturlung company come tearing down from the garth, having finished their mischief there. Eyjolf takes to the boat-house, with his mind made up to defend it, as long as his doom would let him. There were double doors to the boat-house, and he puts heavy stones against them.

Brand, one of Siglwat’s followers, a man of good condition, caught a glimpse of a man moving, and said to his companions that he thought he had made out Eyjolf Karrson there, and that they ought to go after him. Sturla was not on the spot. There were nine to ten together. So they come to the boat-house. Brand asks who is there, and Eyjolf says that it is he.

“Then you will please to come out, and come before Sturla,” says Brand.

“Will you promise me grace?” says Eyjolf.

“There will be little of that,” says Brand.

“Then it is for you to come on,” says Eyjolf, “and for me to guard, and it seems to me the shares are ill divided.”

Eyjolf had a coat of mail, and a great axe, and that was all.

Now they came at him, and he made a good and brave defence; he cut their pike-shafts through — there were stout blows on both sides. And in that bout Eyjolf broke his axe-shaft, and caught up an oar, and then another, and both broke with his blows. And in the bout Eyjolf got a thrust under his arm, and it came home. Some say that he broke the shaft from the spearhead, and let it stay in the wound. He saw now that his defence was ended. Then he made a dash out, and got through them, before they knew. They were not expecting this; still, they kept their heads, and a man named Mar cut at him and caught his ankle, so that his foot hung crippled. With that he rolled down the beach and the sea was at the flood. In such

plight as he was in, Eyjolf set to and swam, and swimming he came twelve fathoms from shore to a shelf of rock, and knelt there; and then he fell full length upon the earth, and spread his hands from him, turning to the East, as if to pray.

Now they launched the boat and went after him. And when they came to the rock, a man drove a spearhead into him, and then another; but no blood flowed from either wound. So they turned to go ashore and find Sturla, and tell him the story plainly how it had all fallen out. Sturla held, and another man too, that this had been a glorious defence. He showed that he was pleased at the news.

Now, do you observe anything peculiar about this very human document? I think you must appreciate the power of it; but I doubt whether you have noticed how very differently from modern methods that power has been employed.

In the first place, notice that there are scarcely any adjectives; altogether there are nine or ten—suppose we say ten. There are two and a half pages of about three hundred words in a page, in the extract which you have written. That is to say, there are about seven hundred and fifty words, and there are only ten adjectives in the whole—or about one adjective and a fraction to every hundred words. I think that you would have to look through thousands and thousands of modern English books before you could find anything like this. And there is no word used which could be left out, without somewhat spoiling the effect. This may not be grace; but it is certainly the economy of force, which is the basis of all grace.

Next, observe that there is no description—not a particle of description. Houses are mentioned and rocks and boats, and a fight is narrated in the most masterly way; yet nothing is described. And nevertheless how well we see everything—that cold bay of the North Sea with the boat floating upon it, and the brave man helping his wounded cousin on board, and the unequal struggle at the boat-house, during which we can actually hear the noise of the oars breaking. There is no picture of a face; yet I am quite sure that you

can see the face of that brave man in every episode of the struggle. The Norse people were perhaps not the first to discover that description was unnecessary in great writing. They loved it in their poetry; they avoided it in their prose. But it requires no little skill to neglect description in this way,—to make the actions and incidents themselves create the picture. At first reading this might seem to you simple as a schoolboy's composition; but there is nothing in the world so hard to do.

Thirdly, observe that there is no emotion, no partiality, no sympathy expressed. It is true that in one place Eyjolf is spoken of as having made "a good and brave defence," but the Norsemen never spoke badly of their enemies; and if their greatest enemy could fight well, they gave him credit for it, not as a matter of sympathy but as a matter of truth. Certainly the end of the narration shows us that the adjectives "good" and "brave" do not imply any sympathy at all; for the lord of the men who killed Eyjolf was pleased to hear of the strong fight that he made. Notice this point carefully. Such men found no pleasure in killing cowards; they thought it glorious only to kill a good fighter in a good fight. The lord is glad because his men killed somebody well worth killing. So, as I have already said, there is not one particle of personal emotion in the whole story. Nevertheless what emotion it makes within the reader! And what a wonderful art this is to create emotion in the reader's mind by suppressing it altogether in the narration! This is the supreme art of realism,—about which you may have heard a great deal in these last few years. I know of only one writer of the nineteenth century who had this same realistic power,—the late French story-teller Guy de Maupassant. In the days before his brain weakened and madness destroyed his astonishing faculties, he also could create the most powerful emotion without the use of a single emotional word or suggestion. Some day I shall try to give you in English a short specimen of his power.

Now if you will consider these three things—the scarcity

of adjectives, the absence of description, and the suppression of emotion, I think that you will be able to see what a wonderful bit of writing that was. But it is no more than a single example out of a possible hundred. And in a certain way the secret of it is the same which gave such surprise and delight in modern times to the readers of Hans Andersen. This matchless teller of fairy tales and "wonder-stories" full of deep philosophical meanings, was, as you know, a Norseman,—even by blood a descendant of those same men who could write about the story of Eyjolf in the thirteenth century. I want to give you now another little story of the same kind from the old Icelandic saga of Njal. You will discover all the same qualities in it. The story told might almost be Japanese,—an incident of the old fierce custom of vengeance. Among the Norsemen, as among the men of old Japan, the brother was bound to avenge the death of the brother; the father had to avenge his son; everybody killed had some blood relative to avenge him. If there was no man to do this, there would often appear a brave woman willing and capable of doing it, and in the wars of Katakuchi* there were many brave things done on both sides, even by the little boys and girls. In this case the victims are a little boy and his grandparents. They are locked in a wooden house that has been surrounded by their enemies and set on fire. There are many people in the house, and they all are about to be destroyed without pity,—for this is a fight between two clans, and there are many deaths to be avenged. But suddenly the leader of the conquering party remembers that the old man inside used to be his teacher (I think there is a Japanese incident of almost exactly the same kind in the story of a castle siege). Now we will make the old northern story-teller relate the rest.

Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

* *Japanese*, vendetta.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said—

“I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors.”

“I will not go out,” said Njal, “for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame.”

Then Flosi said to Bergthora—

“Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors.”

“I was given away to Njal young,” said Bergthora, “and I have promised him this, that we should both share the same fate.”

After that they both went back into the house.

“What counsel shall we now take?” said Bergthora.

“We will go to our bed,” says Njal, “and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest.”

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari’s son: “Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here.”

“Thou hast promised me this, grandmother,” says the boy, “that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you.”

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said—

“Now thou shalt see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones.”

He said that he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered, and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the sign of the cross, and gave over their souls into God’s hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.*

There are about four adjectives in all this; and, as in the former case, there is no description and no sympathy, —no sentiment. Very possibly this is an absolutely true incident, the steward, who was allowed to go out, having

* Sir George W. Dasent, *The Story of Burnt Njal*, (E. V. Lucas’s Edition), p. 239.

been afterward able to make a faithful report of what the old people and the boy said in the house. The young men said other things, full of fierce mockery, things that manifest a spirit totally unlike anything in modern times. They stood up to be burned or to break their way out if a chance offered. One of the sons seeing the father lying down in the bed sarcastically observed, "Our father goes early to bed, and that is what was to be looked for, as he is an old man." This grewsome joke shows that the young man would have preferred the father to die fighting. But the old folks were busy enough in preparing the little boy for death. It is a terrible story,—an atrociously cruel one; but it shows great nobility of character in the victims, and the reader is moved in spite of himself by this most simple relation of fact.

Now perhaps you will think that this simple style can only produce such effects when the subject matter of the narrative is itself of a terrible or startling or extraordinary character. I am quite sure that this is not true, because I find exactly the same style in such a modern novel as "Synnövé Solbakken" by Björnson, and I find it in such fairy tales of Andersen as "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid." These simplest subjects are full of wonder and beauty for the eyes that can see and the mind that can think; and with such an eye and such a mind, the simple style is quite enough. How trifling at times are the subjects of Andersen's stories—a child's toy, a plant growing in the field, a snow image, made by children somewhat as we make a snow *daruma** in the farmyard, a rose-bush under the window. It would be nonsense to say that here the interest depends upon the subject matter! In such a story as "The Little Tin Soldier" we are really affected almost as much as by the story of Eyjolf in the old saga—simply because the old saga-teller and the modern story-teller wrote and thought very much in the same way. Or take another subject, of a more complicated character, the story of the "Nightingale

* Cf. "Otokichi's Daruma" in *A Japanese Miscellany* by L. Hearn.

of the Emperor of China and the Nightingale of the Emperor of Japan." There is a great deal more meaning here than the pretty narrative itself shows upon the surface. The whole idea is the history of our human life,—the life of the artist, and his inability to obtain just recognition, and the power of the humbug to ignore him. It is a very profound story indeed; and there are pages in it which one can scarcely read with dry eyes. It affects us both intellectually and emotionally to an extraordinary degree; but the style is still the style of the old sagas. Of course I must acknowledge that Andersen uses a few more adjectives than the Icelandic writers did, but you will find, on examining him closely, that he does not use them when he can help it. Now the other style that I was telling you about,—the modern artistic style, uses adjectives almost as profusely as in poetry. I do not wish to speak badly of it; but scarcely any writer who uses it has been able to give so powerful an impression as the Norse writers who never used it at all.

In the simple style there is something of the genius of the race. After all, any great literary manner must have its foundation in race character. The manner that I have been describing is an evidence of northern race character at its very best. Quite incidentally I may observe here that another northern race, which has produced a literature only in very recent times, shows something of the same simple force of plain style,—I mean Russian literature. The great modern Russian writers, most of all, resemble the old Norse writers in their management of effects with few words. But my purpose in this lecture has been especially to suggest to you a possible resemblance between old Japanese literary methods and these old northern literary methods. I imagine that the northern simple art accords better with Japanese genius than ever could the more elaborate forms of literature, based upon the old classic studies.

II

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

IN our first lecture on prose style you will recollect the extraordinary simplicity of the examples given from some of the old Norse writers. And you will have observed the lasting strength of that undecorated native simplicity. To-day I am going to talk to you about a style which offers the very greatest possible contrast and opposition to the style of the Norse writers,—a style which represents the extreme power of great classical culture, vast scholarship, enormous reading,—a style which can be enjoyed only by scholars, which never could become popular, and which nevertheless has wonderful merit in its way. I do not offer you examples with any idea of encouraging you to imitate it. But it is proper that you should be able to appreciate some of its fine qualities and to understand its great importance in the history of English literature. I mean the style of Sir Thomas Browne.

I have said that the influence of this style has been very great upon English literature. Before we go any further, allow me to explain this influence. Sir Thomas Browne was the first great English writer who made an original classic style. By classic style I mean an English prose style founded upon a profound study of the ancient classic writers, Greek and Latin, and largely coloured and made melodious by a skilful use of many-syllabled words derived from the antique tongues. There were original styles before. Sir Thomas Malory made a charming innovation in style. Lyly made a new style, too,—a style imitated from Spanish writers, extravagantly ornamented, extravagantly complicated, fantastic, artificial, tiresome,—the famous style called Euphuism. We shall have to speak of Euphuism at another time. It also was a great influence during a short period. But neither the delightful prose poetry of Sir Thomas Malory nor the extravagant and factitious style of Lyly has anything in common with the style of Sir Thomas

Browne. Sir Thomas Browne imitated nobody except the best Latin and Greek writers, and he imitated them with an art that no other Englishman ever approached. Moreover, he did not imitate them slavishly; he managed always to remain supremely original, and because he was a true prose poet, much more than because he imitated the beauties of the antique writers, he was able to influence English prose for considerably more than two hundred years. Indeed, I think we may say that his influence still continues; and that if he does not affect style to-day as markedly as he did a hundred years ago, it is only because one must be a very good scholar to do anything in the same direction as that followed by Sir Thomas Browne, and our very good scholars of to-day do not write very much in the way of essays or of poetry. The first person of great eminence powerfully affected by Sir Thomas Browne was Samuel Johnson. You know that Johnson affected the literature of the eighteenth century most powerfully, and even a good deal of the literature of the early nineteenth century. But Johnson was a pupil of Browne, and a rather clumsy pupil at that. He was not nearly so great a scholar as Sir Thomas Browne; he was much less broad-minded—that is to say, capable of liberal and generous tolerance, and he did not have that sense of beauty and of poetry which distinguished Sir Thomas Browne. He made only a very bad imitation of Sir Thomas, exaggerating the eccentricities and missing the rare and delicate beauties. But the literary links between Browne and the eighteenth century are very easily established, and it is certain that Browne indirectly helped to form the literary prose of that period. Thus you will perceive how large a figure in the history of English literature he must be.

He was born in 1605, and he died in 1682. Thus he belongs to the seventeenth century, and his long life extends from nearly the beginning to within a few years of the end. We do not know very much about him. He was educated at Oxford, and studied medicine. Then he established

himself as a doctor in the English country town of Norwich, famous in nursery-rhyme as the town to which the man-in-the-moon asked his way. In the leisure hours of his professional life he composed, at long intervals, three small books, respectively entitled "Religio Medici," "Pseudodoxia," and "Hydriotaphia." Neither the first, which is a treatise upon humanism in its relation to life and religion, nor the second, which is a treatise upon vulgar errors, need occupy us much for the present; they do not reveal his style in the same way as the third book. This "Hydriotaphia" is a treatise upon urn-burial, upon the habit of the ancients of burying or preserving the ashes of their dead in urns of pottery or of metal. It is from this book that I am going to make some quotations. During Browne's lifetime he was recognized as a most wonderful scholar and amiable man, but there were only a few persons who could appreciate the finer beauties of his literary work. Being personally liked, however, he had no difficulty in making a social success; he was able to become tolerably rich, and he was created a knight by King Charles II. After his death his books and manuscripts were sold at auction; and fortunately they were purchased afterwards for the British Museum. The whole of his work, including some posthumous essays, makes three volumes in the Bohn Library. Better editions of part of the text, however, have been recently produced; and others are in preparation. It is probable that Sir Thomas Browne will be studied very much again within the next fifty years.

The book about urn-burial really gives the student the best idea of Sir Thomas Browne. No other of his works so well displays his learning and his sense of poetry. Indeed, even in these days of more advanced scholarship, the learning of Sir Thomas Browne astonishes the most learned. He quotes from a multitude of authors, scarcely known to the ordinary student, as well as from almost every classic author known; likewise from German, Italian, Spanish and Danish writers; likewise from hosts of the philosophers of

the Middle Ages and the fathers of the church. Everything that had been written about science from antiquity up to the middle of the seventeenth century he would appear to have read,—botany, anatomy, medicine, alchemy, astrology; and the mere list of authorities cited by him is appalling. But to discover a man of the seventeenth century who had read all the books in the western world is a much less surprising fact than to find that the omnivorous reader remembered what he read, digested it, organized it, and everywhere discovered in it beauties that others had not noticed. Scholarship in itself is not, however, particularly interesting; and the charge of pedantry, of a needless display of learning, might have been brought against Sir Thomas Browne more than once. To-day, you know, it is considered a little vulgar for a good scholar to make quotations from Greek and Latin authors when writing an English book. He is at once accused of trying to show off his knowledge. But even to-day, and while this is the rule, no great critic will charge Sir Thomas Browne with pedantry. He quotes classical authors extensively only while he is writing upon classical subjects; and even then, he never quotes a name or a fact without producing some unexpected and surprising effect. Moreover, he very seldom cites a Latin or Greek text, but puts the Latin or Greek thought into English. Later on I shall try to show you what are the intrinsic demerits of his style, as well as its merits; but for the present let us study a few quotations. They will serve better than anything else to show what a curious writer he is.

In the little book about urn-burial, the first chapter treats generally about the burial customs of all nations of antiquity—indeed I might say of all nations in the world, together with the philosophical or religious reasons for different burial customs; and yet in the original book all this is told in about twenty pages. You will see therefore that Sir Thomas is not prolix; on the contrary, he presses his facts together so powerfully as to make one solid com-

position of them. Let us take a few sentences from this chapter :*

Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the original of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus; and therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcel of their composition. . . .

But the Chaldeans, the great idolators of fire, abhorred the burning of their carcasses, as a pollution of that deity. The Persian magi declined it upon the like scruple, and being only solicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of birds and dogs. And the Parsees now in India, which expose their bodies unto vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra* or biers of wood, the proper fuel of fire, are led on with such niceties. But whether the ancient Germans, who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their deity of Herthus, or the Earth, we have no authentic conjecture.

The Egyptians were afraid of fire, not as a deity, but a devouring element, mercilessly consuming their bodies, and leaving too little of them; and therefore by precious embalmments, depositeure in dry earths, or handsome inclosure in glasses, contrived the notablest ways of integral conservation. And from such Egyptian scruples, imbibed by Pythagoras, it may be conjectured that Numa and the Pythagorical sect first waved (modern *waived*) the fiery solution.

The Scythians, who swore by wind and sword, that is, by life and death, were so far from burning their bodies, that they declined all interment, and made their graves in the air; and the Ichthyophagi, or fish-eating nations about Egypt, affected the sea for their grave; thereby declining visible corruption, and restoring the debt of their bodies. Whereas the old heroes, in Homer, dreaded nothing more than water or drowning; probably upon the old opinion of the fiery substance of the soul, only extinguishable by that element; and therefore the poet emphatically implieth the total destruction in this kind of death, which happened to Ajax Oileus.

So on, page after page crammed with facts and comments. He mentions even the Chinese burial customs — so

* *Hydriotaphia*, chap. I., par. 7—12 (First Ed., pp. 6—8).

little known to Europeans of the seventeenth century; and his remarks upon them are tolerably correct, considering all the circumstances. You will acknowledge that a dry subject is here most interestingly treated; this is the art that can give life to old bones. But the main thing is the style,—remember we are still early in the seventeenth century, in the year 1658; see how dignified, how sonorous, how finely polished are these rolling sentences, all of which rise and fall with wave-like regularity and roundness. You feel that this is the scholar who writes,—the scholar whose ear has been trained to the long music of Greek and Latin sentences. And even when he uses words now obsolete or changed in meaning, you can generally know very well from the context what is meant. For instance, “relentment,” which now has no such meaning, is used in the sense of dissolution, and “conclude,” of which the meaning is now most commonly “to finish” in the literary sense, this old doctor uses in the meaning of “to end life, to finish existence.” But you do not need to look at the glossary at the end of the book in order to know this.

We might look to such a writer for all the arts of finished prose known to the best masters of to-day; and we should find them in the most elaborate perfection. The use of antithesis, long afterwards made so famous by Macaulay, was used by Browne with quite as much art, and perhaps with even better taste. Certainly his similes are quite as startling:

Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot, a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burthen of Isaac were sufficient for an holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.*

The subject is always made interesting, whether the writer be speaking of mathematics or of gardens, of graves or of stars. Hear him when he begins on the subject of ghosts—how curious the accumulation of facts, and how effective the contrasts:

* *Ibid.*, chap. III, par. 16 (1st Ed., p. 44).

The dead seem all alive in the human Hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophesy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules made a noise but like a flock of birds.

The departed spirits know things past and to come; yet are ignorant of things present. Agamemnon foretells what should happen unto Ulysses; yet ignorantly enquires what is become of his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in Homer; yet Sibylla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies; and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell; yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses: and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts, yet we meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.*

But these examples do not show Browne at his very best; they merely serve to illustrate his ordinary style. To show him at his best through quotation is a very difficult thing, as Professor Saintsbury recently pointed out. His splendours are in rare sentences which somehow or other light up the whole page in which they occur. Every student should know the wonderful passage about the use of Egyptian mummies for medicine,—mummy-flesh being a drug known to English medicine up to the year 1721. I should like to read the whole passage to you in which this sentence occurs, but this would require too much time; suffice to quote the conclusion:

Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.†

If Sir Thomas Browne had lived in modern times he might have added that mummies were used on the steam-

* *Ibid.*, chap. IV, par. 16—17 (1st Ed., p. 62).

† *Ibid.*, chap. V, par. 10 (1st Ed., pp. 78—9).

boats of the Nile instead of coal—even within our own day. The bodies of common people were preserved mostly by the use of cheap resinous substances, such as pitch; therefore, as soon as it was found by the steamboat companies that they would burn very well indeed, they were burned by tens of thousands to make steam! Also I suppose that you may have heard how mummy dust was sold for manure, until English laws were passed to prevent the custom. Sir Thomas Browne's object in these pages is only to point out the folly of funeral pomp, or of seeking to maintain a great fame among men after death, because all things are impermanent and pass away; and his illustrations are always strikingly forcible. On the subject of human impermanency the book is full of splendid sentences, many of which are worth learning by heart. But let us turn to a less sombre subject—to a beautiful paragraph in the fourth chapter of "The Garden of Cyrus":

Light that makes things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of the creation had remained unseen, and the stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, or there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types, we find the cherubims shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadows of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark *simulacrum*, and light but the shadow of God.

The little essay from which I have made this quotation, usually bound up with the work on urn-burial and called "The Garden of Cyrus", is a most curious thing. It is a dissertation upon the Quincunx, or, to use simpler language, a dissertation upon the mathematical, geometrical and mystical values of the number Five. The doctor, beginning his subject with some remarks about the merit of arranging trees in a garden by groups of five, is led on to consider the signification of five in all its relations to the universe. He discourses upon that number in the heavens and upon the

earth and even in the waters which are beneath the earth. He has remarked that not only in the human hand and foot do we find the divisions of five fingers and five toes, but we find like divisions in the limbs of countless animals and in the petals of flowers. He was very near a great discovery in these observations; you know that botany to-day recognizes the meaning of fives and sixes in floral division; and you know that modern physiology has established beyond any question the fact that even in the hoofs of a horse or of a cow we have the rudiments of five toes that anciently existed. If the doctor had lived a little later—say in the time of that country doctor, Erasmus Darwin, he might have been able to forecast many discoveries of Charles Darwin. Anyhow, his little essay is delightful to read; and if he did not anticipate some general laws of modern science, he was none the less able to establish his declaration that “all things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical mathematicks of the city of heaven.”*

It would be wrong to call Sir Thomas Browne a mystic outside of the Christian sense. He was really a religious man, and he would not have ventured to put out theories which he believed the church would condemn. But no writer ever felt the poetry of mysticism more than he, or expressed its aspirations better without actually sharing them. Therefore his books have been classed with mystical literature, and are much admired and studied by mystics. It is impossible to read him and not be occasionally astonished by suggestions and thoughts that seem much too large for orthodox Christianity, but which would excellently illustrate the teaching of older eastern religions.

I shall be glad if these notes upon Sir Thomas Browne should serve to interest you in some of his best writings. But I think that his value for you will be chiefly in the suggestive direction. He is a great teacher in certain arts

* *The Garden of Cyrus*, chap. V, par. 13.

of style—in the art of contrast, in the art of compression, in the art of rhythm, and of melody. I do not think that you could, however, learn the latter from him. What you would learn would be the value of contrasts of metaphor, and of a certain fine economy of words; the rest is altogether too classical for you to apprehend the secret of it. Indeed, it is only a Greek and Latin training that can give full apprehension of what the beauties of his style are. But, like all true style, there is much there that means only character, personality,—the charm of the man himself, the grace of his mind; and all that, you can very well understand. I think you could scarcely read the book and not feel strange retrospective affection for the man who wrote it.

Now the great thing for you to remember about his place in English literature is that he was the father and founder of English classic prose. He was the source from which Dr. Johnson obtained inspiration; he was the first also to show those capacities of majesty and sonority in English prose which Gibbon afterwards displayed on so vast a scale; he was also the first to use effectively that art of contrast and of antithesis which was to make so great a part of the wonderful style of Macaulay. And even to-day no student can read Sir Thomas Browne without some profit. He is incomparably superior to Bacon and to not a few others who are much more widely known. I do not think that the study of Bacon's essays can be at all profitable to the student in the matter of style—rather the reverse. The value of Bacon is chiefly in his thinking. But Sir Thomas Browne offers you both thoughts and style in the very finest form.

Nevertheless I must utter a final word of disfavour. There is one drawback to all such style as that which we have been considering—not excepting the styles of Gibbon or Macaulay. It is the necessarily limited range of their power. You cannot appeal to the largest possible audience with a scholarly style. And what is worse, every such style, being artificial more than natural, contains within itself

certain elements of corruption and dissolution. We have to read Sir Thomas Browne with a glossary to-day—that is, if we wish to be very exact in our renderings of his thoughts; you will find an extensive glossary attached to his work. This you will not find in Gibbon or Macaulay, but this is only because they are still near to us in time. For all that, the language of the former is now found to be decidedly old-fashioned, notwithstanding its beauty; and the study of the latter will probably become old-fashioned during the present century. It is quite otherwise in the case of that simple northern style, of which I gave you specimens in a former lecture. That never can become old-fashioned, even though the language die in which it was originally written. Containing nothing artificial, it also contains no element of decay. It can impress equally well the most learned and the most ignorant minds, and if we have to make a choice at all between their perfectly plain style and the gorgeous music and colours of Sir Thomas Browne, I should not hesitate for a moment to tell you that the simple style is much the better. However, that is not a reason for refusing to give to the classic writers the praise and admiration which they have so justly earned.

III

BJÖRNSON

BEFORE studying some further wonderful prose I want to speak to you about what I believe to be a wide-spread and very harmful delusion in Japan. I mean the delusion that students of English literature ought to study in English only the books originally written in English,—not English translations from other languages. Of course, in these times, I acknowledge that there is some reason for distrust of translations. Translations are made very quickly and very badly, only for the purpose of gaining money, and a vast amount of modern translation is absolute trash, but it is very different in the case of foreign works which have been

long adopted into the English language, and which have become practically a common possession of Englishmen,—such as the translation of the “Arabian Nights,” the grand prose translation of Goethe’s “Faust,” the translation of “Wilhelm Meister” by Carlyle, the translation of “Undine” which every boy reads, to mention only a few things at random. So with the translations of the great Italian and Spanish and Russian writers,—not to speak of French writers. In fact, if Englishmen had studied only English literature, English literature would never have become developed as it is now. And if Englishmen had studied foreign literature only in the original tongue, English literature would still have made very little progress. It has been through thousands of translations, not through scholarly study, that the best of our poetry, the best of our fiction, the best of our prose has been modified and improved by foreign influence. As I once before told you, the development of literature is only in a very limited degree the work of the scholars. The great scholars are seldom producers of enduring literature. The men who make that must be men of natural genius, which has nothing to do with scholarship; and the majority of them are not, as a rule, even educated beyond the ordinary. To furnish these men with the stimulus of exotic ideas, those ideas should be placed before them in their own tongue. Now it may seem to you very strange that foreign influence should operate chiefly through translations, but the history of nearly every European literature proves that such is the case. And I am quite sure that if Japan is to produce an extensive new literature in the future, it will not be until after fresh ideas have become widely assimilated by the nation through thousands of translations. For these reasons, I think it is a very unfortunate notion that the study of English literature should be confined to the study of books originally written in English, or even written by Englishmen.

How is the mind of the English boy formed? If you think about that, you will discover that English literature

really represents but a part and a small part of world influences on him. After the age of the nursery songs, most of which are really of English origin, comes the age of fairy tales, of which very few can be traced to English sources. Indeed I believe that "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are quite exceptional in the fact that they are truly English. "Puss in Boots" is not English, but French; "Cinderella" is French; "The Sleeping Beauty" is French; "The White Cat" is French; and "Bluebeard" is French. In fact the great mass of our fairy tales are translations from French authors such as Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy, to mention only two. When the little boy has feasted himself to repletion upon this imaginative diet, what is the next course of reading? Other fairy tales, of a deeper character—half pure story, half moral teaching; and where do these stories come from? Well, they are not English at all; they are translations from other languages, chiefly German and Swedish. The most important of all works of this kind are those of Hans Andersen. Every child must read them and learn from them, and they have now become so much a part of English child life that we cannot help wondering what children did before Andersen was born. The best German work of this sort is the work of Grimm. Everybody knows something about that. After this reading, stories of adventure are generally taken up, or slight romances of some kind. There is "Robinson Crusoe," of course, which is English, and "Gulliver's Travels"; but excepting these two, I believe that most of the first class of juvenile romance consists of translations. For example, in my boyhood the romances of Henry Conscience were read by all boys; and they are translated from the Dutch. And even when a lad has come to delight in Sir Walter Scott, he has still foreign literary influences of even greater power working upon his imagination—such as the magic of the elder Alexandre Dumas. The wonderful stories of "Monte Cristo" and of "The Three Musketeers" have become indispensable readings for the young, and their

influence upon modern English fiction has been very great. Still later one has to read the extraordinary novels of Victor Hugo; and there is no time at which the English student is not directly or indirectly affected by French masters as well as by the German masters. Of course you will say that I am mentioning modern authors when I speak of Dumas and Hugo. Yes, they are even contemporaries. But when we look back to the times before these great men were heard of, we still find that foreign literature influenced Elizabethans quite as much as contemporary English literature. In the eighteenth century the influence was French, and other foreign influences were at work. Then everybody had to read the classic French authors, but even these were not dull; there were story-tellers among them who supplied what the authors of the romantic time supplied to the English youth of the nineteenth century. Also in the seventeenth century there was some French influence, mixed with Italian and Spanish. In the Elizabethan Age, education was not so widely diffused, but we know that the young people of those times used to read Spanish novels and stories, and that no less than one hundred and seventy Spanish books were then translated.

I think you will see from all this that English literature actually depends for its vitality upon translations, and that the minds of English youth are by no means formed through purely English influences. Observe that I have not said anything about the study of Greek and Latin, which are more than foreign influences; they are actually influences from another vanished world. Nor have I said anything about the influence of religious literature, vast as it is—Hebrew literature, literature of the Bible, on which are based the prayers that children learn at their mother's knee. Really, instead of being the principal factor in English education, English literature occupies quite a small place. If an Englishman only knew English literature, he would know very little indeed. The best of his literature may be in English; he has Shakespeare, for example; but the

greater part of it is certainly not English, and even to-day its yearly production is being more and more affected by the ideas of France and Italy and Russia and Sweden and Norway—without mentioning the new influences from many Oriental countries.

No: you should think of any foreign language that you are able to acquire, not as the medium for expressing only the thoughts of one people, but as a medium through which you can obtain the best thought of the world. If you cannot read Russian, why not read the Russian novelists in English or French? Perhaps you cannot read Italian or Spanish; but that is no reason why you should not know the poems of Petrarch and Ariosto, or the dramas of Calderon. If you do not know Portuguese, there is a good English translation of Camoens. I suppose that in Tokyo very few persons know Finnish; but the wonderful epic of the *Kalevala* can be read to-day in English, French and in German. It is not necessary to have studied Sanskrit in order to know the gigantic epics of India; there are many European translations of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*—indeed, there are English and French translations of most of the great Sanskrit writers, though the Germans have been perhaps the greatest workers in this field. You can read the Arabian and the Persian poets also in English; and there are Oriental classics that everybody should know something about—such as the *Shāhnāma* or “Book of Kings”, of Firdusi; the *Gulistan* of Saadi; and the *Diwan* of Hafiz. And speaking of English translations only, both the written and the unwritten literatures of almost every people under the sun can be read in English—even the songs and the proverbs of the most savage tribes. There is one great defect in English work of this kind,—a great deal of such translation has been made in bad verse. For this reason the French translators who keep to prose are generally to be preferred. But you have certainly learned how great some English translators have proved themselves, even in verse,—for example, Fitzgerald; and

scarcely less interesting and sympathetic than Fitzgerald is Palmer's volume of translation from the ancient Arabian poets. However, what I am anxious to impress upon you is this,—that the English language can give you not only some knowledge of the productions of one race, but the intellectual wealth of the entire world. In England there are many thousands of persons who cannot read German, but there are no educated persons who have not read the German poets in English, and who cannot quote to you some verses of Heine.

Now if you are satisfied that the study of English means for you infinitely more than the study of English authors, you will know why I am not attempting to confine these lectures to original English prose. I shall take only the best examples that I can find in any kind of European prose for illustration; because everything depends upon the idea and the form, and neither the idea nor the form of prose (it is not the same in the case of poetry) can be restricted by the boundaries of language. In the last two lectures of this series I gave you two extremely different examples of style —one representing the old Norse or saga style; the other the elaborate, fantastic, almost pedantic, but matchlessly beautiful prose of Sir Thomas Browne. Both of these refer to the past; and the contrast was about as strong as it could be made. Now let us turn to modern times, to the nineteenth century, and again take two striking examples of the most simple and the most ornamental varieties of prose. The simple style will again be Norse; for the genius of the race, which showed itself so markedly in those quotations from the sagas which I gave you, again shows itself to-day in the nineteenth century prose of the very same people. Let us now talk about that.

You must not suppose that Norse literature remained unaffected by change through all the centuries — I am not speaking of language (that is not at all the same), but of method. On the contrary, the Norwegians and Swedes and Danes went through very much the same kind of literary

experiences as the English and the French, the Italians and the Germans. They had also their romantic and classic periods; even they became for a while artificial, especially the Danes; and the Danish culture remained very conservative in its classicism until well into the nineteenth century. And at that time it was Danish culture that especially affected education in Norway and Sweden. But in 1832 there was born a man destined to revive the ancient saga literature in modern times, and so make a new literature unlike anything that had been before it. That man was Björnstjerne Björnson. He went through the usual course of university education, and did not prove himself a good scholar. He was always dreaming about other things than Greek or Latin or mathematics, and instead of trying to compete for any university honours, he gave all his spare time to the reading of books having nothing to do with the university course. The ancient Norse literature especially interested him; he read everything relating to it that he could lay hands upon. He had hard work to pass his examinations, and his fellow-students never imagined that he would be able to do anything great in the world. But presently, after leaving the university, this dreaming young man suddenly developed an immense amount of unsuspected intellectual energy. He became a journalist, which, of all professions, is the worst for a man of letters to undertake; and in spite of it he produced a wonderful novel, within quite a short time, which attracted the attention of all Europe and has been translated into most European languages. This novel was "Synnövé Solbakken," a story of Norwegian peasant life. Björnson himself was a peasant's son, and he had lived and seen that which he described in this novel. But the wonder of the book was not in the story, not in the plot; it was in the astonishing method of the telling. The book reads as if it had been written by a saga man of the ninth or tenth century; the life described is indeed modern, but the art of telling it is an art a thousand years old, which scholars imagined could never be

revived again. Björnson revived it; and by so doing he has affected almost every literature in Europe. Perhaps he has especially affected some of the great French realists; at all events, he gave everybody interested in literature something new to think about. But this first novel was only the beginning of a surprising series of productions,—poetical, romantic, historical and political. Björnson went into politics, became a statesman, did honour to his country, did a great many wonderful things. But his chief merit is that he is the father and founder of a new literature, which we may call modern Norse. The study of the modern Norse writers ought to be of great service to Japanese students, for this strong and simple style accords remarkably well with the best traditions of Japanese prose. Moreover, the works of these writers have been put into English by scholarly men—masters of clear and pure English, who have been able to preserve the values of the original. This is easy to do in the case of the Northern dialects proper, which are very close to English—much closer than French, much closer even than German. The simpler the style, the less it loses by translation.

Moreover, you will find in the work of this man the most perfect pictures possible to make of the society and the character of a people. The people ought to interest you—ought to interest any student of English literature; for it was out of this far north that came the best element in the English race, the strongest and a good deal of the best feeling that expresses itself in English literature. You will find in these stories, or studies from real life, that the race has remained very much the same from ancient times. It is true that to-day in all the schools of Norway the students learn English and French; that modern science and modern philosophy are most diligently acquired; that Norway has produced poets, dramatists, men of science, and men of art, well worthy of being compared with those of almost any other country. It is true that writers like Björnson and Ibsen (the only other Norwegian man of letters of to-day

who can be compared with Björnson) have been actually able to influence English literature and European drama in general. But it is not in the cities nor in the most highly cultivated classes that the national distinctiveness in the character of a people can be judged. You must go into the country to study that; you must know the peasantry, who really form the body and strength of any nation. Björnson well knew this; and his university training did not blind him to the literary importance of such studies. The best of his fiction, and the bulk of it, treats of peasant life; and this life he portrayed in a way that has no parallel in European literature with the possible exception of the Russian work done by Turgénev and others. He has also given us studies of Norwegian character among the middle class, among the clergymen, and among the highly cultivated university people, who discuss the philosophy of Spencer and the ethics of Kant. But these studies are interesting only to the degree that they show the real Norse character, such as the peasant best exemplifies, in spite of modern education. It is a very stern, strong and terrible character; but it is also both lovable and admirable. Brutal at moments, it is the most formidable temperament that we can imagine; but in steadfastness and affection and depth of emotional power, it is very grand. At first you will think that these terrible fathers who beat their children, and these terrible young men who fight with demons on occasion, or who climb precipices to court the maiden of their choice, are still savage. But after the shock of the strange has passed, you will see that they are after all very human and very affectionate; and that if they are rougher than we in their ways, it is because they are stronger and better able to endure and to benefit by pain. Well, as I said, every kind of northern society is depicted in Björnson's tales, but the greatest of all is the story of "Synnövé Solbakken." It is a very simple story of peasant life. It describes the lives of a boy and girl in the country up to the time of their marriage to each other, and it treats especially of the inner life

of these two—their thoughts, their troubles, their affections. There is nothing unusual about it except the truth of the delineation. This delineation is done very much as the old Norse writers of whom I spoke to you before would have done it.

I shall quote only a little bit, —because the ancient extracts which I gave you from the saga must have served to show you what I mean. The scene described is that where the boy is taken to church for the first time, and there sees a little girl whom he is to marry many years later.

There was a little girl kneeling on the bench, and looking over the railing. She was still fairer than the man — so fair that he had never seen her equal. She had a red streamer to her cap, and yellow hair beneath this, and she smiled at him—so that for a long time he could not see anything but her white teeth. She held a hymn-book in one hand, and a folded handkerchief in the other, and was now amusing herself by striking the handkerchief on the hymn-book. The more he stared the more she smiled; and now he chose also to kneel on the bench just as she was doing. Then she nodded. He looked gravely at her a moment; then he nodded. She smiled and nodded once more; he nodded again, and once more, and still once more. She smiled, but did not nod any more for a little while, until he had quite forgotten; then she nodded.

No more natural description was ever given of the manner in which two little children, still untrained, act upon seeing each other for the first time, without being able to get close enough to talk. They tried to talk by nods and smiles, when they like each other's looks. There is a very fine study of conversation when these two do come together—the random conversation of children, full of affection, also full of innocent vanity and innocent desire to please. But before they come together the little boy has a fight with another little boy, which is also admirably told. You feel that the writer of the book must have had this fight himself. Later on the hero is to have a very terrible fight, with a jealous and powerful man—a fight that almost takes the reader's breath away; and this is told just as a saga man

would have told it a thousand years ago. I am not going to attempt to quote it now, for it is too long; and one part cannot be extracted from the rest without injuring the effect of the whole. But some day when you read it, please to notice that quality in it by which northern writers surpass all others—I mean exactness in relating the succession of incidents. This is a quality to which Professor Ker has but lately called attention. I told you, when we were talking about the sagas, that I believed the style of these men depended upon the perfection of their senses—quickness of eye, accuracy of perception; and what Professor Ker has said in his lectures* upon this very style would seem to confirm this. For example, he remarks that a writer of to-day might write in English such a statement as “he felt the king come behind him and put both hands over his eyes.” Professor Ker observes that a Norseman never could have written such a statement, because it is inaccurate in regard to the succession of incidents. The Norse writer would have said, “he felt some one touching him from behind; and before he could turn his head to look, a hand was placed over his eyes; and he knew, by the ring upon the hand, that it was the king.” That is the proper way to relate the fact accurately. He could not know, when he first felt himself touched behind, that the king was touching him, nor could he know that the king’s hands were placed before his eyes, until he saw something about or upon the hands, by which he could identify them. Seeing the king’s ring upon a finger of the hand, he knew that he was being held by the king. In reality all this would happen in a second, and modern writers are not in the habit of studying the succession of the events within so short a time as a second. But the Norseman was obliged to do so; if he could not measure with his eye what took place within even the fraction of a second, he might lose his life at any moment. Now you will find in the description of this fight in “Synnövé Solbakken” exactly the same faultless accuracy as to

* W. P. Ker *Epic and Romance*, p. 312 *sq.*

succession of incidents. One man is drunk, and undertakes to fight because he is drunk; the other man, who is sober, does not wish to fight, nevertheless the fight is forced upon him by a succession of little circumstances, all of which could not have occupied more than five or ten minutes. An English story-writer of to-day would probably have compressed that ten minutes into two lines of prose. But Björnson gives three pages to those ten minutes, and by so doing he thrills you with all the excitement and passion of the moment as no English writer can do. Still, you must not think that he is prolix. Really he never describes anything which is not absolutely necessary. But he knows what is necessary much better than other writers. He does not avoid little details because they happen to be very difficult to recount. If any of you have been forced into a quarrel of a dangerous kind, I am sure you will remember that all the little details of those moments before the quarrel, although not remarked perhaps by others present, were extremely clear to your own perception. Danger sharpens the senses, quite independently of the fact that the person is brave or not brave. At any such time you can hear and you can see better than at ordinary times. Björnson knew this. That is what makes his account of the fight between two peasants one of the greatest things in modern fiction.

Now I want to interest you in Björnson as the founder of a school,—to make you remember his name, to tempt you to read his wonderful story. But I shall not talk more about him now. Enough to say that he has done in Norway what I hope some future Japanese writer will do in Japan. You know what I mean by Norse style both in ancient ages and in our own day—that is, you must be able after these lectures to have a general idea about it. And now for a contrast. Nothing is more strongly contrasted with this sharply cut hard short style of the Norse than the prose of the modern romantic movement. The romantic movement in prose did not reach its greatest height in England. The English language is not perfect enough in its prose form

for the supreme possibilities of prose. It was in France that romantic prose became most highly perfected; there were so many masters of style that it is hard to make choice among them. But only one conceived the idea of what we call poetical prose—that was Baudelaire; he was, you know, a great and strange poet who wrote a volume of splendid but very terrible verse called “*Les Fleurs de Mal*,” or “*Flowers of Evil*”—perhaps “venomous or poisonous flowers” would better express the real meaning of the title. He also translated the stories of Poe into French; and he was in all things an exquisite artist.

IV

BAUDELAIRE

BAUDELAIRE believed that prose could be made quite as poetical as verse or even more so, for a prose that could preserve the rhythm of poetry without its monotony, and the melody of poetry without rhythm, might become in the hands of the master even more effective than verse. I do not know whether this is really true. I am inclined to think that it is; but I do not feel sufficiently learned in certain matters related to the question to venture a definite opinion. Enough to say that Baudelaire thought it possible, and he tried to make a new kind of prose; and the book containing these attempts entitled “*Little Poems in Prose*” is a wonderful treasure. But Baudelaire did not say anything very extravagantly in its preface. He only expressed the conviction that a poetical prose might be used with good effects for certain particular subjects,—dreams, reveries, the thoughts that men think in solitude, when the life of the world is not about them to disturb their meditations; his prose essays are all reveries, dreams, fantasies. I want to give you a specimen of one of these; and I am going to choose that one which Professor Saintsbury selected as the best. But let me tell you in advance that the English language cannot reproduce the real values of Baudelaire’s

prose. I am not going to attempt an artistic translation for you, but only such a translation as may help to show you in a vague way what poetical prose means. The piece I am going to turn into English is called "Les Bienfaits de la lune," — that is to say, freely rendered, the Gifts of the Moon, — the word "Bienfaits" (literally, benefit) being here used in the meaning of the present or gift given to a child by a fairy god-mother.

The Moon, who is caprice itself, looked through the window while thou wert sleeping in thy cradle, and exclaimed: "That child pleases me!"

And she softly descended her stairway of clouds, and passed without sound through the panes of glass. Then she stretched herself above thee, with a mother's supple tenderness, and she put her own colours upon thy face. Wherefore thine eyes have always remained green and thy cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was while contemplating this visitor that thine eyes first became so fantastically large; and she compressed thy throat so tenderly that since that time thou hast always felt a constant desire to weep.

Meanwhile, in the expansion of her joy, the Moon filled the whole room, like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all that living light thought and spoke: "Thou shalt eternally endure the influence of my kiss. Thou shalt be beautiful after my fashion. Thou shalt love all I love, and all that loves me: the water, the clouds, the silence, and the night; the waters formless and multiform; the place where thou shalt never be; the lover thou shalt never know; the monstrous flowers; the perfumes that give delirium; the cats that stretch themselves upon pianos, and moan like women, with a hoarse sweet voice.

"And thou shalt be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. Thou shalt be the queen of green-eyed men, whose throats I have also pressed in my nocturnal caress; those who love the sea, the immense, tumultuous green sea, the water formless and multiform, the place in which they are not, the woman they know not, the sinister flowers that resemble the censors of some unknown religion, the perfumes that confuse the will, and the wild and voluptuous animals that are the emblems of their madness."

Of course in the French this is incomparably more

musical and more strange. You will see that it has the qualities of poetry, although not poetry; it has the same resonance, the same groupings of vowel sounds, the same alliteration, the same cadences. It is very strange, and it is also really beautiful. Probably Baudelaire's poetical prose is the most perfect attempt of the kind ever made; and there is a good deal of it. But being a very great artist, he saw, as I have told you before, that this kind of prose is suitable only for reveries, dreams, philosophical fancies. And thereby comes the question as to whether a book of that kind should be written only in one style.

Now this may seem to you a queer question, but I think that it is a very important one. The French have solved it; the English have not. Everything depends upon the character of the book. If the book be composed of different kinds of material, it seems to me quite proper that it should be written in different styles to suit the differences of subjects. You cannot do this, however, except in a book which is a miscellany, a mixture of reflection and fact. Combinations of the latter kind are chiefly possible in works of travel. In a book of travel you cannot keep up the tone of poetical prose while describing simple facts; but when you come to reflect upon the facts, you can then vary the style. French books of travel are much superior to English in point of literary execution, because the writers of them do this. They do it so naturally that you are apt to overlook the fact that there are two styles in the same book. I know of only one really great English book of travel which has the charm of poetical prose,—that is the "Eothen" of Kinglake. But in this case the entire book is written in one dream tone. The author has not attempted to deal with details to any extent. Beautiful as the book is, it does not show the versatility which French writers of equal ability often display. While on this subject, it occurs to me to show you an example of the difference in English and French methods, as shown by two contemporary writers in describing Tokyo. The English writer is Kipling. He is

certainly the most talented English writer now living in descriptive and narrative work. The greatest living prose writer among the French is Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud), a French naval officer, and, you know, a member of the Academy. I hope that you have not been prejudiced against him by the stupid criticisms of very shallow men; and that you do not make the mistake of blaming the writer for certain observations regarding Japan, which were made during a stay of only some weeks in this country. Although he was here only for some weeks, and could only describe exactly what he saw, knowing nothing about Japan except through his eyes, yet his sketches of Japan are incomparably finer and truer than anything which has been done by any other living writer. His comments, his inferences may be entirely wrong (they often are); but that has nothing really to do with the merit of his descriptions. When he describes exactly what he sees, then he is like a wonderful magician. There is nobody else living who could do the same thing. I suppose you know that his reputation does not depend upon his Japanese work, however, but upon some twenty volumes of travel containing the finest prose that has ever been written. However, let us first take a few lines from the English traveller's letter. It is very simply phrased, and yet very effective.

Some folks say that Tokyo covers an area equal to London. Some folks say that it is not more than ten miles long and eight miles broad. There are a good many ways of solving the question. I found a tea-garden situated on a green plateau far up a flight of steps, with pretty girls smiling on every step. From this elevation I looked forth over the city, and it stretched away from the sea, as far as the eye could reach—one grey expanse of packed house-roof, the perspective marked by numberless factory chimneys. Then I went several miles away and found a park, another eminence, and some more tea-girls prettier than the last; and, looking again, the city stretched out in a new direction as far as the eye could reach. Taking the scope of an eye on a clear day at eighteen miles, I make Tokyo thirty-six miles long by thirty-six miles broad exactly; and there may be some more which I missed. The place roared with life through all its quarters.

Here is the work of a practical man with a practical eye—interested in facts above all things, though not indifferent at any time to what is beautiful. Now, anybody who reads that paragraph will have an idea of the size of Tokyo such as pages of description could not give. There is only one half line of description to note, but it is very strong; and the use of house-roof in the singular gives a particular force to it. That is quite enough to satisfy the average mind. But the Frenchman is an infinitely finer artist. He also gives you a description of Tokyo seen as a wilderness of roofs; but he first chooses a beautiful place from which to look and a beautiful time of the day in which to see it. Let me translate a few sentences for you:

Uyeno. A very large park; wide avenues, all gravelled,—bordered with magnificent old trees, and tufts of bamboos.

I halt upon an elevation, at a point overlooking the Lotos-lake—which reflects the evening, like a slightly tarnished mirror, all the gold of sunset. Yedo is beyond those still waters; Yedo is over there, half-lost in the reddish mist of the Autumn evening: a myriad of infinite little greyish roofs all alike;—the furthest, almost indistinguishable in the vague horizon, giving nevertheless an impression that that is not all,—that there are more of them, much more, in distances beyond the view. You can distinguish, amidst the uniformity of the low small houses, certain larger buildings with the angles of their roofs turned up. These are the temples. If it were not for them, you might imagine that you were looking at almost any great city quite as well as you could imagine that you were looking at Yedo. Indeed, it requires the effects of distance and of a particular light to make Yedo appear charming;—at this moment, for example, I must confess that it is exquisite to see.

It is dimly outlined in the faintest colours; it has the look of not really existing, of being only a mirage. Then it seems as if long bands of pink cotton were slowly unrolling over the world, drawing this chimerical city in their soft undulations. Now one can no longer distinguish the interval between the lake and the further high land upon which all those myriads of far-away shapes are built. One even doubts whether that really is a lake, or only a very smooth level, reflecting the diffused light of the sky,—or simply a stretch of vapour; nevertheless, some few long rosy gleams, still showing upon surface,

almost suffice to assure you that it is really water, and that Lotos-beds here and there make black patches against the reflecting surface.*

Although this rapid translation does not give you the colour and charm of the original French, you must be able to see even through it how very accurate and fine the description is—an effect of evening sunlight and rosy mist. I think that most of you have enjoyed the same view, and have noticed how black the lotos leaves really do seem, when the surface of the water is turned to gold by sunset. And then the description of the coming of the mists like long cloud bands of pink cotton is surely as beautiful as it is true. That is the way that a Japanese painter would paint a picture of Tokyo as seen from the same place at the same time. The Englishman would not have noticed all those delicate and dreamy colours, or if he did, would not trouble himself to try to paint them. Really it is a most difficult thing to do.

Now after this little digression let me come back to the subject of variety in style. Loti knows the art of it; so does many another French writer; but very few Englishmen do. What I am going to say is this, that an author ought to be able to choose a different style for different kinds of work,—that is, a great author. But it is so much trouble to master even one style perfectly well, that very few authors attempt this. However, I think it can be laid down as a true axiom that the style ought to vary with the subject in certain cases; and I think that the great writers of the future will so vary it. The poetical prose, of which I gave you an example from Loti, is admirably suited for particular kinds of composition—short and dreamy things. It is very exhausting to write much in such a style; it is quite as much labour as to write the same thing in verse. But a whole book upon one subject could not be written in this way. The simple naked style, on the other hand, is particularly adapted to story telling, to narrative, even to

* Cf. Loti *Japoneries d'automne*, pp. 292-3—Ed.

certain forms of history. The rhetorical style, ornamental without being exactly poetical, has also a special value; it is in such a style that logical argument and philosophical work in the form of essays can perhaps be most effectively presented. I think that some day this will be generally done. But once it becomes a fashion to do it, there will be danger ahead,—the danger of the custom hardening into conventionalism. Conventionalism kills style. The best way, I think, to meet the difficulty suggested will be to persuade oneself that sentiment, artistic feeling, absolute sincerity of the emotion and of the thought will guide the writer better than any rules as to what style ought to be used. If you try to imitate a model, you will probably go wrong. All literary imitation means weakness. But if you simply follow your own feeling and tastes, trying to be true to them, and to develop them as much as you can—then I think that your style will form itself and will naturally, without direction, take at last the particular form and tone best adapted to the subject.

CHAPTER XXIII

LITERARY GENIUS

(A FRAGMENT)

*Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.**

THE evidence that genius has some relation to moral weakness is certainly very large. Not only in English literature, but in the literature of all European countries, we find that the names of the great poets are generally associated with stories of unhappy lives and bad morals. In our own lectures upon modern English, you will have noticed that such men as Coleridge and Byron and Shelley were very weak characters, and quite out of harmony with their surroundings. And these great three are examples of hundreds of lesser men who were equally open to reproach, but who were possessed of remarkable literary abilities. Even in the history of English drama, we find that a large proportion of the great names were names of men who could not be considered moral in any sense of the word—Shakespeare being a remarkable exception. French literature tells pretty much the same story, from the time of Villon, who narrowly escaped being hanged, to the time of Baudelaire and of De Nerval, both of whom were partly insane. But probably the proportion of men of genius who have been either insane or bad is not so large as has been supposed. Prejudice must always be taken into consideration where we deal with such criticism. But you will find criticism without prejudice accumulated upon this subject by a Mr. Galton; and the evidence is very strong against the literary men.

The controversy was begun by the work of an Italian man of science, Cesare Lombroso, a professor at Milan.

* John Dryden *Absalom and Achitophel*, I, 163.—Editor.

Lombroso is an evolutionist, and all his lectures are based upon the evolutionary philosophy. In his book, "The Man of Genius," he accumulated a great number of facts about the morals of the men of genius; and he inferred from these facts that genius means a kind of insanity, and that it is usually accompanied with physical and moral weakness. He argues, with a great show of reason, that men of genius exhibit in the general character of their acts, not an advance upon the morals of their time, but a reversion to the morals of a former age. He thinks that the criminal in society represents the original savage man, the survival of instincts and tendencies older than civilization. On this subject his evidence and arguments are very strong indeed. But he also regards the man of genius as being in some degree related to the criminal rather than to the moral type of mankind. His book at once inspired a German writer, Max Nordau, to compose a popular work on the same topic. Nordau's object would seem to have been to please the great middle class, the conventional class *par excellence*, who are usually incapable of understanding genius, but are quite delighted to find something bad to say about anybody who, while disobeying conventions, yet manages to attract the attention of superior men. When you find that a person whom you dislike is undeniably clever—is able to do something which you cannot possibly do, you have a certain satisfaction in knowing or believing that his higher ability is the result of some miserable disease. Nothing flatters and pleases mediocrity more than to be able to disparage superiority. In other words, Nordau's book was an appeal to all the prejudices and meannesses of the half-educated; and it had an immense sale. It is still popular; the dullards of society have been fully convinced by it that men of genius are very contemptible persons, in most cases, probably immoral, and usually degenerate.

Nordau is not a man of science; he is simply a clever and cunning journalist, who knew how to make money by a misuse of Lombroso's facts. What about the facts them-

selves? How much truth are we to allow them? I think that a reference to Spencer's "Psychology" would have settled the whole question so far as the evolution matter is concerned. The "eccentricity of genius," as Spencer calls it, really represents two things; the opinions of Lombroso err chiefly in the direction of one-sidedness. The two things represented by the eccentricity of genius are likely to be higher developments and degeneration—two opposites. The average man of genius is likely to be superior to other men in one faculty, and inferior to other men in other faculties. The reason is that genius can only be produced at a tremendous cost to the vital energy of the being in whom it exists. There are for this several reasons, which I shall try to explain in the easiest way possible.

Let us first take it for granted, as we must do scientifically, that every being starts into existence with a certain quantity of what I may call life-force. The force may differ considerably in different men, but there must be a general average. Let us say that this average force would under ordinary circumstances enable a man weighing a hundred and fifty pounds, standing five feet and eight inches, possessing good blood and faculties, to live under comfortable circumstances to the age of eighty. This fact you will perceive is quite easy to understand. The life-force, however, is influenced by tendencies that we know very little about, hereditary tendencies. According to these, it may act more in one direction than in another. It has only so much material to work with; it may make out of that material a great many different things or differences in things.

CHAPTER XXIV

ENGLISH FICTION IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE first immense influence of the century in the literature of fiction was certainly Sir Walter Scott. I am sure that you know a good deal about him already. What I have to say about him here will consequently be very short; but it is very important. I need not speak of his novels in detail. What is necessary for you to know is why they have become one of the treasures of English literature; you must be able to understand the reason of their merit. It is not because of style. They have no style to speak of, for Sir Walter was almost as indifferent to finish in his prose as he was in his poetry. Nor is their merit due to the fact that the stories are at all wonderful in themselves as to plot or plan. The whole value of the Waverley novels is in the story-teller's way of telling his story; and I hope you will be patient with me while I try to explain what I mean by his "way." I have already said that it is not style. Scott's power of telling a story differs from that of most other novelists who appeared before or since his time, and the difference lies in his skill to make his characters seem alive. I have only said *seem* alive. They are not always really alive. Shakespeare's characters are really alive; so are some of Jane Austen's. Scott's do not always reach this high degree of creative perfection. You feel that men do not act exactly and speak exactly as Scott makes them act and speak; you feel that some of his people are impossibly good, too heroic, therefore too unnatural. Occasionally you do find really living figures—the proof of great genius; but this is not common. Nevertheless, the figures always at first have an appearance of life. Scott managed this in quite a

peculiar way—by an enormous mastery of detail. When he puts a Highland chief before you, you can see the man, outwardly, exactly as he was; you can study his dress, his port, his action; you can hear his mountain accent; you see all his exterior as vividly as if he were there. This is what makes Scott's creations so wonderful. But inwardly the man of whom I speak, this Highland chief, is not so perfectly made. His accent is quite correct, but his emotions and thoughts are not always quite real. We feel that the real man would have thought and felt somewhat differently under the same circumstances; then we find that we have been looking at a ghost, not a man. With Shakespeare it is altogether otherwise. Shakespeare does not bother himself about the outer man as to details; he gives you the real thought, the real feeling only; then the soul that he made immediately covers itself with warm flesh and becomes alive. But Scott's figures are very often like those Scandinavian goblins which were all hollow behind.

For all that, there is life enough in Scott's personages to make them wonderful; and besides this partial life, there is a real general life in the books, borrowed from the writer's own mind and heart, a generous vivacity, a noble idealism, a fire of purpose, such as no other novelist has given us in historical romance. There are only two books of the whole set in which these qualities do not appear—books written when the man was sick and dying. He achieved something new in the mere fact of making history alive, changing it into romance. I think there is no doubt that he inspired Macaulay to some extent with those new ideas about history-making which have influenced all the great histories of our time. But his great work was in reforming and inspiring fiction and romance. You must not think of him merely as a great figure in *English* literature. He was a European force. He influenced and changed almost every literature of consequence in Europe. He powerfully influenced French literature, German literature, Italian literature, and Spanish literature. His books have been translated into most lan-

guages. And I may venture here to express an opinion that if he has not already influenced Japanese literature, the day will almost certainly come when you will feel his influence all about you. Do not think of Scott as an expired power; he is a living force even to-day, though you must not look to him as a master of style, or anything of that sort. He is only a very great story-teller, one of the greatest story-tellers that the world has ever seen.

You know that Scott lived well into the present century: he died in 1832. The next great figure in this branch of literature was born, unlike Scott, within the century, in 1812. This was Charles Dickens. For many reasons, Dickens must be considered an eccentricity in English literature. Though a very great master of prose, much greater than Scott, he had no education or culture to speak of. He had only the plainest and simplest school training in his boyhood, and had to get out into the world and earn his living, or study how to earn it, long before he became a man. Without going into details, I will only tell you that he began life as a newspaper reporter, doing chiefly shorthand writing in that capacity, which is as severe drudgery as any man of brains could be condemned to. But he was full of youth and health and spirits, and he actually found time between his daily tasks to write down the curious impressions that came to his mind, and to put them into the form of little sketches for publication. I do not think I need tell you anything further about his remarkable and successful life. I will say only that he first became famous through the publication of a little volume of comical sketches, called "The Pickwick Papers," which show the peculiarity of his genius as much as anything that he afterwards wrote. And he wrote, besides stories and sketches, about twenty-five big books. He died only in 1870.

Dickens would be for you a very difficult author to study as regards the bulk of his work, for it relates chiefly to English city life, particularly the life of London. But you can study him, even without knowing anything about

London life, in one or two of his novels, and in some short stories of a very strange kind. Of the novels I should most recommend to you the "Tale of Two Cities," which is a story of the French Revolution; and of the short stories, I should especially recommend a group of railroad sketches, published under the title of "Mugby Junction." I mention these last chiefly because they show in a very strong way the power of Dickens to put ghosts into inanimate objects, to make even railroads and telegraphs become alive.

Dickens had two great faculties. He had the power of giving a factitious animation to objects; and he had the power of seizing and painting certain peculiarities of people, much as certain great painters have. But I must tell you that his greatness is within certain rather narrow limits. There is now, I believe, in Tokyo a French artist who has been making outline drawings of what he sees in the everyday life of the streets. I suppose that you have seen some of them. They are not flattering to Japanese feelings. Some people become very angry on seeing them. Yet it is impossible to say that they are not true. There is truth in them; and yet you feel that they are unjust, sometimes apparently malicious. What is the reason of this? The reason is that this man, who is very clever indeed, observes a certain peculiarity, and slightly exaggerates it so as to produce what we call a caricature. A caricature is the exaggeration of a defect, or a funny peculiarity, or an eccentricity; it is never the exaggeration of anything good. It is thus an art of drawing which is of great use in affecting public opinion during times of political excitement. It is at once true, and yet not true; according to the wish of the artist, it can be made almost wicked. Now the talent or genius of Charles Dickens as a novelist was chiefly the same kind of genius that is possessed by the caricaturist—the faculty for instantly observing a peculiarity, and exaggerating it picturesquely. Sometimes Dickens gives us sweet and good characters, but even then he always exaggerates something—just as the artist of the London *Punch*, when he

draws a beautiful girl, never fails to define some characteristic in a somewhat exaggerated way, so as to create a type of character. Most often Dickens' characters are not sweet and good, but simply odd and downright wicked. But they are all wonderful. They are all at once true and not true, just as a caricature is. It is very important to recognize this fact before you begin to study Dickens. What you have to learn from him will be the great literary value of the special faculty to which I referred. For example, one of his characters, Rigaud, has a very long nose and a very peculiar smile; whenever he smiles his nose seems to come down over his moustache, and his moustache seems to go up under his nose. Now this is more than mere play, more than a mere caricature. If you have seen such a smile, and most of us have seen it, then you know that it means evil. The whole man is represented by his smile, and we know a great deal about him long before he shows himself to be thoroughly wicked. Almost every character in Dickens is described by some such peculiarity, bad or good. The method is not altogether untrue to common human nature. In real life we generally remember people by something peculiar in the voice, the walk, the attitude, or the habit of speech. What we think of the peculiarity, is another matter. Dickens showed it always as the caricaturist sees it, not only distinctly but exaggeratedly. And he saw men's hearts somewhat after the same manner. A character did not appear to him the marvelously complex thing that it really is; he distinguished it only by some peculiarity. And this is to say that he saw chiefly the eccentricities of people, and that these eccentricities remain in his mind as the only symbols of their existence. I therefore say that such an art is limited. To come back to the case of the French artist above referred to, I should make the same observation. He is a very clever artist in a certain direction, but not the noblest direction; and he could not be a great painter. So Dickens was a very great artist in certain directions, but not the highest

directions; and we cannot call him a great painter of human nature. Rather he was a marvellous caricaturist, a genius in the delineation of peculiarities, and peculiarities mostly of a small kind.

Remember, these observations are but general criticism. As general criticism I believe they are certainly true. But as there are always exceptions to general rules and general statements, so there are pages in Dickens which deserve higher praise than the foregoing remarks would indicate. He is sometimes able to give us sensations of fear of a very strange kind—ghostly fear; and this is always an approach to serious art. At other times he can draw tears, or fill us with a sudden passionate admiration for something noble and good; this is more than an approach to great art—it is great art. In the “Tale of Two Cities” you will find examples of all his powers. But I must say that he does not always rise to such heights; he generally remains at the stage which I have already indicated, the world of caricature. But you must not think that Dickens always wished to caricature. Sometimes he did, as in “The Pickwick Papers”; but generally he did not. He made the caricatures only because he could not help it, because he saw life exactly as a caricaturist sees it, and imagined that he was seeing and feeling like other people, although he was really not able to see or to feel like a common man.

Dickens took for his own subjects generally the middle and the poorer classes of English life, especially London life. The aristocracy and the upper classes were little known to him. But he had two great contemporaries, who formed with him the great triumvirate of nineteenth century novelists. I say “novelists,” because, although Walter Scott was so great a writer, his books must be regarded more as romances than as novels in the true sense. The triumvirate consisted of Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, and Thackeray. Whatever differences of opinion there may be among critics as to the merits of other novelists of the age, I am quite sure that no other writer of real novels can be given a place beside

these three. One of them was the greatest of all English novelists except, perhaps, Fielding. We shall speak of him last.

Lord Lytton is, then, the next figure to consider. There were two Lord Lyttons, father and son. Of the son, known in literature as "Owen Meredith," I shall speak in a lecture upon Victorian poets. The father—Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton—one of the most remarkable of modern novelists, was born in 1803 and died in 1873. He was a Cambridge man, a member of Parliament, a great society gentleman, and has every advantage that rank, wealth, and education could give a man. Such a person ought to have done extraordinary work; and Lord Lytton did extraordinary work.

The whole of his books would represent about thirty volumes in their present form—large volumes—some containing two or more different stories. And when you remember that this great work was done by a man who not only gave much of his time to society, but a great deal of his time also to politics and to diplomacy—for, besides being a member of Parliament, he also held many offices at different times; among others, that of Secretary of State—we cannot but wonder at the industry which could accomplish so much, even in the space of forty-five years. But there is a greater wonder than the bulk in this work, always highly finished; there is also the wonder of its versatility. No other great English novelist ever wrote in so many different ways, and upon so many different things. It is hard to believe that all these novels and stories were written by the same person. They can be divided into groups. Each group is marked by a different tone, a different style, almost as if a different writer had created each group. He began with highly fashionable novels, such as "Falkland" and "Pelham," fashionable novels not only in the fact that they picture aristocratic life, but in the fact that they are written in a peculiar epigrammatic style which reflects faithfully the tone of society of a certain quality. Next he turned to

historical romances, and produced quite a number, each upon an entirely different phase of history. "Harold" is the story of the king who died in battle with William the Conqueror. "The Last of the Barons" is a story of Italian life in the fifteenth century. "The Last Days of Pompeii" is, as its name implies, a tale of the first century after Christ. And there are several others upon equally diverse subjects. Another group consists of novels of crime, which at that time were quite popular, perhaps because of the influence of French writers who distinguished themselves in the same direction. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these is "Eugene Aram"; you will remember that the poet Thomas Hood wrote a famous poem about the same schoolmaster who became a murderer. Another group of novels by Bulwer are all novels of middle class domestic life, such as "The Caxtons," and "What will he do with it?" And yet another group treats of the supernatural, the thaumaturgical, the mystical, the alchemical, the impossible. To this class belongs, I think, the most astonishing work that the author accomplished, and much the most extraordinary that was ever done upon the same subjects by any European writer. Two of these books deal with the subject of an elixir of life,—that is to say, a medicine by the use of which a man could prolong his existence for hundreds of years; and the titles are "Zanoni" and "A Strange Story." But "A Strange Story" is incomparably the greatest book; and the subject includes much more than the elixir of life; it includes almost every weird and terrible imagination of magic and magical power, of alchemy and Rosicrucianism, of mesmerism and double personality. The hero is a man of society; and the effect of the whole story is made more powerful by the fact that all the scenes are of to-day. The chief figure is a man who lived for five or six hundred years, but who has been able by secret arts to remain continually young, changing his name every fifty or sixty years, so as to conceal his real personality, speaking all languages, and utilizing all sciences, having power of life and death over

his fellow-men, and using it for his own interests only, capable of enormous crime without remorse, and feeling no sympathy with the humanity to which he has made himself strangely superior. No more terrible story ever was written; and it is written with an art that makes it appear not only possible but actual. In order to have written it, enormous reading was necessary, as well as enormous talent. There is scarcely any remarkable superstition of the middle ages, of the Orient, or of ancient Scandinavia, which has not been utilized in the preparation of the book. Many readers, even highly educated men, were taught by this book to feel an interest in matters that they had never heard of before, such as the *Scin-Laeca*, or luminous ghost, of old northern fancy. Yet it is not so much in the actual learning which the story displays, as in the marvellous combinations of that learning, that the writer's art is displayed. You ought, all of you, to read this particular story, even if you read no other book of Bulwer's; for to read it is like an education in the supernatural. I shall mention only one other title of this last group, "The Coming Race." This little book is known in Japan, and I need not tell you much about it. But I want to say that at the time it was written, many of the electric and magnetic discoveries imagined in the story, had not yet been made. They have been made since, and the book was like a prophecy of scientific discovery. Take for instance the art of electric lighting, and compare the resulting facts with the description of the Vril lights in "The Coming Race." Bulwer was not a shallow thinker; and it is not rash to assume that some others of his imaginations may be realized in a future day. An application of electricity to war purposes, as indicated in "The Coming Race," would, if realized, be the end of all war in this world, and perhaps that would be a very good thing for mankind.

But I am not yet done with the subject of the supernatural as treated by Bulwer. One of his short stories is generally acknowledged to be the greatest ghost story that

was ever written, and perhaps it is an even more wonderful thing than "A Strange Story." I mean the little story called first "The House and the Brains," but afterwards called "The Haunted and the Haunters." By this little story Bulwer is attached for all time to the highest literature, as it has become a classic.

There is another story, a very short story, by Bulwer, which has a most interesting history; for it may be said to have indirectly influenced the literature of half the English world. First I will mention my own experience of the story. I read it when a boy in some magazine; there was no name attached to it, and I supposed that it had been written by Edgar Poe. For many years this mistake continued in my mind; unfortunately it had been confirmed by the opinion of a man wiser than I, who had said to me that "Monos and Daimonos" was certainly written by Edgar Poe. It has indeed all of Poe's peculiarities, every one of them. But as a matter of fact it was written by Bulwer, and may be found in his volume entitled "Conversations with an Ambitious Student"—in most editions I think you will find this bound up with "The Pilgrims of the Rhine." Now Poe read the story while very young, and it changed his whole life. All his prose work afterwards was written in imitation of it or under its influence. The influence of Poe in turn affected nearly all English poetry and a great deal of English prose—besides influencing also French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian literature. Thus you can see how much even one little story may accomplish. In Bulwer's case it indirectly toned all European literature. If for no other reason, you should read it; it is a little story about a ghost and an evil conscience. What I have told you about it cannot, however, give you the least idea of how extraordinary it is.

It is now time to talk about Bulwer's style. The ornamental and rhetorical style, the highly coloured and musical style, in short the romantic style, reached its highest in him. No man before or since wrote in just the same

splendid way. After him the tendency became simple again. At one time Bulwer's English was studied in thousands of colleges as a model style; it was used in elocution clubs; it was recited at all literary entertainments. Now there is feeling against it. It is called extravagant, theatrical, melodramatic, and many other bad names. But this is unjust, and I think it is owing chiefly to the bad taste of our time. I will say that Bulwer's English is very beautiful, often very wonderful, and that if his books are not now read so much as they used to be, it is only because they have other defects than defects of style. Bulwer's characters are not living characters in the true sense. They are not even living characters in the sense that many of Scott's characters are. But it is otherwise when Bulwer writes about the supernatural, the ghostly, the impossible; then his work becomes as living or real as any work of the kind can be, and it is for that reason that I expressly advise you to read the supernatural books. But even in the other books, the style is always very remarkable, and it is an education to read such pages as those describing the eruption of the volcano in "The Last Days of Pompeii," or the descriptions of Rome and Roman life in "Rienzi," or the description of Venice in "Zanoni." Do not believe critics who tell you that Bulwer's style is not worth study. It is style of a particular class, indeed; but it is the best of that class in the whole of English novel writing. As for his rank merely as a novelist, I should say that he wrote too much, and that he never reached the highest rank except in his short stories and in his astonishing "Strange Story."

Contemporary with him lived and worked the greatest of all English novelists, the very giant of the art of novel writing, Thackeray. Giant in power, not in bulk of work; for he wrote less than half of what Bulwer wrote,—only seven or eight novels. But these novels are incomparably greater than those of Dickens or Bulwer or even Scott, and are approached by no work of the century except that of Jane Austen. Thackeray was not born in England but in

India—at Calcutta, in the year 1811. It is a curious thing that the greatest English novelist of the nineteenth century was born at Calcutta; and that the greatest English songwriter and story-teller of the present day was born at Bombay, somewhat more than half a century later. I think it is probable that in the twentieth century it will be acknowledged that the two greatest English men of letters of our own age were both born in India. Another queer fact is that both have much the same quality of dramatic art, that they see life in the same vivid way, and that they both excel in a kind of satirical poetry, half pathetic and half mocking, but always of a unique and unparalleled kind. Thackeray was educated in England, and studied at Cambridge. He came of a very good family, and could have taken a high place in London society, but he was poor, and wrote only to live. His first ambition was to be a comic artist, a caricaturist, and he was certainly clever in this kind of drawing. But he was not clever enough to win a high position and to make a good salary at this sort of work; therefore he suddenly changed his plans, and took to writing. At first he tried to write comical or satirical things chiefly, in verse and prose, for "Punch" and other papers. But gradually he worked into serious writing, and his first great novel, "Vanity Fair"—with a title suggested by Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress"—startled the literary world. But it was really too great to become at once popular. Men were then more interested in the brilliant romantic novels of Bulwer, and the eccentric novels of Dickens. Thackeray had to compete against these, and only a giant could have done it. Again and again he put forth astonishing studies of life—"Henry Esmond," "The Virginians," "Pendennis," "The Newcomes." At first he had to do journalistic work for "Punch" and other periodicals, while his reputation was being made; and it was made slowly, because a very great talent cannot be understood quickly by the public. But the reputation came, and Thackeray was acknowledged, even before his death, as the greatest man of

letters. He did not write very much. No man could write very much and do such astonishing work, because work of this class costs too much to the nervous system. I shall speak of this again in a moment; I first want to remark upon Thackeray's versatility. Observe that his great novels are not all of one class. Like Bulwer he could write historical romance, though he did not attempt to go very far into history. "Esmond," "The Virginians," these are historical romances; but they are also in the truest and highest sense novels—treating of realities, and nothing but realities. "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," "The Newcomes,"—these are novels of society, high society, novels of the gentry, in which the figures mostly belong to the very finest classes, the nobility, the clergy, the military aristocracy. Yet Thackeray could depict, when he wished to, any class of society, and he sometimes amused himself by literary caricatures of the peculiarities of the lowest ranks, especially the peculiarities of the English servant. Such studies you will find in his "Yellowplush Papers." But you must not think that Thackeray caricatured only the poor and spared the rich. Quite the contrary. No man has satirized more terribly what we may call the "genteel vulgarity" of the English upper classes, that vulgarity of selfishness and conceit that may even make a lord at times less of a gentleman than his servant. In "The Book of Snobs" Thackeray treated such vulgarity as it never had been treated before, and in all his novels he never spares the faults of men in high places. Besides this work Thackeray did many light things, comic poetry, sketches of travel, lectures upon historical and literary subjects. There is very little of his poetry; but what there is may be classed with the very best kind of that "society-verse" about which I shall give you a lecture. It is full of kind mischief and half-suppressed tenderness, a delightful mixture of the cynical with the emotional. This same delicate double tone qualifies a great deal of his literary work, even his travel sketches. There are two bits of verse by him of which you ought to re-

member the names. One is "The Sorrows of Werther"—this is perhaps a little cruel—and "The Ballad of Bouillabaisse," which is a masterpiece of mixed humour and pathos. Besides, I may mention some purely comic verses, half satirical, painting certain types of character. Such are the "Ballads of Policeman X." In England you must know that the police are numbered in divisions, each division having for sign a letter of the alphabet; thus, if you see on a policeman's uniform the letters A132, or B200, that means that the man is ranked as No. 132 in Division A., or No. 200 in Division B. English police are largely drawn from the country classes, men of great strength and honesty being required, and they have some peculiarities of character and manner which Thackeray amused himself by celebrating in verse. But outside of his novels, his most remarkable literary work consists of lectures. No other lectures can well be compared with those except the lectures of Froude, and Thackeray is even superior to Froude. There are two volumes of lectures, one upon the literary men of the eighteenth century, and one upon four English kings, "The Four Georges." These are very wonderful, and anybody who reads "The Four Georges" must regret that Thackeray never had the time or the inclination to write a history of England. He died comparatively young, leaving a novel unfinished.

What distinguishes Thackeray's work from all other novel writing of the century, except Miss Austen's, is the same quality that distinguishes Shakespeare's characters in English drama. They are really alive, and to make a character really alive is the greatest feat of which human genius is capable. But, as I told you before, it costs. In order to make your characters live, you must actually put so much of your own life into them; they can live only at your expense. The man who has a perfect imagination must exhaust his nervous system very quickly through the exercise of his prodigious faculty. How this happens I cannot very well explain to you without going into a study of

physiology, which would take too much time. But the fact is scientifically recognized and explained; and it is because of this fact that Thackeray has given us only seven or eight novels, while other men were writing twenty-five or thirty. Perfection is too expensive to the life of the man that is capable of it. Even Shakespeare, you will remember, died at a comparatively early age.

CHAPTER XXV

ENGLISH FICTION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I THINK we may begin the study of English fiction since 1850 with the name of a woman. It is curious that the first great period of nineteenth century fiction also begins with the name of a woman; for if Sir Walter Scott was the father of the modern romance, Miss Edgeworth was just as certainly the mother of the modern domestic novel, and the writing of novels of this class is a work depending much upon that delicacy of observation which women possess in a much higher degree than men. The same fact, I am told, is observed in the history of Japanese literature, though on this subject I am not qualified to speak. Nevertheless I imagine myself tolerably close to the truth when I say that a considerable portion of the best Japanese literature is the work of women.

The woman who began the second period of the nineteenth century novel writing was Charlotte Brontë. Miss Brontë was one of three sisters, all of whom possessed considerable literary ability. They were the daughters of an Irish clergyman, Patrick Brontë (or Brunty), who settled in Haworth. The Rev. Mr. Brontë was a passionate, ill-tempered man, and seems to have caused his daughters considerable unhappiness, and unhappiness which perhaps shows itself, like a fugitive gloom, through many pages of the work of the sisters. The living, as the curacy of such a clergyman is called in England, was very small; and poverty added to the bitterness of the girls' lives. They had no prospects; the position of a daughter of a poor clergyman is apt to be very unenviable. She is delicately educated and is therefore unfitted to marry into the artisan

class, while, unless possessing remarkable beauty or other advantages, she has very little chance of marrying into a higher class. In a large number of cases she is therefore doomed to remain unmarried, and is usually obliged, notwithstanding, to make her own living. Therefore she is trained for a governess—that is to say, a female teacher in a private family. The three Brontë sisters were so trained, and Charlotte was sent to Belgium for a special course. There was a brother, but he appears to have been a good-for-nothing, lazy fellow, who never gave his sisters any help, and who probably lived at their expense, which is considered a very shameful thing to do. Charlotte Brontë and Anne Brontë and Emily Brontë first attempted poetry. Their poems did not succeed, but some critics observed in them remarkable qualities. Emily wrote under the name of Ellis Bell, Anne wrote under the name of Acton Bell, and Charlotte under the name of Currer Bell,—each thus choosing a literary name beginning with the same letter as the real name. Charlotte Brontë next appeared in print singly, under the name of Currer Bell, with a novel called “The Professor.” This was followed by a novel called “Jane Eyre,” which startled England into the recognition of a new and very powerful literary personality. Nothing like “Jane Eyre” had yet appeared in literature. There was nothing romantic about it. It was not the story of a beautiful woman and a handsome man, such as other popular novelists had written, but the story of two very plain, very obstinate and very deep natures, alternately attracting and repelling each other, fearing to show love and withdrawing violently when it was shown, yet at last irresistibly drawn together in spite of this long struggle between pride and affection. It was a story of everyday humanity, and it appealed to a very large class. Its success was immense and well deserved. It provoked a great number of weaker writers to imitate it, and within a few years there were brought out, both in England and America, a great number of flimsy novels with ugly women for heroines, and ugly

obstinate men for heroes. After "Jane Eyre," Charlotte Brontë produced two other novels, "Villette," and "Shirley." The heroine of the latter is said to be a study of the character of one of her own sisters. Both are very good, but I think that "Villette" is the better,—indeed I have often been tempted to think that it is even better than "Jane Eyre," but perhaps the reason why I think so is that I have been in the same class of French school as those described in "Villette," and the verisimilitude of the narrative therefore appeals to me in a particular way. One feels in reading any of this author's books that one is reading not a story, but warm, living, cruel pages out of a life. What Charlotte Brontë did was simply to put into book form her own experiences of love, despair, and struggle, but this with the very highest art of the novel writer, with a skill of grouping incident and of communicating vividness to the least detail, rarely found in English fiction. The work of her sister Emily in prose, "Wuthering Heights," is gloomy and strong, weaker than her own, but showing much of the same originality. Anne, the other sister, produced two novels, "Agnes Grey," and "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall." They are not very remarkable. Charlotte alone is likely to remain a very great figure in English fiction, and only last year the taste for her work revived, with the result that a beautiful new edition of her novels was brought out in London. Some sneers have been made at the poetry of the sisters, chiefly because these poems were somewhat pantheistic in spirit, but I am inclined to think that the sneers were foolish. At all events the intense admiration expressed by John Addington Symonds for these poems served to awaken new interest later, and they have been reprinted. Symonds himself was not a very great poet, but he was a critic of excellent judgment and of no little weight.

Many other women figured in the roll of honour of English fiction since 1850, and Charlotte Brontë was not the greatest. Still greater was a woman born three years later, and now universally known to the English speaking world

as George Eliot. Her real name was Mary Ann Evans. She was born in 1819, the daughter of a steward in charge of an English estate at Arbury in Warwickshire. An English steward does not rank very high socially, and can be said to belong at best to the lower middle class; but he has to be a man of considerable intelligence as well as integrity, and he can usually command a very good salary. Mary Ann was not merely well educated by her father, but extremely well educated, some would say over-educated. She studied in Switzerland, followed the university courses so far as was possible at that time, and must be thought of altogether as a university woman. She was certainly an intellectual force rather masculine than feminine in her massiveness.

Her first literary work was a series of sketches of provincial life as seen in the neighbourhood of a country parsonage, and entitled "Scenes of Clerical Life." These stories appeared in *Blackwood Magazine*, and at once gave her a considerable reputation. Nevertheless she allowed quite a considerable interval to pass before again appearing in print. She went to London, began to write serious articles for *The Westminster Review*, and shortly became one of its editors. *The Westminster Review* was one of the ablest reviews of the time, but it was a thorn in the side of the godly, for it was anything but orthodox. Church prejudice abhorred even the name of it. It was mainly scientific and philosophical, with a fine flavour of pure literature noticeable in its criticisms. Darwinism had not then forced itself upon the conviction of the century, and the liberality of opinions expressed by *Westminster* was considered somewhat scandalous. Herbert Spencer was then a frequent contributor to *The Westminster*. He made the acquaintance of Miss Evans, and learning to estimate her as an extraordinary woman, introduced her to his friend the philosopher and critic, George Henry Lewes. The acquaintance thus resulting turned out somewhat differently perhaps from Mr. Spencer's expectations. The two fell in

love with one another, but there was an obstacle to their marriage in the fact that Mr. Lewes already had a wife. Mrs. Lewes was insane; but the law of England did not allow a divorce under such circumstances. Both Miss Evans and Mr. Lewes were philosophers, and deciding the question after their own fashion, they formed a union which, although illegal, was ultimately recognized to a certain extent by English society,—a strange example of the fact that genius is able to obtain even in England, the most prejudiced of countries, forgiveness for what is never forgiven to the ordinary class of people.

This union certainly had a very great influence upon the literary career of Miss Evans. Lewes was a good critic, though an unsuccessful story-teller. He was also a thinker, and one of the foremost scientific writers of the time. He was not of the dry class of learned men, but could write on the deepest subjects in the most romantic manner. He had the art-sense of the wonderful race to which he belonged, for he was a Jew, and therefore could appreciate all the qualities of the fine mind of his companion. Only by a very little did Lewes miss rising to the first rank in the scientific world. He was unfortunately a Comtist, and had been perhaps a little too hasty in yielding to the new thought of a new time. Most of the English writers who followed Comte made failures,—failures that chiefly show themselves in want of synthesis, in the lack of capacity to carry out a work upon intended lines. Buckle and Lewes alike show this weakness. Both began work upon a scale disproportionate to their powers, and both found it impossible to finish. While Lewes's "History of Philosophy" will always be found one of the most delightful books of its class, his great psychological work, "Problems of Life and Mind," is quite as much a failure as was Buckle's "History of Civilization." Both are full of good and grave things, but both show the lack of that wonderful synthesizing power which marks the superiority of minds like those of Spencer and of Huxley.

From these remarks upon Lewes, it is easy to see that

the mind of his companion was likely to receive influence both for good and bad. And such influences her most admiring critics have found traces of in her work. Her early novels, resembling in their simple strength and sunny humour the "Scenes of Clerical Life," differ so much from her later productions that it is almost impossible to understand how they could have been written by the same person. By earlier novels I mean "Adam Bede," published 1859, "The Mill on the Floss," published 1860, and "Silas Marner," published 1861, under the name of George Eliot—the author, like a very famous French woman who wrote in very much the same style, finding it advantageous to adopt a masculine *nom de plume*. Whether Miss Evans had the example of George Sand before her when she chose the literary name of George Eliot, I am not prepared to say; but I think that any reader of the works of these two women will find in the earlier work of George Eliot much of the charm that distinguishes the work of George Sand.

These were stories of simple characters and of simple life. In the meantime Miss Evans had been for many years preparing a novel of a totally different description, which appeared first in 1863. She said afterwards that she was a young girl when she began the book, and an old woman when she had finished it. In order to write it she had been obliged to read studiously more than five hundred different works in English, German, French, and Italian,—especially in Italian, because it was a story of the Italian Renaissance. The book is called "Romola," after the name of the principal female character in the narrative. The hero, or at least the chief male character, Tito, is one of those Greeks who, after the ruin of the Eastern Empire, became teachers in Italy of the arts and sciences, and helped the revival of learning. The great strength of the book is the study of Tito's character. It is a character extremely complex, extremely charming, and extremely detestable at the same time. It is a character to some degree void of moral conscience, void of moral honour, void of gratitude. Tito betrays his bene-

factor, not for gain, but through mere indolent lazy selfishness. He betrays his wife; he betrays his friends and his party; and he is at last killed by the hands of the very man who had once adopted him as a son. In short, Tito represents as faithfully as a great artist can paint it, one of the types of the Renaissance man,—neither the best nor the worst, but a type which must have been common enough. As a foil to it we have a drawing of the character of Savonarola, perhaps less successful. That which makes the book most agreeable reading, in my opinion, is the æsthetic study of the Renaissance which illustrates and beautifies every page; the descriptions of gems, bronzes, marbles, manuscripts; the colourful studies of costume and decoration; the rare but exquisite paintings of womanly sweetness and grace and statuesque loveliness. At all events I think it may be said that this book stands alone in English literature and perhaps in the world's literature, as a picture of the romantic epoch. Critics are very much divided in opinion about it. I must tell you that the majority of them have called it a failure, and when I say that it is to me the greatest of all George Eliot's books, I am speaking against the majority. Before turning to other works by the same author, I should like to direct the attention of the student to what seems to me one of the most particularly effective passages in the book, touched by a feeling not to be found in any other work of George Eliot,—the feeling of the weird. I mean the dream of Romola, that marvellous dream of the river whose waters are not waters but an unrolling of ancient parchments, and of the marriage at which the face of the priest became the face of Death. Whoever can read that and deny to George Eliot the qualities of poetic imagination, seems to me a poor critic. "Romola" cannot be said to suggest to the world the influence of Lewes upon George Eliot. That influence does not appear even in a subsequent volume, "Felix Holt," published in 1866, a strong, simple story which seems to return to the writer's first manner. But in the great novel "Middlemarch," which belongs to

the class of learned novels, the influence may be said to show itself. It appears especially in the psychological studies which give the volume quite a special character. It is beyond question a very great book, but a painful book, because of the painful truths of the conditions therein portrayed—the marriage of the girl through an ideal of duty to a man totally selfish and unworthy, with the inevitable disillusionment that such a step must bring to any fine mind.

In the next novel, published in 1876, there is no room to mistake the influence of Lewes. Daniel Deronda, the character who gives the name to the novel, is a Jew,—some have said an ideal study of Lewes himself, though that may be going too far. But all that part of the story treating of Jewish life, Jewish learning, Jewish religion, Jewish history, has obviously been written under urging and for a purpose not at all in harmony, I would not say with George Eliot's feelings, but with her natural literary tendency, and it is just this part of the book that the public pronounced a failure. It vexed her admirers and lost to her a great deal of the popularity that she had previously enjoyed. Nevertheless, I think the main part of the book contains some of the most splendid work ever done by any novelist. The character of the girl who marries a wealthy man whom she cannot love, in order to assist her parents; the character of the man, hard and cold as stone, the struggle between the two natures, in the cruel existence which the reader cannot help sharing, and the multitudinous moral questions that the narration suggests but leaves unanswered,—these would do honour to any of the great novelists of modern times, even the French masters not excepted.

There is not much to be said about the rest of George Eliot's work. After the death of Mr. Lewes she married a Mr. John Cross. Her later work was of very little importance. "Theophrastus Such," a volume of dissertations, psychological and philosophical, only suggests that the impulses received from Mr. Lewes toward the study of philosophy had at last entirely dominated her, and perhaps para-

lyzed her creative power. But I am not sure that this suggestion would be altogether correct. She had become an old woman, and at her age fresh novel writing was almost out of the question. I should mention also that she published several volumes of poetry, since collected into one. The longest poem in the collection is the "Legend of Jubal,"—in Bible story the first musician. Most critics deny poetical value to George Eliot's verses. They are sweet, melodious, pleasing; here and there one finds in them pretty little songs; but they are not great, or deep, or particularly wonderful in any way. Still, remembering the charm which they gave me at the time that I first read them, I cannot help believing that they would never have been so severely judged if they had been written by a less important person. In her greatest work this woman was so very great, greater than even any man of our time in the same field, that the world expected from her only gigantic things, and she could not always come up to its expectations.

After George Eliot's date, the next great name that interests us is that of Charles Kingsley, who figures especially about 1850. Charles Kingsley was the son of a clergyman, became a clergyman himself, and remained one all his life. But perhaps no other name in English literature so little represents those conservative influences which we are accustomed to associate with the Church. We see a very great deal of the man, and of the soul of the man, but of the clergyman we see very little; of the Christian nothing sectarian, nothing narrow-minded, only a great broad, deep, and true religious sense, toned by idealism, but never qualified by humbug.

Kingsley was born in 1819, educated first at King's College at London, and afterwards at Cambridge. His native place was Devonshire, and in many of his stories we find charming pictures of the Devonshire coast. After entering the Church he was appointed to the rectorship of Eversley in Hampshire, where he always lived. Perhaps because of his great literary powers he was made Professor of Modern

History at Cambridge in the latter part of his life. He was the brother-in-law of the great historian Froude, and what has been said of Froude, as Professor of History, has also been said of Kingsley in the same capacity. Indeed the men resembled each other in many respects, both of weakness and of strength. The fault found with the lectures of both was that they were too romantic, that they delighted the students by appealing to their imagination with vivid and emotional pictures, but at the same time gave them one-sided views of history. Romantic Kingsley's lectures certainly were, but in the most artistic sense; and it is certain that those who heard them with open minds obtained such glimpses of historic truth, and received such impulses of patriotic pride and heroism, as no merely pedantic work ever could have given.

His books represent much variety. We have pure scientific studies in natural history and geology; we have fairy tales; and we have a number of novels, both historical and romantic. The novels themselves cannot be classified under one general head nor even under three. For example, "Alton Locke" is a romance of the Chartist period in England, and largely expresses personal feeling; "Hypatia" is a story of the fifth century, and the scene is Alexandria in Egypt; "Westward Ho!" is a narrative of the great naval struggle between Spain and England in the sixteenth century; "Hereward the Wake" is a romance of the time of the Norman Conquest; "Yeast" embodies the theory of what was called in Kingsley's time "Christian Socialism," and "Two Years Ago" is perhaps the only novel of the lot in the strictest sense of the word—a novel of modern English life.

Perhaps because of the relation of the narratives to particular agitations of English social life, "Alton Locke" and "Yeast" are not well adapted for reading by students in Japan. I should not dare to recommend them; and yet I cannot but regret that they are not likely to appeal to you in the same way they once appealed to English readers. I do not know any pages in all Kingsley's work more politi-

cally impressive than those in which the dream of Alton Locke is described, the dream of the great migration of races from India westward, as it was imagined in the period when the new Sanskrit studies had first taught us that the English and the Hindoo were brothers in blood and kindred in speech. You will not easily forget the splendid phantasmagoria in this description—the vastness—the movement, the idea given of great space and great light, and the divisions always lessening behind the Himalayas, like a rosy dawn. More useful for your literary study, however, are almost any of his other books. Most critics say that “Westward Ho!” is his masterpiece, but I cannot help believing that English patriotic feeling inspires this judgment. “Westward Ho!” is a great book with its studies of West Indian life, its drawings of the English gentlemen’s adventures of Elizabeth’s time, its battle scenes, its heroism, and the awful but not impossible catastrophe at the end, when Amyas Leigh is blinded by a lightning flash; but somehow or other I cannot help thinking that to persons not English this story is less interesting than “Hypatia,” or even than “Hereward,” the most really English of all. I should say to the student, “Read ‘Hereward’ and ‘Hypatia,’ before you read any other work by Kingsley.” Hereward is the old English viking,—brother in blood and speech to the Scandinavian berserk,—the man who took off instead of putting on his armour to fight. There was really a Hereward in history, who long resisted the power of William the Conqueror and who was called the Wake, or the Awake, because he could never be taken by surprise. Kingsley has nobly idealized this figure; he has made Hereward not merely the typical man of the North, but a model of strong and generous manhood for all time. He once and only once does wrong—he is faithless to his wife because of the fascination and the charm of another woman, and this fault brings about his ruin and death, though not before he has made, as a man should make, proper moral atonement. So much for the merely ethical side of the story. But study

the artistic side! It is simply beyond praise. And here you can feel that the historian is behind the novelist. Only one who has read and studied northern literature and northern history very deeply could have made such pictures for us. As we read, we do not doubt that we really can hear the cry of the sea-kings, and the sound of the oar roll "like thunder working up from the Northeast."

I do not think that Kingsley loved the old North, the Scandinavian North, merely because he was an Englishman, but because the old North seemed to him ever the highest type of ideal manhood, combined strength of body and soul. No one, not perhaps even Mr. Swinburne, felt the beautiful side of Greek life more than Kingsley; you might be sure of that after reading the matchless volume of "Greek Fairy Tales" which he wrote for his own children, drawing the little pictures with his own hand. But he loved the North more than Greece; he loved its heroes, its scorn of death, its tremendous and ferocious energy. Therefore he introduces it to us under circumstances and in contrasts which manifest these qualities in quite a special way. "Hypatia," you know, is the story of one of the most horrible episodes of the history of the early Christian Church. Hypatia was the last of the pagan, that is to say Greek, priestesses of note; she was also the last representative of the pagan philosophers. She was a virgin and very beautiful, and her beauty and learning had made her famous. In the universities of Alexandria she taught the philosophy of Plato in its later form, the form known as Neo-Platonism. The savage fanatics of that time regarded her as their enemy, and as the enemy of Christianity. As she went one day to lecture, they seized her, stripped her naked, scraped all the flesh off her bones with sharp shells, and burned the miserable remains. With the death of Hypatia died Greek learning in Alexandria, and fanaticism and superstition obtained supremacy by the brutal murder.

Now this was a strange subject for Kingsley to make a novel of,—I say strange, because it was so painful, so hor-

rible a fact. But he treated it like a great artist, and he seemed to have chosen it because of the opportunity which it afforded him of introducing a Scandinavian study, or something very like it. As you know, the men of the North, under the various names of Goths or Vandals, descended upon the Roman provinces of northern Africa at an early day. Kingsley represents a small party of these terrible men entering the city of Alexandria and doing whatever they pleased by mere force of character. They avenged Hypatia. They killed four or five thousand monks just as a mere sacrifice to the soul of their chief. The contrast between the corrupted life of Alexandria and the life of these men, the study of the enervating effect of climate, luxury, and vice upon their moral character, and the magnificent sketch of the method by which they redeemed themselves triumphantly under the leadership of old Wulf,—these are the very noblest parts of the book. There are chapters which could not but appeal to the Japanese, imbued with the old Samurai spirit, which was not after all so very different from the northern spirit Kingsley describes, as you might suppose. In “Two Years Ago”—which is quite a modern English novel—we are introduced to another form of Kingsley’s idealism, generally known as “muscular Christianity.” At all events, it is in “Two Years Ago” that this idea is best expressed. And what is muscular Christianity? The shortest way of explaining is by stating Kingsley’s strictly personal views of religion. Although a clergyman of the English Church, and in so far perfectly orthodox, Kingsley held that true religion did not consist in faith but in works,—that it was not religion merely to kneel and pray in time of trouble, or to submit to every difficulty, with the idea that the will of God makes human misfortunes. He taught that it was the duty of a man to meet and to conquer obstacles; to strive with all his might, strength of body and soul, honestly for success; to cultivate his muscles as well as his mind, to enjoy the beautiful world as much as possible without being wickedly selfish or mean or

scheming. And Kingsley's readers saw in this new gospel a sort of union of the northern spirit with Christianity; they smiled at it and called it muscular Christianity. But it was good, sound teaching, no more peculiar to Christianity than to any other faith, no more English than Japanese, but simply the exposition of what religion ought to be for a gentleman of any country or any faith. "Two Years Ago" is the picture of Kingsley's ideal of an English gentleman and English university man, fighting his way through the world to success by following a few simple, noble, gentlemanly principles.

Besides the novels, Kingsley wrote a number of books for young people on scientific and other subjects, such as "Town Geology" and "Glaucus." These might have been more successful than they were, had not Kingsley happened to live in the time of Professor Huxley. Although Kingsley's books were very good in their way, Huxley's manuals for students, written in a simple form never attempted before, took away the public attention from the juvenile scientific books of Kingsley. More noteworthy are his beautiful fairy tales, "The Heroes" and "The Water-Babies." As for "The Heroes," it is beyond any question the best book of Greek stories written for children in any language. Kingsley has had hundreds of imitators, but none who ever approached him.

If I seem to be giving a great deal of space to Kingsley, it is because he was really one of the very greatest figures in nineteenth century literature, with talent of immense range. Above all, his attractiveness seems to be due to his power of exciting the emotion of heroism, of manliness, of self-confidence, of common expression, — and this by prose beyond the power of anybody but a very great poet to equal. Kingsley could also be a poet in verse. Several critics have agreed that his "Andromeda" is written in the very best hexameters in the whole range of English verse, Mr. Swinburne, I believe, alone dissenting from this rather generous praise. But in any case the verse of "Andromeda"

is confessedly grand. Kingsley wrote very little poetry, but he had more success with what he did write than perhaps any of our latest poets of the century. His two songs "The Three Fishers" and "The Sands of Dee" have been translated into every European tongue, as well as into various tongues not European. Some years ago it was announced by an English traveller that the Arab women were singing "The Sands of Dee."

For pure literature, I doubt whether there are two other names in the period we are considering really comparable with that of Charles Kingsley. If there are, one of them would certainly be Kingsley's brother Henry, who was born considerably later, in 1830. He showed at an early time evidence of the same peculiar faculty of writing poetically effective prose that distinguished his brother. Unlike his brother, unfortunately, he was troubled about the question of a livelihood. He was educated at Oxford, but after graduating went to Australia in the hope of making his fortune, like many other English younger sons. He remained in Australia five years, but was not successful, and returning to England was obliged to write for a living. He produced three novels—"Geoffrey Hamlyn," "The Hillyars and the Burtons," and "Ravenshoe"—the first being an Australian romance. All are good; but the last is supremely good,—so good that some critics have placed it above anything done by his brother. This is questionable. But "Ravenshoe" is certainly one of the finest novels of the century. The character of the English cavalry officer, Hornby, is noble, and the splendid story of his death in the Balaclava Charge is one of the best battle narratives in any language. I would recommend only this novel to you as a sample of the younger Kingsley's power. Afterwards he wrote several minor novels, including a book called "Hetty," which is pleasing. But Henry Kingsley was unfortunate in his circumstances; the necessity of writing for a living prevented him from showing all the skill of which he was capable.

A special era in novel writing is marked by the name of Anthony Trollope, born 1815. He was the younger son of a barrister, and was educated at Oxford. He belonged to a literary family. His mother was the same Mrs. Trollope who in 1832 wrote a book entitled "Domestic Manners of the Americans." There were three English writers who made Americans extremely angry—Captain Basil Hall (grandfather of Professor Chamberlain of Tokyo), Mrs. Trollope, and Charles Dickens. All three visited America at a time when the social conditions were really very bad, and they wrote truthfully, though perhaps sarcastically, about what they saw. But of these three Mrs. Trollope was the most unmerciful critic, and the Americans have not been able to forget her even to this day. Still her book shows great talent, and that talent she transmitted to her children. The eldest, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, was a writer on Italian history, and also a novelist, but not of the first rank. The younger, Anthony, achieved a prodigious success.

This prodigious success was simply the success of a story-teller. Trollope wrote novels dealing with the life of the great English middle classes, ranging principally from the upper rank of middle classes into lower rank of the nobility and gentry. He happened to strike a field that had never been adequately cultivated by any predecessor, and which gave him an enormous audience. But be careful not to compare novelists of this type with Kingsley or with women like Brontë or Evans. There is an immense distinction. The work of Trollope and of Trollope's imitators is not fine literature in the best sense of the word; it is only very clever story-telling, without much study of form. There are several curious things to be said about Trollope's work. In the first place he wrote so many novels that one of his recent critics, Mr. Saintsbury, confesses that he does not know how many novels Trollope wrote. Another curious thing is that Trollope did all this work while he was a clerk in the post office, a fact showing tremendous application. And a third queer thing about the work is that not a

little of it was done while travelling; for Trollope kept writing always and everywhere, in steamboats, upon railroads, and in cabs. The value of his work is not, as I have already said, purely literary. It is a faithful reflection of the manners, customs, thoughts, and feelings of the English middle classes. As a student of many types of the English nature, Trollope was very successful. It is said that he was the only man that could take his readers into a bishop's bedroom and make them hear all that the bishop was saying to his wife. He had an extraordinary imagination, but an imagination developed entirely in one direction, in that of character types. His position in the English civil service and his relations with that part of society to which his family belonged, were such as enabled him really to know his subjects. Studying characters by groups or types, he could use them as puppets, could arrange them like men on a chess board, and make them do whatever he pleased. Given a certain knowledge of the main lines of character, Trollope could say, "Under such and such circumstances, that man will do this; under other circumstances he would do that." And he was very seldom wrong. The great English reading world, at all events, thought him right, and made him rich, but he remained in the Civil Service until his death. Of the immense multitude of books which he wrote I should advise you to read only one, as a specimen, because Trollope is only of second or third rate value to the student of literature. But I will give you the titles of what are commonly considered his best works, — "Barchester Towers," "The Warden," "Doctor Thorne," "Framley Parsonage," "The Last Chronicles of Barsest," "The Small House at Allington."

In the same secondary category to which Trollope belongs, in spite of his great cleverness, I should also place Wilkie Collins — though Collins is in some respect a larger man than Trollope. He had a wider range of imagination, and a larger range of subjects. To identify him in a phrase, I should say that he was the greatest inventor of plot in the

whole line of English novel writers. As for style, he had very little. He wrote almost like a journalist, but his plots were wonderful, and his dramatic sense was very great. He was the son of a painter, was born in London in 1824, and died in 1889. I believe that some of his work has been translated into Japanese. His stories have been translated into many languages, because of their inventive superiority and their eccentric and picturesque phases of character. There was another peculiarity about the work of Collins, which reminds us of Stevenson. He could make the reader extraordinarily interested in bad characters. Collins would describe villains of the most villainous kind, but they were such impersonations of force in evil-doing, they were such splendid, exceptional villains, that you could not help feeling a natural admiration for them, just as you might admire the graceful motions of a deadly serpent, the grace of a leopard, or the strength of a tiger. Such a villain is Count Fosco, in "The Woman in White." Again Collins loved to draw for us studies of wicked women, — women immensely clever, but capable of any crime, and passing their lives in carrying out plots to ruin innocent people, or plots of revenge. Such a woman is the red headed governess in "Armada." Now you will see that in such work Collins very nearly descends to the vulgar,—to that circle of sensation lovers who devour with delight stories about thieves and murderers and bad characters of every kind. Write a book about the life of a thief or prostitute, and you will have a great many readers. But what kind of readers? What keeps Collins from being absolutely vulgar is the fact that he idealizes his bad characters, he makes them almost heroic incarnations of badness, like the villains of the great English dramatists. Again he saves himself from vulgarity by the magnificent ingenuity of his plots. In this respect he is really in the circle of genius, and therefore a little beyond the range of Trollope.

Charles Reade also belongs to that school of novelists who deserve the name of story-tellers, rather than that of

literary men. He was the younger son of a country gentleman of means, and was born in 1814. He had no public school education, but nevertheless was able to obtain an Oxford fellowship, which made him practically independent. He may have suffered somewhat by means of his independence in his literary profession, for being independent may in some cases tempt a man to do a good many things which he would not dare to attempt if obliged to consult the opinions of the public or his own financial interests. A great deal in such cases depends upon character; and Reade's character was very curious. He was perhaps one of the most irritable men of letters that ever lived, and criticism of any kind threw him into a passion. He was therefore not only sensitive to the advice of good judges, but naturally inclined to oppose that advice to the utmost degree possible. This peculiar disposition probably prevented him from obtaining a higher position in literature than he received. He wrote about twenty volumes of extraordinarily uneven quality; some rose to the standard of greatness, some sank to the level of mere sensationalism, but all had a good, bright style. Critics of eminence prefer the novel called "The Cloister and the Hearth," to any other of Reade's, and are inclined to give the next place to "It is Never too Late to Mend." The first is a story of the days of Erasmus, and Reade used a great deal of historical matter in its compilation. The second is a story of the Australian gold fever. These are very good novels, and show a peculiar mingling of romance and of realism combined. I should give the preference, however, to an extraordinary book, "A Terrible Temptation," in which there is an excellent study of gispy character as revealed in hereditary tendency. As for variety of subjects, it would be hard to name any English author who chose his themes from a more varied range of topics. He has given us stories of city life, studies of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, studies of modern life in many places. The following list certainly comprises his finest books: "Peg Woffington," "Griffith Gaunt," "It is

Never too Late to Mend," "The Cloister and the Hearth," "A Terrible Temptation," "Christie Johnstone," "Hard Cash."

Before approaching the next group of novelists, I would call attention to the child stories of 'Lewis Carroll.' 'Lewis Carroll' deserves separate attention. His real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. He was born in 1832, and educated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he obtained high honours in mathematics; and afterwards he became a clergyman. But his profession was that of lecturer on mathematics. In 1865 he produced a little book called "Alice in Wonderland," which has become famous in every part of the world. It has been translated into French, German, Italian, and other languages, and has passed through an immense number of editions. Carroll followed this up with other books in the same vein, such as "Sylvie and Bruno," "The Hunting of the Snark," "Through the Looking-Glass." These stories have an immense and peculiar value, because although apparently tales told to amuse children, they are really psychological studies of superlative merit. What Carroll has really done is to describe the mental process of dreams in the brain of an intelligent child, perhaps the very most difficult thing to do either in psychology or in literature. For you must know what the child dreams about, and why such dreams are formed; then you must be able to describe the vacillations and distortions, the impossibilities and absurdities, of the vision, and all the extraordinary sensations that accompany it, in such a manner as to give the reader the exact sensation of the dream. To do this is possible only for the highest genius. Lewis Carroll, as he called himself, was such a genius, but no man ever seemed less desirous of becoming known to the world. It has only been within the last few years that the real authorship of his books was even guessed, and he continued to write under the assumed name. Judging from his work, he must have been one of the most sympathetic and lovable of men, but his extraordinary position in literature has been ac-

quired without his own desire. He wrote these things only to please some children whom he loved, an example of a gigantic intellect applying itself to trifles with results great enough to startle the world.

We may now turn to the group of more recent writers who have reached literary fame, but before so doing, let us say a word or two about certain literary changes. Before the year 1880 English literature was almost completely dominated by the novel, as distinguished from the romance, and by the novel of a peculiar kind. It was the domestic novel, the novel in which Trollope especially excelled. To write a historical novel or a romance was in those years to risk loss of time and money. Only a very great genius could attempt it. The public wanted novels about family life and love and social matters. Short stories of wonderful beauty might be written, but made no impression. The hunger for one particular kind of fiction discouraged all attempts in other directions. Therefore it was inevitable that until the public became tired of the domestic novel, no great literary change could take place. The change came about 1880, partly because the art of the domestic novel had become exhausted, and partly because a few writers of extraordinary talent suddenly made their appearance and compelled recognition. They were preceded by Richard Blackmore in 1869, but his "Lorna Doone" did not win for him a permanent place. The next great place was won by Stevenson. It is very probable that the success of Stevenson was helped by a literary change in America. Through the success of Bret Harte, the short story had begun to receive attention in England. Another help was the amazing development of the short story in France, in the hands especially of Maupassant, perhaps the greatest short story writer in all modern literature. When an Englishman then proved himself capable of writing powerful short stories, the public at last turned to him with eagerness. Twenty-five years before they would not have listened to him. Robert Louis Stevenson was born in 1850, of a family famous, not in

literature, but in engineering and in lighthouse architecture. The Stevensons are probably known by name in Japan as well as in Europe. Robert was intended to be an engineer, but he refused to follow the necessary course of study. He was then given the alternative of studying law, and he graduated. But his literary tastes conflicted too much with the practice of law to admit of his achieving any success in that profession, and he wisely abandoned himself altogether to letters. His early writing exhibited the marks of an absolutely new talent, and succeeded so well that he soon found himself in a position to live by literary work alone. Regularly from the years 1878 to 1894 he continued to put forth an extraordinary amount of wonderful work, but ill health compelled him to leave England seven or eight years before his death. He settled in the Island of Samoa in the Pacific, where the gentleness of the climate probably prolonged a life already undermined by consumption, but he died there while still a comparatively young man. As a writer he holds a place entirely distinct; it would be very difficult to say in one word exactly how high a place, but we may begin a consideration of his work with the statement that he re-created the taste for romance as distinguished from the novel.

Half of Stevenson's work is not of the highest class; it is only clever journalism, and this alone accounts for his great productivity. For the student of literature, while everything of Stevenson's best belongs to English letters, and will probably become classic at a later day, the rest of his work has practically no literary importance, and does not belong to our study. "An Inland Voyage," "Travels with a Donkey," "Familiar Studies of Men and Books," even "Virginibus Puerisque," cannot be put in a high class. But even then we have a mass of work before us too great for the power of one sick man. It can only be explained by the fact that a considerable part of the work was done with help. "The Wrecker," "The Wrong Box," "The New Arabian Nights" were written, the first two in partnership with Mr.

Lloyd Osbourne, and the last with the assistance of Mrs. Stevenson. We must first give attention, therefore, to the books which Stevenson made alone, that is, so far as the title-page assures us; for it is probable that the story-teller always had some assistance, especially from his wife.

An extraordinary diversity of power is shown in his work. In "Kidnapped" and "Catriona" we have studies of Scotch life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; in "The Master of Ballantrae," sketches of the same life, with variations of adventures carried into North America. Stevenson here gives us studies of gentry, but an immense amount of research and of exact knowledge was necessary to depict the scenes of another century. The language, the costumes, the forms of speech and courtesy, the historical and social conditions of the epoch had to be thoroughly mastered before the story could be written. In the time of Walter Scott such exactness was never required, perhaps it was never thought possible. But times have changed. Stevenson knew that the chance for a revival of romance depended altogether upon the application of realism to the romantic method. And this application he made as no other had done before him. Hence the greatness of the books, merely as artistic constructions. Nor was Stevenson afraid to go back even further in his period for materials. He gave us in "The Black Arrow" a study of the time of the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century, one of the principal figures in the narrative being Richard III. It is true that the author here professed only to be writing a romance for boys; nevertheless the book is one which most appeals to grown people. In "Treasure Island," which has been called the best sea story in English literature, the time is set in another century; but in "The Wrecker" we have proof that a modern sea story was equally within the power of the writer's genius. Romantic all these are, in the adventurous sense, but we have in them very little trace of two influences required in the older form of romance,—namely the terrible, the tragical, and the love story. For a

long time it was even said that Stevenson was the one English writer who could write novels without women,—a fact which did not, however, imply that Stevenson could not create heroines, as he afterwards did, with immense success.

In the longer romances we are impressed by a certain air of reality, a consistency that prevents our asking whether the event described could have happened. But in some of the shorter stories, we enter at once into dreamland. In dreams a very normal person may do very immoral things; the sense of responsibility disappears. It is so in the delightful short tales. We read of the most extraordinary crimes without the least sensation of horror. Indeed, we feel at times rather amused. In "The Dynamiter" we have the story of an inventor who believes it a good thing to spread death about you as a sort of benefit to humanity. A beautiful young lady assists him in these infernal operations, which happily terminate without any very frightful tragedy to the parties concerned. In "The Suicide Club" we have the story of a society of unhappy men who draw lots to decide the order in which they shall die, each member being killed by another in regular rotation, lots also being drawn for the killing. The mixture of absurdity with the tragedy here is artistic in the extreme, and justifies the character of the title given to the whole series of extravagant stories to which "The Suicide Club" belongs. The general title is "The New Arabian Nights,"—for "More New Arabian Nights," "The Dynamiter," etc., are only continuations of the first volume. Those of you who know "The Arabian Nights" will remember the peculiar feeling which the Oriental stories give—you are intensely interested always, but never shocked or scandalized even when reading scandalous or shocking stories. In fact, the feeling is exactly like that in dreams in which the moral sentiment has no existence. It is no small art to be able to imitate the tone of "The Arabian Nights" while choosing modern London or Paris for the scene of the narration. And this is the feat which Stevenson accomplished.

But when he wished to write moral stories, he could do so after a unique fashion. The narrative of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is an example. No book of the year in which it was published created a greater sensation. It is the story of a man with two natures in him, evil and good, who manages to appear throughout the greater part of his life as two persons. In the character of Dr. Jekyll he is one individual; in that of Mr. Hyde, he is another, and a strange chance alone reveals the identity of the two. Perhaps we might call this book one of the most remarkable among modern psychological stories. Undoubtedly it inspired a number of symbolical tales which made their appearance within the last few years, and among others a queer study by Henry James, in which a man is described as having a social existence, but no private existence;—when you meet him in society he seems to be the most charming of men, but if you follow him into his private home he disappears; there is no body, nothing but a suit of clothes. Both stories are likely to prove classics because they reflect moral facts in quite an original way. Stevenson has also given us moral stories illustrating the power of remorse, the value of content, and the inheritance of evil passions. On the last subject he produced the only extremely horrible narrative which ever was created by his pen. I mean "Olalla," the fancy of a beautiful girl born with an irresistible tendency to bite and devour human flesh. It is a frightful fable, but its real significance is one which is becoming more and more a question of the day,—a question relating to the deepest and the greatest of social problems.

Transported to the other side of the world, among a Polynesian race, it might have been expected that Stevenson's imagination would have been affected by his strange surroundings to no small degree. As a matter of fact, he continued in Samoa to work very much as he had worked in England, writing stories about European life. But at times he permitted the Polynesian influence to inspire him, and then he gave to the world little stories of the weirdest

and strangest description,—illustrating the superstitions of a cannibal race whose religious and social customs differed from those of any other race until the time of their semi-civilization by force. I would call especial attention to the collection entitled “The Beach of Falesa,” now included, I believe, in the volume called “The Island Nights’ Entertainments,” but at first published separately. These Polynesian stories are unlike anything before written in any European language, and even their nightmare character does not detract from their delightfulness.

The stories written in connection with Mr. Osbourne include something of what we might call roaring farce in literature. “The Wrong Box” is simply the narrative of a man who finding a dead body upon his hands and anxious to get rid of it secretly in order to escape being arrested by the police on suspicion, tries to get rid of it by putting it in a box, and sending it to an imaginary address in London. A mischievous boy on the train sees in the car this and another large box, and to amuse himself changes the label upon the packages. Then the dead body begins to travel. Everybody who receives it naturally wishes to get rid of it as quickly as possible, but in spite of all efforts the police do get hold of it in the end. In “The Wrecker” we also have some excellent humour, but here the humour is mixed with the real terror of tragedy, and “The Wrecker” is on the whole anything but a funny book.

I should advise the reading of any of these works by Stevenson, and of another too, not yet considered, “Prince Otto,” an extraordinary book which has been translated into many languages. The advantage of the study of Stevenson is to be sought in his effects of style. By his style he belongs to the very first rank of English prose writers; he has never had a real superior; it is even a question whether among novelists he has ever had even an equal. The story charms, but the value is in the author’s manifestation of new flexibilities and powers in the use of English, such as before him were practically unknown.

It remains to say a few words about the verse of Stevenson. This is not really the place in which to consider verse, except in its relation to the life and thought of the prose writer. For this reason any consideration of its technical force and merits would be out of place; but its emotional qualities deserve a word. It is not great poetry, but it is peculiarly imaginative, dainty and sincere. He was most successful in the volume called "A Child's Garden of Verses." There are not many grown men capable of any other thought of authorship, who have the power to portray the feelings and fancies of a child so as to be able to charm at once both the very young and very old. Stevenson had this power, in a much less degree than Dodgson, but in a distinct way, and he deserves to be studied especially on account of it. I would recommend the reading, for example, of the little piece called "The Land of Counterpane," in which the imagination of a little child in bed looking at the wrinkles and folds of his bed covering, discovers in them mountains and valleys and forest-covered spaces.

But the Japanese reader should remember that the counterpane used in English beds is commonly white and covered all over with little white tufts of cotton, in which a child's fancy can easily discover wonderful shapes.

I think it is worth while to speak to you of three more writers in relation to the present epoch. I do not speak of Mr. James or Mr. Crawford, because these although writing in English are not Englishmen, but I cannot help speaking to you of George Meredith, of Rudyard Kipling, and George Du Maurier, whose sudden death last year compels at least an attempt to estimate his place. In pure literature I think that George Meredith's place will be decided rather by his poetry than his prose, for he is a poet of no mean order. As a novelist, he is very great indeed,—great as a psychologist, as a student of the motives and acts of the most complex and delicate varieties of character, in the highest forms of English and foreign society. He has no rival in his own peculiar field, and his especial force seems to be in

the depiction of a contest between two powerful characters in the social struggle. He is also great in his exactness,—in his perfect mastery of all the details of the epoch, the place or the condition which he paints. He is also great in his skill of portraiture,—in painting for us a multitude of different characters with such distinctness that we can see them and hear them; but I could certainly not recommend you to read any of George Meredith's novels, unless you want to read them only for the stories. The style is, in my opinion, detestable; it is certainly such a style as could not have any other than bad influence upon a student's style. It is colloquial, confidential,—as if the man were talking to you personally about matters which he presumed you knew all about; it is involved and often provokingly obscure, owing to a habit of suggesting facts rather than telling them. But if you should want to read something of Meredith so as to have a fair idea about his literary position, I should say to choose between "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" and "Vittoria." These two will suffice to show his power in completely different directions, for "Vittoria" is a story of modern Italy in the time of the great struggle for national independence.

The place of Kipling is in any case, I think, more important than that of Meredith, and he is certainly much more worthy of your attention, for many reasons. It may seem strange to attach such significance to the name of a new apparition in literature; but I have good authority, following the example of the leading critics of the time, and I cannot hesitate to express very plainly my admiration for the man and my conviction of his value to you in relation to the style of English prose literature, as well as of English verse.

Rudyard Kipling, like Thackeray, was born in India. He was born in Bombay in 1865, and made his reputation at the age of twenty-three. He was partly educated in England, but not at any of the universities. At an age when most youths are still studying, he was already editing

newspapers, acting as war-correspondent to English and Indian journals, and writing poems and stories. His abilities as a correspondent and journalist seem to have enabled him to travel over the greater part of the world before he was twenty-five years old. He has been almost everywhere, has seen almost everything, and has had nearly all those experiences of life, such as other men seldom have until they become old. This might account partly for the extraordinary character of his work; but you must remember also that his own abilities rendered this possible. His first success was made in India. He was the son of a civil service official, and when he began journalism at Lahore, he must have known a great deal about the secrets of official life in India. He produced a number of witty satires in verse upon the follies, absurdities, and tragedies of official life in the colonies. These were collected and published in a little volume called "Departmental Ditties." They were not great; but as the work of a boy of eighteen or nineteen, they showed extraordinary knowledge of life, uncommon power of wit, and exceptional ability in the handling of many different forms of verse. The next work which appeared made him famous, — a collection of stories of Anglo-Indian life written to be sold upon the railways, and published at Allahabad. Everybody in India read them and wondered at them, and their reputation reaching England, arrangements were made for the publication of his future works. Everything that has since issued from Kipling's pen has been not only of unique merit, but of a character to attract attention immediately in every part of the world where English can be understood. Already Kipling is known in half a dozen different languages.

Not to dilate too much, I may say in short that the work of Kipling is represented by two novels, two story books for children, two volumes of extraordinary poetry, and three volumes of short stories. He is without any comparison whatever, the greatest writer of short stories in English, greater even than Stevenson at his best; there is

absolutely no one with whom to compare him among English writers; to find comparison with him we must go to France. France produced in Maupassant perhaps the greatest short story writer in the whole history of literature; and it is only with Maupassant that I think Kipling can be compared. Mr. Gosse thinks otherwise, and finds that Kipling might be compared in some respects with Pierre Loti. But Mr. Gosse made this remark five or six years ago; I do not think he would say the same thing to-day. Loti, moreover, is not a short story writer, but a sketch writer, and the only point in which he resembles Kipling is that both men have their nervous sensibilities developed to a degree rare in ordinary human beings. But the difference of the nervous organization is enormous. Loti is all eye, ear, smell, taste. Kipling is all mind and eye.

There is nothing sensuous in his material; there is sensitiveness extraordinary, but it is the sensitiveness of facts in their relations to mental perception. He is supremely impersonal when at his best, and in this he resembles Maupassant, and also that other great story writer, Voltaire. But neither Maupassant nor Kipling ever wrote from imagination as did Voltaire. They resemble him only in strength and in the impersonality of their style. In Maupassant's case, as in Kipling's, the severity is even greater than in Voltaire's. Neither writer, in telling a story, describes; or rather both describe without describing. They do not tell you that a man is so many feet high, or that a woman's hair is just of such a colour, or that a street is built in just such a way, or a landscape had just such an appearance; but they can make you see the man, the woman, the street or the landscape much more plainly than almost anybody else could do who should attempt it. I say *almost* anybody else, because here the young French lieutenant, Loti, presents us with another and very different nineteenth century phenomenon. He can describe! As a rule, however, literary experience has shown, in our own time, that descriptions either of persons or of nature are not essential to good

story telling, and that a strong artist can do much better without them. I am thinking of general rules only. When Maupassant went to Africa simply to study nature he thought himself justified in description, and the world thanks him for "Au Desert." So when Kipling has occasion at rare moments to speak of memories of extraordinary places which he has seen, and which very few other persons have seen, he describes just enough to make an everlasting picture in your mind. But this, remember, is very rare, and has little connection with his art of story-telling. Even in such a marvellous thing as "The City of Dreadful Night," the suggestion of what the city looks like and what the surroundings are, is given to the reader much more vividly by the few terrible words about the sleepers under the open sky, and by the incidents of the heat in the streets and in the spiral staircase of the minaret, than could be done by any details about faces, landscape or architecture.

It is especially to this amazing power in Kipling that I wish to call your attention. No other story writer, always excepting Maupassant, is so much the reverse of prolix. The great art of telling a story depends just as much upon knowing what not to say, as upon knowing what to say; but the natural tendency of nearly all story-tellers is to say more than is necessary. Kipling is a great object lesson of the contrary virtue. He never says more than just enough to convey the idea desired, never uses more adjectives than he can help, and never uses a weak one. In his choice of words he shows exactly the same sort of care that a poet shows in work of the first order. No one has managed to produce great effects with so few words. Some of his stories are only two or three pages long, but you will never forget those two or three pages after having read them, nor will you forget some extraordinary uses of words in those two or three pages—uses that give to the words an altogether new force and colour. Simplicity is the apparent quality of the style, produced by anything but simple methods. The sentences are hard, very short and very strong; they

succeed each other like a rapid succession of powerful blows ; they strike the imagination so as to produce that feeling of astonishment mixed with pleasure to which the French have given the name "inquiétude," and to which Mr. Gosse has given the name of "intellectual uneasiness." Something of intellectual uneasiness is produced by any very superior power which manifests itself to us through literature. In the presence of this mental and emotional superiority we feel at first just as uncomfortable as when we are introduced for the first time to some person of rank and power incomparably above our own.

Stories of Indian life, or of the life of English soldiers in India, make a distinct department of Kipling's work ; but he is just as successful when writing of life in Africa, in Japan, in South America, in the United States, or in London, providing that he keeps to the form of the short story. Take for example "The Disturber of Traffic." Here we have the story of a man maddened by solitude, in one of the most lonesome parts of the globe,—keeper of a lighthouse in the Malay Archipelago, with no one for companions but wild beasts, and one savage, more beast than man. The story is written in dialect, and is full of humour ; but it is a terrible humour, this comedy of insanity in the midst of desolation, and its consequences in disturbing the traffic of the world. You know the man who wrote such a story must have been in the place described. Then we have another story of madness entitled "At the End of the Passage." Perhaps nothing equally horrible has ever been written about nightmare. The scene is, indeed, in upper India, but the event might happen anywhere else. "The Finest Story in the World," laid in London, deals with the question of remembering one's former lives. It shows that the author has not only been an extensive reader, but a reader of judgment. I doubt whether any better criticism upon Longfellow has ever been made, than those few references to him constitute, which occur in this really wonderful story. "Bertran and Bimi," and "Reingelder and the German Flag,"

are narratives of the American and Malay tropics; the first carries the element of terror to the very highest pitch excusable in art. Nearly always in the narrative, though the effect may be strange and unexpected, nothing appears to have been drawn from any other source than the observation of eye and ear. With the exception of the apparition of a sea-serpent in one story, I cannot at this moment remember anything in the multitude of them which might not have been really seen; and yet everything is unfamiliar. Even when we are brought into a camp of the British cavalry, and into the dining room of its officers, as in "The Man who Was," something happens in the most natural way which never could possibly have been anticipated. Again in London we go upstairs into a cheap lodging room to find assembled there a company of young English subalterns, "A Conference of the Powers." The conversation of these mere boys, as reported by the story-teller, revealed to the English people more concerning colonial conditions than had been generally known before that time. There are then two remarkable faculties shown by the writer outside of his mere literary ability. One is the power to stir fear and wonder in the human mind as no other writer has been able to do, not by the help of the impossible, but by the simple statement of the possible. The other faculty is that of explaining some enormously complex social condition by the selection of a few powerful and extraordinary incidents which suggest all that cannot be reported in detail.

The faculties of this man are not, however, confined to prose. As a writer of verse he has exhibited such power that no less than three eminent critics have declared that he should have been made poet laureate instead of the very insipid Austin. Certainly his claims to the laureateship would be justified by the splendid patriotism of those verses in which the whole work of English expansion is painted and panegyricized—such as "The Native Born," "The Flag of Their Country," "The Song of the Dead." Judged by such production Kipling impresses us, not only as a great poet,

but as the highest lineal descendant of the old English *Scop*, or Northern Skald. Where he has surpassed every other English writer, however, is in his ballads and songs, where he remains incomparably first among moderns. But most of these ballads and songs are in dialect, and for that reason are not paralleled with purely artistic ballad work such as that of Swinburne and Tennyson. They belong to a different and a special order. Yet in three or four examples he has attempted the artistic ballad, and he does not fall below the highest rank even then. A fine example is offered in the "Last Rhyme of True Thomas," probably written in scorn of the suggestion of his fitness for the laureateship. As for the form of his verse, I do not know how to define some qualities of it better than by saying that since Thomas Moore no English singer seems to have been born with such an ear for melody. What this man's future may be, is now a very interesting question. Some of his greatest admirers are afraid that he may exhaust his power even before the age at which most poets obtain recognition. He strikes them as being miraculously precocious; and there is always a great danger in precocity. But if there is one thing more characteristic of him than his mental power, that one thing is nervous force. Immense self-control, energetic strength, manly robustness show themselves in every line of his work. This tells of physical strength, but it reminds us of the chief defect which Kipling shows.

The defect is brutality. He is not only strong, but brutally strong, and manifests the pride of strength in unpleasant ways. He is nearly always cynical, and very often offensively so. Nothing which repels him escapes treatment because of its intrinsic disagreeableness; but is just on that account handled with diabolical force and mockery. There is very little of the tender, or gentle, or touching, in all this marvellous work; but there is a great deal of the strange, the horrible, the bloody, the morally terrible and naturally terrible. All his literary expression is like a celebration of Force, mental and moral physical force, as the

ruler of humanity; it is the great song of strength, a song of Odin and Thor, a modern utterance of the old Scandinavian spirit. The teaching is, "Be strong under all circumstances, strong of will, strong of body; gentleness is weakness; it is moral weakness; life is a fight; you must fight until you fall, and you must allow yourself to be killed rather than show a moment's weakness. You may be brutal, and still be a man; but you cannot be weak and be a man. Everything great or noble in this world has been achieved by hard fighting, and through all time the conditions must be the same. This is my gospel." And yet he is capable of the most exquisite tenderness. You all know that the tenderness of a very strong, stern, and rough character has an extraordinary quality in it—something massive, overwhelming, and all-conquering, very different from the affection of feeble natures. It is such tenderness that we meet with in that exquisite passage of "The Naulahka," a novel, half American and half Indian, where the Hindoo Queen speaks to the missionary girl about the meaning of maternity. I do not think there is anything more powerfully touching in literature. But this tenderness appears very rarely, and only from the lips of women. Perhaps the harshness which has given so much literary offence is sufficiently explained by youth, and will wear off gradually. But on one occasion it was manifested to a degree which called out very severe criticism. This was on the publication of a novel called "The Light that Failed," the story of an artist who became suddenly blind at the height of his success. The characters of the story were nearly all brutal to an extraordinary degree, even the women being, as Mr. Gosse says, utterly detestable. There were incidents of the fighting in the Soudan, which were offensively horrible, such as that of a war-correspondent tearing out the eyes of an Arab who had attacked him. Probably Kipling had himself seen the incident, but it was too much to be borne in print. Although ordinarily indifferent to criticism, he on this occasion yielded to the extent of rewriting and republishing

the whole book. But it is still a question whether he would have done better to leave it alone as one of the productions of his youth before his taste had been developed to the high level of his talent.

If I have dwelt so long upon one man's name, it is because of my sincere belief that the text of Kipling's stories ought to have exceptional value with Japanese students. I do not think his wonderful poetry can be of much service to you. It is too idiomatic even when not written in dialect. But his prose is unique prose, the only prose of the nineteenth century which offers you all the qualities of concentration and strength that characterize the best French writers. If there be any qualities especially absent from the composition of Japanese students, these are concentration and force. It is therefore that I especially recommend a careful study of at least the best among this writer's stories, believing, at the same time, that the peculiar talent exhibited in them is really more in accord with the art of the best Japanese story-tellers than anything which contemporary English writers of fiction can offer.

The case of George Du Maurier is a most unusual one. Within the space of about five years he made himself an extraordinary name in literature, and then disappeared from the world by a sudden death even before it had time to judge or explain him. Du Maurier was not by profession an author at all. He was an artist, the artist of the great English comic paper *Punch*, and his speciality was the portraiture of society life. His drawings were delicious, on account of their amazing truth and their delicate irony. As his name might suggest, he was only half-English; and having been educated on both sides of the Channel, either French or English came to him with equal readiness as the medium of expression. Probably the French element in his blood dominated a little, for he wrote English in French forms; but this might also be accounted for by the paramount influence of the study of those French authors whom he loved. It was in his advanced years that he first took a

notion to write, and produced an astonishing novel called "Peter Ibbetson," illustrated by himself in a most admirable way. Everything in this book—plot, fancy, style—was totally new. The startling idea that under certain conditions of self-training, the power of entering into the spiritual world might be obtained during one's lifetime, immediately gave the book a great vogue among those thousands interested in spiritual problems. Another singular fact about the story was that it presented to English readers, in a totally new way, some of the most remarkable of the ideas of Buddhism, and of Indian Brahmanism. It suggested new possibilities of remembering one's former life. Finally it was to some extent a musical novel, an artistic novel, and a social novel. It had every quality that could attract the largest possible class of readers belonging to the world of culture. Then the style was so queer, so French, free, eccentric, contrary to all English convention, and nevertheless full of poetry and charm. But remarkable as this book was, the volume that followed it was much more successful. I mean "Trilby." This was a story about hypnotism. A very great musician, himself without a voice, conceives the idea of mesmerizing a woman and using her as a sort of instrument through which to sing. He finds such a woman among the models who pose for the art students of Paris, obtains complete control of her will, and makes himself famous by means of her. She sings in the theatre to immense audiences, and is supposed to be the greatest singer in the world; but she is really unconscious of anything that she is doing in the theatre; she is mesmerized; and she sings not with her own knowledge or will, but by the science and will of her mesmerizer. He suddenly dies, and her power to sing is gone, for she never knew anything herself about music. This is the central theme of the story, which otherwise introduces a number of interesting characters and interesting incidents. The life of art students in Paris, a life which Du Maurier was perfectly familiar with, is represented in this volume with a grace of mingled pathos and comedy

reminding us of Henri Murger. The success of the book was exaggeratedly great—perhaps fully half a million copies have been sold up to this time. Extraordinary social crazes were created by it, and all kinds of fantastic things were done by young women who imagined that their feet were as beautiful as the feet of Trilby. The literary world proper remained dumb with astonishment. Such work violated all canons, yet there was no denying its power and beauty. Its success could not be called merely vulgar. How could a man who had never studied the art of writing at all, who never had any literary training, who would not submit to any literary rules, perform a feat of this amazing kind? To-day, I think, the answer has been given. The success of Du Maurier's work really rested upon the same power which made the success of the best French and English writers of the century, and that power was the power of observation. Du Maurier had studied human life, under the most favorable conditions and with the most exceptional opportunities, for nearly fifty years before committing his impressions to paper. Hence their value, which is not likely to prove merely ephemeral.

CHAPTER XXVI

ON MODERN ENGLISH CRITICISM, AND THE CONTEMPORARY RELATIONS OF ENGLISH TO FRENCH LITERATURE

NOTHING is more important for the student who loves literature than to become intimately acquainted with its great critics; for they alone can guide him in his judgments, can teach him to distinguish and classify merit, and can ultimately enable him to estimate literary values for himself. There are critics and critics; hundreds of them are useless, even mischievous; the great ones alone are worth knowing, those few men to whose judgments we can submit our own without hesitation. No course of literature could be complete without some mention of these; and I must speak to you to-day of the best living English critics of English literature. There are good French critics of English literature also; but we need not for the present consider them. A remarkable fact is the small number of really great English critics of English literature as compared with the number of great French critics of French literature. You can count the latter by dozens, the French having obtained supreme excellence and supreme ease in this branch of literature. But if I were asked to name the great English literary critics of to-day, I could name only three. It is of these three that I wish to speak.

These three are George Saintsbury, Professor of English literature in the University of Edinburgh; Edmund Gosse, Professor of English literature in Cambridge University; and Edward Dowden, Professor of English literature in Dublin University. These are pre-eminent. With some hesitation might be added to these names, but only in a second or third class capacity, the name of Stopford Brooke, whom

you may know as the author of a primer of English literature, and of a history of Anglo-Saxon literature. But we have to concern ourselves now only with the work of the other three.

The first fact to observe about the work of these three is the degree to which it has been influenced, directed and coloured, by the study of French. Each one of the professors named is an equally good authority upon French as upon English literature; and two of them have written histories of French literature. The best work upon French literature in the English language is Saintsbury's "Short History of French Literature." It is not so very short as the name might imply. It is accompanied by a companion volume entitled "Specimens of French Literature"; and the two should be studied together. Professor Dowden, on the other hand, has given us one excellent volume on modern French literature. As for Mr. Gosse, a great number of his best critical essays deal with French subjects, and show the results of French study upon every page. I believe that all of these men are furthermore students of other foreign literatures. Mr. Gosse is a Scandinavian scholar. Mr. Saintsbury knows Anglo-Saxon and Provençal. Mr. Gosse, an excellent classical as well as modern scholar, has also busied himself with original poetry, and the study of verse in many languages. Again I suppose you know that Professor Dowden is famous as the biographer of Shelley—he provoked Matthew Arnold, by his life of the poet, into a very celebrated essay. The only one of the three who has attempted no creative work outside of criticism is Saintsbury. Perhaps for that very reason, he is the strongest, concentrating all his power in one direction. When we come to think of the acquirements of these men, it is impossible not to wonder at their powers of study. To master even one literature is the work of an ordinary life-time. But to master two, or even three literatures, in addition to the literatures of Greece and Rome, five in all, is certainly a prodigious feat. It is something which reminds us of

Gibbon's tremendous powers of reading and digesting what he read. But Gibbon was a rich man, with nothing to do except to please himself. England's three greatest modern critics are comparatively poor men, obliged to teach in order to live.

Of the three the greatest charm of style is shown by Mr. Gosse. In the course of this lecture I may quote some passages to you, in order to show you how very exquisitely he can write. This exquisiteness has been learned chiefly by the most careful study of French models. There are times also when Mr. Dowden approaches him. Mr. Saintsbury, altogether the shrewdest critic, is not the best stylist. Sometimes he is almost careless, though he can perform miracles. I imagine that he has always thought it more important to utter the thought than to care about the form of the utterance. But then, consider the enormous quantity of his work on two literatures—his "History of French Literature", his "History of Elizabethan Literature", his "History of Nineteenth Century Literature", and his volumes of essays, and the number of texts edited by him. He has done the work of five or six men; and if he had given more attention to style, we should have been deprived of some of the benefit of his knowledge.

Concerning the opinions of any one of these three critics, I should say to you, "Submit to their judgments." If any one of them should happen to be unjust in a single case, he would certainly be right in ninety-nine cases. No man is infallible in literary judgment. The nearest approach to the infallible in literary judgment is represented in the colossal work of the teacher of all these three, the greatest critic that ever lived—not an Englishman, but a Frenchman, the wonderful Sainte-Beuve. I have said that he was not an Englishman; but I must not forget to add that his mother was of English descent. He was born in 1804 and died in 1869, so that he is a very modern person. It was he who really created the highest art of criticism, and whose influence entirely changed critical methods during the

latter part of the present century. He was the critic of the great French romantic movement which began between 1820 and 1830. If we have to-day in England such good critics as Saintsbury and Dowden and Gosse, it is because Sainte-Beuve taught them how to be critics. I do not mean to tell you that they imitated him; indeed, no one of them would agree that Sainte-Beuve's method should be followed in all things. But it was by studying his method that they made the new English critical method.

We must say a few words now about criticism in general—what it means. Put into the simplest language possible, criticism is the art of discovering and of stating what is good and what is not good in a book. The old fashioned criticism, the criticism of the eighteenth century and of the centuries before it, signified very little in the modern meaning of the word. When it was the rule that a subject should be chosen in a certain way, and ordered in a certain way, and written about in a certain way; when there were fixed laws not only for the general construction of a sentence, but for the construction of every part of the sentence, and for the position of each and every word in the sentence—then criticism meant very little more than censorship and measurement. A thing was good if the subject was conventional, if the language was conventional, if the forms were conventional. On the other hand a book was not praiseworthy if the subject or the language or the thought was not according to the old fixed rules. Early in the nineteenth century higher forms of criticism made their appearance. Macaulay, as I told you long ago, was the founder of a new school of criticism, which consisted in analyzing the value of the book in relation to moral and aesthetic ideas, and in relation also to the whole range of the subject treated. Macaulay would take a book upon Italian history, for example, and then compare what it contained with his own idea of the whole subject of Italian history; then he would consider the author's ideas in relation to accepted moral ideas, and the author's sense of

beauty in relation to accepted standards of beauty. This was a much larger and better way of criticism than had been followed before, but it was still far from perfect. Macaulay belonged by taste and feeling to the classical school of the eighteenth century; his standards of morality and ethics and philosophical truth were all old-fashioned, somewhat narrow, and above all English. Now a great criticism ought not to be any more English or French or German, than it should be Greek or Hebrew or Sanskrit. A great criticism should be equally true in all times and countries and conditions. For the highest criticism should not concern itself with any questions except those of beauty and of truth—nay, I should add, eternal beauty and eternal truth.

Here is the great difficulty about criticism. Let us consider for a moment how very few persons are capable of judging beauty and truth apart from everything else. A man who has been brought up to think in a narrow way may not be able to see beauty or truth at all. A pious Roman Catholic may not find beauty in a thing not written according to the mediæval spirit of the religion to which he belongs. Whatever thought is contrary to the teaching of Christianity of the middle ages, may fill him with horror. Again, in the narrower Protestant creeds the education given is usually anti-aesthetic and anti-scientific; the narrowness of mind produced is very hard, and absolutely hostile to independence of expression or originality in feeling. The religious bias, as Spencer calls it, is almost necessarily opposed to fair criticism. Then there is the national feeling, the strong prejudice of country and of race. The average Englishman cannot consider the inhabitant of another country as good as an Englishman; and it is very difficult for him to acknowledge the superiority of anything foreign. Well, it is the same in most countries. These very prejudices have their usefulness; they keep up the healthy spirit of race-pride—but they are utterly opposed to fair criticism. Furthermore, we have the social prejudices—those prejudices

which prevent a man who belongs to the upper class of society, from justly considering what concerns the lower classes of society. There is also the prejudice of custom, and this prejudice extends into the highest strata of the intellectual world. The old generation refuses to accept the ideas of the new; the new despises the old. At the present time there are a great many men living who were educated before the time of the new philosophy, who know nothing about it, who detest it, and who cannot consequently understand the best literature of our time. For a man with the ideas of the eighteenth century cannot possibly understand a poem or an essay nor even a thoughtful story written by one who thinks according to the evolutionary philosophy. Such men—many of them are great scholars—think they can understand because they read the words, but of the thought behind the words they do not perceive anything. This is only one of many examples. To be able to judge the beautiful and the true, our minds must be free from all such influences as I have been describing—from religious prejudices, from the prejudice of ignorance, from national prejudice, from race prejudice, from social prejudice, from class prejudice, from philosophical prejudice. How many men can free themselves from all of these? Certainly very few; and that is why there must always be very few great critics—especially in England, where all conventions have a more vigorous life than they have in almost any other country.

Now to return to the subject of Sainte-Beuve. Sainte-Beuve made himself a great critic not only by getting rid of all the prejudices which I mentioned, but by studying them and understanding them. He approached the vast subject of literature only after having prepared himself in a most extraordinary way. He studied medicine, because medicine is in itself one of the greatest sciences for the development of the mind that can be studied without any very exceptional faculties. To understand men's minds, men's feelings, one must indeed first know something about

their bodies; and in choosing this study Sainte-Beuve somewhat anticipated the evolutional school of psychology, which is based upon a knowledge of the nervous system. But he did not intend to become a doctor, and he dropped this study when he had learned enough of it to satisfy his own mind. Thereafter he studied religion, in order to understand belief; then he studied all forms of free thought, in order to understand scepticism. Subject after subject he thus took up and investigated, according as it served his purpose. Becoming one of the most learned of men in general knowledge of this sort, and also perhaps the most widely read man of his time, he entered upon his career of critic—without any bias, any prejudice, any narrowness, but with a great love of beauty in every form, and a wonderful genius for finding and for describing it.

Of course it is not enough to have read everything and to know everything in order to be a critic. One must have been born with intuitive and perceptive faculties of an extraordinary kind. One must have a certain kind of genius. It is very much like the difficulty of understanding the characters of men. Every one among you has remarked that some persons of your acquaintance understand men much better than others can do; they are born with that power; and all the experience possible would never make certain other persons whom you know able to exercise the same judgment. Now consider what a great book is. I think that there is no better definition of a great book than the definition made by Victor Hugo—the book is the man. And some of you who heard my lecture last year upon style will remember that I then said style is nothing more than the peculiar character of the writer. Sainte-Beuve saw this truth when he entered upon his career of critic. He perceived that to understand a book, the reason of what is good in it, the reason of what is bad in it, the reason of the influence which it exerts, we must understand the man who wrote it. There is nothing more difficult than to understand common characters; much more is it difficult to

understand uncommon characters. A man is the product of millions of years, and the depth of him is the depth of the whole night of eternity. Nothing is deeper than a mind, nothing is more difficult to learn. As I said before, one must be born with the power to study minds and feelings; and Sainte-Beuve had this faculty.

He attempted the study of literature in a way that no other man had ever thought of at that time. He would start out by studying the character of an author, all the details of his life, his personality, his habits, his experiences. Next he would consider that man in relation to the society and the time to which he belonged; he would try to discover to what extent the character of the man accorded with the character of that time, with the sentiments and beliefs and ideas of that society. Then he would consider the sources of the writer's inspiration, not only the books that he had read, but the origin of the ideas in those books, tracing back the thought of a nineteenth century writer either to the middle ages or to Greek civilization, or to intellectual influences imported from Oriental and other countries. Only when he had done all this did he think himself prepared to write his criticism. Of course, you must not suppose that Sainte-Beuve undertook in the case of every writer he criticized to read over again all the books which that author had studied, and all the books relating to the time in which he lived, and all the books treating of the subject which he had treated. Not at all. These things he already knew. He had read them; and having a memory as prodigious as that of a Hallam or a Macaulay, he remembered what he had read.

A word about the mass of his work. Much of it first appeared in newspapers. The criticism which appears in English newspapers is not, as a rule, of much literary value; that which appears in American newspapers is of no literary value. But much of what appears in French newspapers is of the very highest literary value. French journalism concerns itself much less about news than does other European

journalism, and much more about literature. It allows its writers plenty of time to do their work. A great deal of such work is produced at the rate of two or three short articles in the course of a month. Sainte-Beuve contributed regularly about once a week, or four times a month, to certain Paris papers what he called his "Monday Talks" (*Causeries du Lundi*); and these Monday Talks became the greatest literary events of the week in Paris. Besides these, however, he produced a number of independent literary studies which he called "Criticisms and Literary Portraits" (*Critiques et Portraits Littéraires*); also a series of "Contemporary Portraits" (*Portraits Contemporains*). Published in book form, these alone represent fifty or sixty large volumes. But a more important production still was his literary and philosophical *Histoire de Port-Royal* in three volumes, which cost him alone twenty years of study. In this book his critical power was manifested in the very highest possible form. Perhaps some of you may never have heard of Port-Royal. The subject is not closely connected with this lecture; but I may say a few words about it. Port-Royal was a convent situated in France about eight miles from the King's palace of Versailles, during the seventeenth century, the time of Louis XIV. At Port-Royal there was a very peculiar society of monks and nuns, a new religious society composed of ladies and gentlemen, scholars and philosophers of the highest accomplishments; and the dream of these persons was to make a reformed Catholic religion in harmony with scientific knowledge. In order to oppose the influence of the Jesuits, the Port-Royal people became educators; they taught religion and science together; they taught nobly and liberally; and they considered truth before theology. The great Pascal was one of their friends, and fought for them, silencing the Jesuit controversialists. The religious system which the Port-Royal people adopted is still known as Jansenism, so called from Bishop Jansen of Ypres. Then began a bitter war between the Jesuits and Port-Royal. Having greater influence at Rome, the Jesuits first

got the Pope to condemn the doctrines of Port-Royal; then they went to work politically and socially to crush and ruin the institution. After many years they were successful. Port-Royal was made bankrupt, was even given into their hands. Triumphant entering into the deserted establishment, they destroyed every vestige of anything that might recall the memory of their enemies. There was, however, something they could not destroy, and which Sainte-Beuve preserved for us—the noble thoughts and the great truths uttered and taught by the vanished society.

Now to reconstruct that convent at Port-Royal, to re-people it with the forms of all who had lived and died there, to make us not only see the faces and hear the conversation, but even know the thoughts and feelings of the dead, was a wonderful bit of magic. This Sainte-Beuve accomplished, and more. For in reconstructing Port-Royal, it was necessary for him also to resurrect the atmosphere and the scenery of the time of Louis XIV, and it was also necessary for him to teach us everything about the conflicting ideas and emotions, religious and social, of that time. But in all his criticisms he has done magic of this kind. Criticism by Sainte-Beuve is biographical; it is historical; it is philosophical; it is artistic. Therefore to read him is an education. But do not think that any painful effort is needed to read him. Not even Macaulay has such a charm of style. Sainte-Beuve teaches by the use of pictures. He does not discourse only, he paints. He does more than paint; he puts the living man before you so that you hear his voice, feel the touch of his hands, apprehend the soul-sympathy existing between yourself and him. When you read Sainte-Beuve, the dead come back and talk to you; and as in dreams, you forget that they are dead, and imagine all that is said and done to be as real as it is natural.

This method has been called by a great many names. Most of these names are inadequate. It has been termed naturalistic; but this is no more correct than it would be to call the method romantic. There is only one name that it

might be called by—that is, the method of Saint-Beuve. It is a combination of every possible way of studying and treating any subject critically, and if it is distinguishable by anything very peculiar, that peculiarity is the author's genius, his infinite sympathy, his irreproachable tolerance, his profound humanity. I imagine that this humanity is especially shown by his habit of studying an author less through the admiration of his friends than through the hatred of his enemies. He always took this view of things, that a man of original genius cannot be in perfect harmony with his century; that he cannot therefore be in perfect accord with the society in which he moves; and that he must therefore be disliked, and very probably persecuted or calumniated. From the contempt, the abuse, or even the falsehoods that have been uttered or manifested towards a great man, we can often learn more about him than we can learn from the praise of those who loved him. Of course this requires extreme superiority of knowledge in matters of psychology. But the good critic must be a good psychologist.

The greatest of Sainte-Beuve's pupils was the historian Taine; and the best example of the influence of Sainte-Beuve upon Taine is, perhaps, the volume written about the character and life of Napoleon. But Taine was not so learned nor so clever nor so sympathetic as Sainte-Beuve. He was apt to use the method somewhat one-sidedly—thus showing, not its defects, but its difficulties. To criticize like Sainte-Beuve one must be as generous and as wise; and no living critic is that. But the method of Sainte-Beuve will perhaps be still more perfected in the future by other great minds, for the best of all reasons—namely, that it is in perfect accord with the philosophy of evolution. No other method of criticism is exactly that. There was no evolutionary philosophy when Sainte-Beuve was young, but he might be said to have in a certain way anticipated it. The innumerable critics who to-day follow the evolutionary method, I mean those who trace the history of anything in literature back through all its centuries to its very beginning, and describe

how the thing grew and budded and blossomed — these, for the most part, are not students of Herbert Spencer; they are imitators of Sainte-Beuve.

It has been well pointed out by Professor Saintsbury that in some respects the influence of Sainte-Beuve has been a little mischievous. Many people thought that they could imitate him by writing foolishly exact biographies of authors, and trying to connect the details of such biographies with passages in the books of the writers discussed. We have now every year hundreds of stupid books published, full of useless and impertinent gossip about the private lives of authors. Now Sainte-Beuve really never did anything of the kind. He never mentioned facts about an author's private life except when these facts happened to have particular value for critical use. He never made mistakes. He never made misjudgments. What he said remains as true to-day as when he said it, and will remain equally true for hundreds of years to come. It is possible, however, only for really great men to follow his system successfully. The three English critics mentioned at the beginning of this lecture have all followed it to some extent. One of them, Professor Dowden, not only acknowledges his immense debt to Sainte-Beuve, but assures us that all the important criticism during the latter part of the nineteenth century owes an equal debt to Sainte-Beuve. This means nothing less than that all the existing schools of English, French, Italian, German, and I may add Russian criticism, have been made or modified by Sainte-Beuve's teaching. We are now immeasurably beyond the critical method of Macaulay, great as Macaulay's method became in his own hands.

Let us return to the special subject of the three great living English critics, and their relation to Sainte-Beuve. Of the three, Saintsbury is much the least attractive, both as to style and method. He is extraordinarily compressed, compact, condensed, never saying more than is absolutely necessary to express his meaning clearly. He is not attractive in any sense of the word, not a writer whom you can

love, but he is a writer who commands your respect. And he commands it in strange ways, particularly by oppositions, by contradictions, by astonishing judgments totally at variance with the judgments of other great critics. Furthermore, he is provokingly cautious. Never does he allow himself to become enthusiastic even about the greatest dead writers; as for living writers, he makes it a rule never to speak about them when he can help it. Unlike Mr. Gosse and Mr. Dowden, he has none of that literary generosity which makes new reputations. Rather he is a destroyer of old ones. No critic with whom I am acquainted is more provoking at times, by his coldness, by his quaint manner of sneering, by the frigid contempt with which he passes over great names in silence. In all these peculiarities, you will find that he is the most typically English of the three. I should say that he has all the repellent qualities of the Englishman quite as strongly marked as the good qualities of the Englishman. But I must say that I should trust him most of all. I do not believe that he will ever mislead you. And he is singularly free from prejudices. Sometimes his sneer, or some single sentence expressing contempt, would lead you to believe that his judgments are coloured by religious or by moral prejudices. But it would be easy to cite judgments which proved the contrary. Observe for example, his eminently just, though reserved, praise of Huxley, of Hobbes, of Mandeville, of others who were strongly opposed to ecclesiastical influence. Or take, on the other hand, his severe criticism of Wyclif. Again you might suspect him of prudishness, the great English hypocrisy of prudishness, because he strongly condemns certain immoralities in certain English writers. But read his splendid reviews of the work done by writers like Carew in English, work as unchaste as anything can be; or read his very fine appreciation of Baudelaire, a name held in horror by prudes both in France and in England; or read his estimates of French writers like Gautier, Hugo, Maupassant, not to mention older French men-of-letters who went quite as far

in offending against what we call moral standards. He has certainly impartiality enough in everything relating to religion and ethics.

As I have said, he provokes. He tells us, for example, that Byron's poetry is not true poetry, that it is pinchbeck, sham; he tells us that it is about as much like true poetry, as the painted scenery in a theatre is like a real landscape. This is one instance of what you may expect from him. He will tell you that there is not even one page of Ruskin which does not contain some untrue or questionable statement. Ruskin is almost the only living writer, except Swinburne, to whom he has given much attention. He will tell you that De Quincey is tiresome, gossiping, and at times absolutely foolish. But if you have patience to examine the reasons which he gives for these statements you will find that they are very truthful. Examine Byron carefully, and you will find that there is scarcely a perfect verse in the whole of his work. Balance Ruskin's judgment carefully, without suffering yourself to be blinded by the dazzling splendour of his language, and you will discover that his value is not that of direct truth, but only of suggestiveness. Take those pages of De Quincey severely criticized, and forget for a moment the pages that cannot be criticized; then you will learn how very tiresome and worthless some of De Quincey's work really is. On the other hand you will obtain from Saintsbury a deeper knowledge of the merits of the same three writers than any other English critic has given us. And an astonishing fact is that Saintsbury's judgments in French literature are quite as sound and concise as his judgments upon English literature. He is the best guide that I know of in both literatures, better even than Professor Dowden. And I do not know that he has exhibited any idiosyncrasies to quarrel with in the whole of his production, except perhaps his obstinate position on the subject of the line between poetry and prose. Although he has praised, and praised highly, certain splendid forms of poetical prose, both in French and in English literature,

he fights for the theory that poetical prose ought not to be written. In this respect I am glad to say that Dowden and Gosse do not agree with him, and that the best French critics do not agree with him.

I should like you to approach Saintsbury always with this conviction in your mind, that he is never so simple as he appears. You must not try to read him quickly. Everything he says deserves to be thought about, and there is a great deal more in his sentences than you can imagine when you read them for the first time. Saintsbury's books are books which you should keep in your libraries, to be read not once only but many times; for only by reading them over and over again can you discover the great power that is in them. Of course in the case of his literary histories, it is of no use for you to read them without having read the literature described. But whenever you have learned to like a French or an English writer, turn to those books for Saintsbury's estimate, and read that estimate many times. Then you will learn how great a teacher he is.

Although influenced by Sainte-Beuve, Saintsbury has never attempted to carry out Sainte-Beuve's method in the direction of biography. He does not try to explain a man to you by the circumstances of that man's parentage, life or social surroundings. In short, he never theorizes when he can help it, because he is afraid of drawing false inferences. But he gives you biographical facts, and he leaves you to make your own conclusions from them. Perhaps this is the safest way, and it has one great merit—it helps to make the student think for himself. This is about all which is necessary to say in regard to Professor Saintsbury. No biography of him has yet been published.

It is quite different in the case of the other two great critics. We have plenty of biographical material concerning them, for the simple reason that they went outside of the rôle of critics and scholars, to appear as poets and dramatists, which made the public want to know everything about them. Mr. Saintsbury does not write poetry, nor do any-

thing outside of the severe limits of his critical profession. But the productions of Professors Dowden and Gosse have been of an extremely varied kind.

Perhaps Professor Gosse is the more remarkable of the two; and I imagine that he is certainly the greatest writer of the three, in point of style. He is also very much the best known to the public at large. His career has been rather curious. He is the son of the naturalist, Philip Gosse, and was born in 1849. He began life as a clerk in the library of the British Museum. Then he became translator to the Board of Trade. Later still his extraordinary talents attracted attention, with the result that he was elected lecturer on English literature at Trinity College, Cambridge. Besides those histories of literature of which I have already spoken, he has produced five volumes of poems, five volumes of essays, and two volumes of literary biography—prodigious work for a man still comparatively young. As to the five volumes of poems, I am sorry to say that I think they are of no importance at all. As verse there is no fault to be found with them; they are perfectly correct, very musical, very clever. But there is really nothing new in them and nothing very strong. It is quite different in regard to the five volumes of essays. There is much more poetry in the prose of those essays than in the verse of the other volumes. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that they are the best essays written by any living Englishman, and I think that there is no essay-work by any other writer of the nineteenth century which surpasses them. Perhaps they have never been equalled in English. To be still more definite about their merit, I shall say that these essays are the nearest approach ever made in English to the elegance and grace and astonishing colour of the best French essays. In other words Mr. Gosse writes English almost as beautifully as the best of French writers write French. But remember, this is due to the fact that Mr. Gosse has studied French with a special view to perfecting his own style. Moreover, he has adopted the method of Sainte-Beuve in

the fullest manner possible, and in most cases with surprising success. He studies the man, the writer, from every point of view, in relation to the time, in relation to heredity, in relation to his social circumstances. And he has extended a great deal of generous notice to living writers, made a great many reputations, and endeared himself to literary aspirants all over Europe. In America he is very much loved, and he gave there a series of lectures which have been very popular, notwithstanding the fact that he dared to say that America had never produced a great poet, and perhaps only one man who could be called even a good poet in a small way.

It is very difficult to give you any idea of the splendour of Mr. Gosse's English by extracts, because, in any of his essays, everything is so woven up with everything else that the effect of any part really belongs to the whole; and when you detach one sentence or paragraph, it loses much of the colour and beauty which it displayed when united to the rest of the living texture. But I shall try the effect of a quotation or two. Here is a little description of the character of the poet Lord de Tabley, which as a description seems to me to teach us something new about the power of the English language when managed by a master-hand: "His mind was like a jewel with innumerable facets, all slightly blurred or misted; or perhaps it would be a juster illustration to compare his character to an opal, where all the colours lie perdue, drowned in a milky mystery, and so arranged that to a couple of observers, simultaneously bending over it, the prevalent hue shall in one case seem a pale green, in the other a fiery crimson."*

I cannot conceive of anything finer in English than that. Of course the idea of the comparison itself has a natural splendour; anybody who has seen an opal, and who knows how to write, must say something striking about it. But even when Mr. Gosse talks, not about jewels, but about the most common and vulgar things, his style is equally splendid

* *Critical Kit-Kats*, p. 165.

and equally surprising. I give you, in illustration, two little paragraphs taken from the narrative of a visit which he made to Whitman some eight or nine years ago: "Whitman, in his suit of hodden grey, and shirt thrown wide open at the throat, his grey hair and white beard voluminously flowing, seemed positively blanched with cleanliness; the whole man sand-white with spotlessness, like a deal table that has grown old under the scrubbing-brush. . . . If it be true that all remarkable human beings resemble animals, then Walt Whitman was like a cat—a great old grey Angora Tom, alert in repose, serenely blinking under his combed waves of hair, with eyes inscrutably dreaming."*

Perhaps some of you may not have seen an Angora cat. It has extraordinarily long silky hair, looking like a pair of whiskers and a beard. This is a pen-picture that makes you see the old man quite as plainly as the writer saw him.

The volume from which these extracts are taken, is a volume of which the title, Mr. Gosse tells us, may be spelled in two ways—"Critical Kit-Kats," or "Kit-Cats"; and it is in this volume that his methods and his style most resemble those of Sainte-Beuve. But another volume of nearly equal excellence is his "Questions at Issue"; and I should be inclined to accord only a slightly inferior place to his "Seventeenth Century Studies." In all these you will perceive that he has an astonishing power of making things seem alive. "Gossip in a Library" belongs rather to the severer form of the literary essay, and deals chiefly with the subject of curious and rare books; but you might obtain much pleasure from perusing it, even if the actual profit should prove small. A very splendid volume, both in relation to style and instruction, is the "Northern Studies," in which Mr. Gosse has condensed the best results of his Scandinavian scholarship. The book is unfortunately out of print for the moment; but I believe that a new edition is being prepared.

I have not anything good to say to you about the poetry of this great critic; but I must tell you that he did not

* *Ibid.*, p. 103 sq.

write it with the idea of displaying himself as a great poet; it was written chiefly to exercise himself in the mastery of certain forms. And he has mastered them very successfully indeed, although one would wish rather that he had given the time to another volume of essays on literature. In my opinion he has carried the form of the essay to the highest point of perfection reached in the English language.

Professor Dowden is an equally remarkable figure, though differing widely from the other two. He was born in 1843. He must have had most extraordinary ability as a student, for at the age of only 24 he was appointed Professor of English literature in Trinity College, Dublin. He is still in that position; but he is also a lecturer, occasionally, at Cambridge University, at Oxford University, and at Edinburgh University, and he holds high degrees from those three universities as well as from his own. He was first made widely known by his "Life of Shelley,"—the same Life criticized by Matthew Arnold. Later on he became widely known as a student of Shakespeare. He has also produced a volume of poems of tolerable excellence, and two volumes of literary essays of very great excellence. His short history of French literature is one of the best ever made, though differing entirely in character from Professor Saintsbury's work on the same subject; and his work upon modern English literature is perhaps the most interesting of any to read, although it is very much condensed, and does not embrace nearly so many subjects as the work of Saintsbury.

Professor Dowden, in his later work at least, shows very strongly the influence of French models. He also is a disciple of Sainte-Beuve, though less successful than Mr. Gosse in imitating some of Sainte-Beuve's methods. But the study of the French masters has given to his style a great deal of the same colour and power observable in the work of Mr. Gosse. I do not think that he is so clever as Mr. Gosse in saying a great deal with a very few words. He does not appear to have Mr. Gosse's power of concentration; his sentences are much longer; and he writes much

more diffusely. But, this being said, it were often difficult to choose between them. Mr. Dowden has the poetical temperament to the same degree that Mr. Gosse has; and in point of style he is able to give us surprises of a like kind. Open his last volume of literary essays, and almost in the very beginning you will find a simile like this: "Whither is literature tending? . . . The science of spiritual meteorology has not yet found its Dalton or its Humboldt; the law of the tides of the soul has not yet been expressed in a formula."*

The man who writes this way we feel to be at heart both a poet and a thinker; and we are prepared to be delighted by him even when he touches upon metaphysical law or philosophical subjects. And the delight comes very soon. A little further on, he speaks of the power of the influence of a foreign literature to inspire our own, like the fusion of strange blood that gives new force to a weak or perishing race: "The shock of strangeness is inspiriting. Every great literary movement of modern Europe has been born from the wedlock of two peoples. So the great Elizabethan literature sprang from the love-making of England with Italy; the poetry of the early part of the nineteenth century from the ardour aroused in England by the opening promise of the French revolution."†

This is the way to write the philosophy of literature, so that we can be at once interested and taught, at once amused and instructed. There is a great deal in that little sentence; for it expresses a universal law, ruling the history not only of literature but of life, the law that governs not only the union of individuals, but the union also of intellectual elements. It reminds us also of the teaching of Sir Francis Galton, that men of genius chiefly come from families representing the union of different national elements. And it ought to interest us here, this law; for if there be universal truth in it, a new Japanese literature must eventually arise from the influence of Western literature, just as

* *New Studies in Literature*, p. 1. † *Ibid.*, p. 19.

we see that, even now in Europe, the influence of Oriental literature, especially from India, is beginning to show itself, to exercise a new power in Western thought.

Mr. Dowden's essays are rich in sentences like these; and, as you might have divined from the above quotations, he has been a sincere student of modern science. I think we may call him a strong evolutionist. He is the only one of the three great critics who has boldly declared that the influence of men like Herbert Spencer will be of the greatest possible value to the literature of the coming age. It has been rather the fashion, both for French and English critics, to declare that science is killing poetry. Mr. Dowden thinks the exact opposite. He believes that science is even now putting new blood and strength into literature, and is preparing the way for grander forms both of prose and of poetry than were ever known before.

In this and in other ways I think Professor Dowden is more of a reformer, more broadminded, and more generous than either Mr. Gosse or Mr. Saintsbury. Mr. Saintsbury would certainly not hazard any strong opinion upon the possible influence in literature of the evolutionary philosophy. Indeed, when he has spoken of it, he has always done so in the most cautious manner, and in the tone of one who thinks that nothing has yet been decided. In this respect he well represents English conservatism. Professor Gosse shows, through all his writings, that he is as much under the influence of the new philosophy as he is under the influence of Sainte-Beuve. But Professor Dowden, greatest by his many university honours, is the only one who has had such sympathy with the new thought, and such courage to express that sympathy, as to give us a thoughtful and splendid chapter upon the subject. He might also do much more for the new cause in literature, were it not that his time is very largely taken up with editing as well as with lecturing. But we should be grateful for what we get, in the case of men like these.

At the beginning of this essay I spoke of Mr. Stopford

Brooke, whom you all know of through his excellent primer of English literature. You know that a good primer is very much harder to write than a big history; even Huxley declared that it was the hardest thing for any intellectual man to undertake. The great point in a primer is, not so much to be simple and clear, but to choose. There must be not only immense compression, but amassing of only the most important facts bearing upon the subject, as that subject ought to be presented to young minds. And that little primer of literature was the best of its kind ever written; in the new edition it has increased value as an educational treasure. The man capable of writing it was not an ordinary scholar by any means, but a very extraordinary one. Mr. Brooke was known as a clergyman considerably before he became known in literature; he was famous for the eloquence and beauty of his sermons. People thought it an intellectual treat to go to the church in which he preached, just for the pleasure of hearing him. In his leisure moments he gave his time chiefly to the subject of Anglo-Saxon literature, and became an authority upon it—so that you can see he is a many-sided man. But I do not think that he can be called either a great critic or a great stylist; indeed, he has never taken the special pains necessary to become either. One quotation from his poetry will illustrate what I mean, a little song, showing both his excellences and his defects. It is taken from a dramatic composition entitled “Riquet of the Tuft.”

Young Sir Guyon proudly said,
“Love shall never be my fate.”
“None can say so but the dead,”
Shriek’d the witch wife at his gate.

“Go and dare my shadow’d dell,
Love will quell your happy mood.”
Guyon, laughing his farewell,
Rode into the fairy wood.

There he met a maiden wild,
By a tree she stood alone;

When she looked at him and smil'd,
At a breath his heart was gone.

In her arms she twin'd him fast,
And, like wax within the flame,
Melted memory of the past,
Soul and body, name and fame.

This simple little ballad is quite a perfect thing thus far—everything that a weird song should be. But the last stanza spoils the whole composition :

Late at night the steed came back,
"Where's our good knight?" cried his men ;
Far and wide they sought his track,
But Guyon no one saw again.

Commonplace phrasing, doggerel-verse, utter indifference to finish! A beautiful little composition destroyed by haste and indifference. Now there is something of the same haste observable in all the work of Mr. Brooke, except in perhaps that wonderful little primer, at which he really worked very carefully, and had the assistance or advice of Matthew Arnold and other eminent men. Everywhere you find a display of immense natural talent and great scholarship, but no sustained exquisiteness, no caution, and a great tendency to twist facts so as to adjust them to fit favourite theories. No few of these theories, about Anglo-Saxon literature, for example, have been proved to be utterly wrong; and they are wrong for exactly the same reason that the little song which I quoted to you was never properly finished. Again we find incapacity to mass and arrange facts systematically. In the first form of the great work upon early English literature, the student is utterly confused by the arbitrary arrangement of the whole thing, by tiresome and useless digression, by leaving one subject half finished in order to consider another, and then returning to the same subject again in a different chapter. In the subsequent and much condensed form of the work, a condensation exacted by the

good judgment of the publishers, there is a great improvement; but the new chapters upon Celtic literature and the ancient peoples of Britain, together with the chapters upon King Alfred, show the same faults as those which mark and mar the whole of the larger work. Therefore it would be impossible to consider Mr. Brooke as a trustworthy critic, or indeed as a critic at all. He is a poet, a scholar, a discoverer, a man who has done very much to stimulate the study of Anglo-Saxon literature; but he is not a critic.

There are of course quite a number of English scholars who are occasional critics and good ones—specialists like Professor Ker, for example. But these men are first of all philologists, and not professional critics, so that they are outside of our present consideration. We have only three great professional critics, recognized as such, to offset the fifteen or twenty master critics that France can boast of. And what I wanted you to observe from the beginning of this lecture has been the influence of French literature upon these three. They have been made by the study of French criticism; they have developed an entirely new art through the study of French criticism; and they have done more than any other men to turn the attention of Englishmen to the real superiority of French literature in certain departments. Another thing which they have done, and a very important thing it is, has been to create a new spirit of literary tolerance and generosity. Forty or fifty years ago English men-of-letters insisted, like Macaulay, on judging everything foreign from an English standpoint—from the standpoint of English ethics, English feelings, English habits and customs; and the result was narrowness and dryness of soul. To-day it is very different. Mr. Saintsbury, conservative in many things; Mr. Gosse, liberal in most things; and Mr. Dowden, liberal in all things—have united their forces to teach us how to look for beauty in itself, apart from all considerations of ethics and habits and prejudices. It was from the French that they learned this, the excellent teaching lately embodied so well in these little

sentences of Anatole France, "*Il ne faut pas demander la vérité à la littérature; il faut demander la vérité aux sciences.*" That is to say, we must not ask truth from literature, in the sense of exactness of fact; such exactness it is the duty of science to give. The only real object of literature is beauty. But remember that beauty in itself also means truth of a larger kind than truth of fact; it means truth of feeling. And in all my lectures I have never failed, when I had the opportunity, to remind you that literature is not the art of writing books, but the art of expressing feeling—feeling, which means everything noble as well as everything common in human life. To-day these truths seem plain enough, but very few Englishmen could see them fifty years ago. It was the duty of the great critics to make them see it.

The great difference between French and other criticism until the present time has been not more in method than in charm. A good French review—a review, for example, by Jules Lemaître—delights like a good story, while it instructs in the best possible way. Not infrequently it happens that the review of a book is much more interesting than the book itself. On the other hand, German criticism, being especially scientific, is likely to be somewhat dry, and never can appeal to an equally large class of minds. English critics have perceived this educational value in the French method, and it is noteworthy that such a critic as Mr. Gosse, who has obtained distinction both as a German and a Scandinavian scholar, never allowed himself to be influenced by German methods of critical analysis. Now the literature of English criticism during the latter part of the present century, has been made almost entirely by French influence. In what other directions is the same influence to be seen?

In the beginning I said that I was going to speak of the general relation between French and contemporary English literature. We owe to French influence also something in poetry, and something in fiction, but not so much

as might be supposed. In poetry the French of to-day had little to teach Englishmen, for English poetry is much more developed than English prose. There are, however, marks of the great French romantic poets in the work of our own Victorian poets—in Swinburne a great deal, in Rossetti a little, in Tennyson scarcely anything. This is curious, that the poet of all who most influenced modern English is the one Englishman who had least to learn from the French. The forms of which English poetry is capable have almost been exhausted. Therefore the influence of French forms could not be much. What could be borrowed from French poetry would be feeling; and the poets who have borrowed from the French have been those who allowed certain influences to appear in their poetry not in accordance with real English feeling. Baudelaire and Gautier, who particularly helped Swinburne to colour his verse, were poets of sensation—sensation of a kind which English feeling usually rejects. We may say that the influence of French poetry upon English poetry has been very small during the Victorian poetry, and has been chiefly in the direction of increased colour and sensuous charm.

As for the novel, the French do not appear to have taught us anything. No great English novelist of the period has successfully attempted to write upon French models. Of course, the naturalistic school, the school of Zola and the others, had its message for English novel writers, and experiments were made, but none of them has been very successful. If we can speak of any French influence in this direction, it can only be the influence of theory—the theory of Realism. Moreover, it is remarkable that at the present time literary novels have almost ceased to be written by Englishmen. Take any French novel, noteworthy or not, and you will find that it is beautifully written; the style is always admirable. But although fifteen hundred new books are promised for the month of December—that is, next month—by English publishers, I doubt whether among them all will be one beautifully written novel. The novel is

multiplying; but it is also deteriorating. It would indeed be a very good thing if English writers of novels could be induced to imitate the workmanship of the French. The trouble is—money. Novel-writing in English has become a money-making business, and the public do not care about style. The last great writer of novels who had a style was Stevenson.

In another direction, however, French fiction is influencing English fiction—the direction of the Short Story. You may think it strange, but it is nevertheless true that until within very recent times the English reading public did not care for English short stories, and English publishers would not publish them. Yet the very same public would buy thousands of volumes of short stories in French, and read them with delight. Perhaps it was thought that only Frenchmen could write really great stories of this kind. The thought was altogether wrong. Perhaps no English writer living can write a short story quite as well as a Frenchman, except Rudyard Kipling. But there is now a growing demand for short stories, and many clever writers are trying to imitate the French in this way, even in the matter of style. But it is curious to observe how the change was brought about. French literature directly influenced, not English literature in this matter, but American. America first yielded to this influence; the work of Poe, Hawthorne, and later Bret Harte, considerably influenced by French writers, at last yielded fruit. An immense number of books of little stories were produced in America after 1860 or 1870; the best of these became popular in England; and then came the short stories of Stevenson and Kipling. Before that some English writers, like Dickens and Lytton, wrote wonderful short stories, but the public only read them because they were already familiar with the novels of the same authors. I remember a most beautiful little story called “A Bird of Passage” by J. Sheridan Le Fanu, published in England early in the seventies; it was ignored in England, but the American public were delighted with it.

Now we can fairly state that the English prejudice in favour of the novel, as against the short story, is breaking down, and that this again is due to French influence.

Thus we have evidence of French influence in criticism, a little in poetry, and a little in fiction. But in other departments of literature the English remain very much behind their neighbours. In the drama the French remain incomparably superior. Indeed, French plays are constantly being translated for English theatres; while no great English drama, of an actable kind, has appeared during the period. And there is yet another department of literature in which the French have much to teach the English—the Sketch, the essay of observation. In that we are still immeasurably behind.

CHAPTER XXVII

NOTE ON SOME FRENCH ROMANTICS

I HAD hoped, in the latter part of the term, to give a lecture upon the relation between the English and the French romantic movement; but there will not be time to treat the subject except in the briefest possible way. However, these few notes should be of some use to you. Every student, of course, should be aware that the great movements in modern literature have never been confined to one country only. The romantic movement of which we have been treating in its relation to English literature, really extended over all Europe. It represented a change not merely in English literature, but in Occidental literature. Every country influenced every other, and each was influenced by all. The benefit of the change effected in France was extended speedily to England and to Germany; and England in turn gave both to German and to French literature the benefits of its own literary reform. The most brilliant of all the romantic movements was certainly the French; and England owes more to French influence than to any other. It has always been so. The English classical literature of the eighteenth century was modelled upon French classic literature. The English romances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had their counterparts in France; nor was it until the huge French romances had been translated into English that the English work developed an original character of its own. Go back yet farther, to the Middle Ages proper, and you will find English literature equally, if not more, indebted to France. And finally you must remember that in the eleventh century French became the language of England and long continued to be. Although originally springing from strangely different sources, the

English and the French languages have so interacted upon each other that English and French literatures are more closely related than any other two literatures of Europe.

The French romantic movement, like the English, was a gradual development; we can trace it well back into the eighteenth century, and should do so if there were time. Suffice now to say that the blossoming of this movement began about the same time that English romanticism had its triumphs, just about the time when Tennyson was beginning to make himself felt. There were before that French poets of original and beautiful talent, who corresponded somewhat in the history of romanticism to our earlier romantics, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott. But the real triumph began in the early thirties—between 1830 and 1834, let us say—though Victor Hugo's "Orientales" appeared as early as 1829. There is one thing, however, worth noticing—that with a solitary exception, that of Dumas, nearly all of the great romantics were born just about the beginning of the century, 1802, 1804, up to 1811. Even Dumas came very nearly being born in the nineteenth century, for his date is 1799.

I do not think the French romantic movement was so much superior to the English in poetry as in prose; indeed, the matter is very disputable, and if we grant the French superiority, it is rather because of the finer qualities of their language than because of higher qualities of thought or feeling. To the student in this country, moreover, the poetical part of the movement is the least likely to appeal. I do not know that it would do you any more good to read the French romantic poets than to read the great English romantic poets. The English poets will furnish you with quite as many ideas and sentiments. But the French poetry was of a totally different order—much more passionate, warm, musical and brightly coloured than the average of English romantic poetry. And it was more perfect as to form; the English language is not capable of producing verses of such jewelled splendours as the "Émaux et Camées"

of Théophile Gautier. For this reason, perhaps, it may be rather to your interest to give your first attention to French poetry. I shall, however, make this lecture deal chiefly with the story-tellers among the French romantics, and their peculiarities as masters of style.

There are a number of names to be mentioned, but most of these can be classed under two heads. You will remember that in our English Victorian and pre-Victorian epochs there were two remarkably different styles in use, and that these two styles continue to prevail. There is an ornate or highly romantic style; and there is the severe style, simple as anything in classic literature, or even more simple,—without any ornament, and yet with extraordinary power of touching the emotions. In French literature we find the very same thing. But a curious terminology was invented to describe these differences in French style; and it is so queer, so easy to remember, that I am going to use it in this lecture. The writers of very ornate prose, like Gautier and Hugo, have been called myopic stylists—men who wrote as if they were myopic, very near-sighted, seeing things in all their details very closely, and so able to describe every little item. But writers of the other style, like Mérimée, were called presbyopic or far-sighted stylists—describing as if they saw clearly at vast distances, but did not distinguish small things in their immediate neighbourhood.

The great names, of course, are Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset, Sainte-Beuve, Théophile Gautier, Alexandre Dumas, Honoré de Balzac, Prosper Mérimée and 'George Sand' (Armandine Lucile Dudevant)—in the first group. Of Sainte-Beuve, the greatest critic who ever lived, I have already spoken, and of his influence upon English criticism; he need be mentioned here only as an infallible guide. Without reading him no one can hope to form a correct taste in French literature.

Victor Hugo's name and work is so well known that we need treat of him very briefly. And the same may be said of Alexandre Dumas, the nearest French approach to our

British Sir Walter Scott, though far surpassing Scott in fantastic imagination. As to Balzac, who is not particularly a stylist, we need remark only that he attempted successfully the immense feat of describing the whole of French life, and the conditions of every class of society, in a vast succession of novels, nearly all of which are linked together, so that the characters in one story re-appear in another—the whole representing some fifty-two volumes.

‘George Sand,’ who in all respects resembles the English George Eliot, was especially a writer of passionate love stories; she does not figure as a stylist, for her books will not bear the test of being twice read with pleasure. A book that you cannot read twice with a feeling of pleasure has no style. But although not a stylist, and now a little wearisome to read, this woman really founded a great school of romantic novel writing, which continues to this day. The styles of the group are best represented in the persons of Théophile Gautier, and of Prosper Mérimée,—the former being the most decorative of all French stylists, and the latter the least decorative and the most severe. As for Victor Hugo I am not going to say much about him, for the reasons already given; in his way he was quite as ornamental as any one else, but only in a way. His style is incomparably more irregular than that of Carlyle; it is rather an idiosyncrasy than a style. To tempt you to study these writers I should recommend their short stories as better than their long ones for a beginning, and I shall speak particularly of these. But such writers as Alfred de Musset and Balzac also wrote short stories, some of which may be advantageously mentioned as representative of the second great style referred to. To sum up first: Victor Hugo represented the Gothic spirit of the movement, best exemplified in his terrible mediæval story of “Notre-Dame.” De Musset, with some classic tendencies, gives us in his prose tales a light delicacy and grace of narrative that almost belongs as much to the eighteenth as to the nineteenth century. Gautier, the second greatest power in the movement—he

could produce more perfect poetry than even Victor Hugo—is also the greatest of all French masters of rich style; I should remind you that he was also the historian of the romantic movement, which he recorded in a charming series of studies entitled “Histoire du Romantisme.” Alexandre Dumas represents the novel of incident. Balzac takes a place apart, for his innovation was something entirely original. Mérimée, both historian and story-teller, resembles our English Froude in more ways than one. And ‘George Sand’ was the mother of that endless series of novels of passion—illegitimate passion rather than legitimate—which have not yet ceased to pour from the Parisian press.

Gautier I shall speak of first. He was a charming man and a very great scholar, and something of his character as well as of his scholarship accounts for the extraordinary beauty of his work. He was one of the few great journalists who never wrote an unkind word about any man, although he attacked parties and principles which he considered wrong. He proclaimed the doctrine of art for art’s sake—the creation or reflection of beauty as the chief object of art. His knowledge of Greek thought and feeling particularly influenced his artistic doctrine; unless the subject were beauty, he would not touch it. In this he differed very much from Hugo, who delighted in the horrible and the grotesque. One of his eccentricities is worth mentioning; his chief pleasure was the reading of the dictionary, and it was his custom to ask any young aspirant for literary honours, “Do you like to read dictionaries?” If the young man said, “Yes,” they were friends; if he said, “No,” Gautier suspected that he would never become a sincere lover of art. Most certainly it was by the study of dictionaries that Gautier became a veritable magician of style, but it does not follow that the same method succeeds in all cases. It succeeded with him not only because he was a genius, but because he had had the very best classical training, and he put it to the most romantic use. We have nothing in English at all like his books—there is nobody to compare with

him. You must try to remember just these two things about him—that he chose only subjects which he thought beautiful and heroic, and that he treated them in a most exquisite way. But his aesthetics were not narrow; beauty of any kind attracted him, no matter to what age or part of the world it might belong. Do you remember the story of De Quincey about the Spanish nun? The subject is a strange one—that of a woman becoming a soldier and a swordsman, distinguished for force, courage, and beauty—a very romantic subject. Besides the Spanish story there is a story in French history of a lady named de Maupin who actually fought duels with the sword. How charming the story of a woman in man's clothes can be made, Shakespeare has given us more than one supreme example; you will remember "Twelfth Night," for example, and "As You Like It." Out of these three elements Gautier composed his famous "Mademoiselle de Maupin," the story of a woman in man's clothes, who has all kinds of amorous adventures. Perhaps there was also some inspiration from the old Italian writers, such as Boccaccio. Certainly the book was immoral. But it was also very beautiful, and it was written especially as a defiance to conventions. Gautier himself was the most moral of men; but he fought against any restrictions upon literature, either of religion or convention. And he succeeded, he broke down the bars. But it was in his short stories perhaps that he proved himself greatest. There are several volumes of these. The best two are simply entitled "Romans et Contes," and "Nouvelles." The greatest of all romantic short stories in French literature is probably "La Morte Amoureuse," and that you will find in one of these volumes. It is a vampire story—the story of a dead woman who comes in the night to suck the blood of a lover, whom she keeps in a state of magical illusion. Such a subject can be very horrible, but Gautier made it very beautiful. Quite as remarkable, I think, is the story of "Arria Marcella", telling of the coming back from the dead, through the power of passion, of a woman

buried for thousands of years. The beauty of this story is especially in the artistic resurrection of the life of Pompeii; and very considerable archæological knowledge was required to write it. Another wonderful little story is called "Le Pied de Momie," or "The Mummy's Foot"; it deals with the life of ancient Egypt. A man who has the dried foot of a female mummy purchased as a curio, wishes he could see, as in life, the person to whom that foot once belonged; and she comes to him out of the night of five thousand years, and brings him under ground to the assembly of her ancestors, myriads of dead kings and princes. A fourth story treats of a subject well known in Japanese tradition, the animation of a beloved picture, the picture in this case being embroidered instead of painted. But I cannot tell you more about Gautier's stories in this short lecture: if you will simply take those two volumes and choose for yourselves, you will find what a wonderful writer and story-teller he is. There is but one drawback—his love of extraordinary words; you cannot read his artistic stories without having a dictionary of art at your elbow.

Very different is it with Prosper Mérimée. Gautier loved long rolling sentences, long soft rhythms; he often composed a sentence a page and a half long, just as Ruskin did. But the sentences of Mérimée are all short, clear, crisp, without rhythms, without extraordinary words, and with the use of the fewest possible number of adjectives. No style, except that of the old Norse writers, is so plain and so simple.

It would be hard to say where his style appears to the best advantage—in his histories, in his stories, or in his letters. As for his histories, such as "Les Cosaques d'Autrefois," they read like the best of romances, though nobody could claim that he is in the least defective or inaccurate as an historian. The book upon the great Cossacks is the very best that I know of—perhaps, indeed, the only book that gives you in brief space a clear idea of the old time struggle between Russia and her Tartar conquerors, as well as a history of the marvellous militia, the Cossacks themselves.

The accounts of the cavalry battles are spirited enough almost to lift the reader off his feet. Another strange book of his deals with the famous impostor who pretended to be the legitimate heir to the throne of Russia, and actually succeeded almost in making himself emperor. This is "Les Faux Démétrius" (for there were two of these impostors), and gives such a picture of Russian life in the old time as you will not find in any other single volume. Mérimée liked the Middle Ages, too, and he has given us some wonderful essays upon French history. By the way, you should remember that it was he who helped Napoleon III to write his famous history of Cæsar. But to the mass of readers Mérimée is better known by his wonderful stories—"Carmen," "Colomba," "Tamango," "Mateo Falcone," "La Vénus d'Ille," and so forth. The first mentioned of the above, "Carmen," is the story of a Spanish soldier bewitched by a gipsy girl, for whose sake he becomes a murderer and robber. He kills her at last in prison, on the evening before his execution. A more terrible story, and yet a more touching story, was never written. The book is, moreover, a revelation of certain characteristics of Spanish gipsies. I think you know that it has been made into an opera, the music of which was composed by the great musician Bizet, who represented the romantic movement in music. Those who have heard the Spanish and Havana melodies introduced into this opera will not easily forget them. "Colomba" is the story of a Corsican vendetta. It is a matchless picture of Corsican manners and customs, as full of poetry as they are of ferocity. "Mateo Falcone" is another Corsican story, short and frightful, about a father, who, although an outlaw, kills his little boy for betraying the honour of the family. "Tamango" is the story of a slave ship, founded on fact. The slaves rise in revolt, kill the captain and the crew, and seize the ship; but they do not know how to navigate her, and she drifts about hopelessly until nearly all on board are dead. "La Vénus d'Ille," is the tale of an antique statue, which exerts a ghostly and fatal charm upon its

possessor. I have been selecting only a few titles out of many, and it would be useless perhaps to mention the variety from the Italian, Spanish, German and Russian studies scattered through Mérimée's volumes. For the charm of the man is so very great that if you read only one or two of his tales you can scarcely rest until you have read them all. And a noteworthy fact about Mérimée, which also shows the bent of his taste, is that he is almost the first to introduce European readers to the wonderful merit of the Russian novelists. He first made translations from Gogol and Pushkin, and among his translations from the Russian the most extraordinary thing is the little story entitled "La Dame de Pique" (Queen of Spades), a marvellous narrative about a gambler's life in which a certain fatal card plays a tragical part. There are also to be found in Mérimée things which are not exactly stories—rather studies in realism, which anticipate Maupassant, such as the little piece entitled "L'Enlèvement de la Redoute" (The Capture of the Redout), the narrative of a soldier who helped to storm the fortress. He describes only what he felt and saw, in the simple language of a soldier, and the narrative gives the reader exactly the sensation of having been in the fight.

Gautier must have taught a great deal about style to English writers; Mérimée could only be admired. The Englishman who comes nearest to Mérimée in style is Froude. Mérimée is a much greater artist, writing in a much more perfect language, and I doubt whether any Englishman can ever succeed in producing exactly the same effects. In French, Mérimée had no imitator before Maupassant; and even Maupassant could not surpass him. It is true that the charm of Mérimée is partly due to the strange and exotic character of his subjects, but independently of the subject the method is always supreme. We may say that his was the most realistic of styles, although producing the most romantic effects.

Of the other writers, only a few need be dealt with at some length. The prose of de Musset, the beautiful little

stories of Italian and Parisian life, though romantic in feeling, are written also in a very plain style, approaching that of Mérimée but not equalling it. A better example of his style is in the famous "Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle" (The Confession of a Child of the Age), which is a passionate piece of autobiography. It tells us all the pain and despair and jealousy of a young man betrayed by the woman to whom he was attached, and the man was the author himself, though other names are of course used. One of the female characters in the narrative is supposed to be the famous 'George Sand'. De Musset was her lover for a time, and it appears by his own confession that he was a very difficult man for any woman to live with. But, whatever may be the right or the wrong of the story, there is no doubt about the passionate pathos and the beauty of the book. However, de Musset was not of much influence in French prose. The great influences of the first period were Gautier and Mérimée.

It is possible, of course, for a man to affect literature through stories which do not depend for their immortal merit upon mere style, but upon imagination and suggestion. Now Balzac is one of those who did this. His enormous series of novels did not affect French literature as prose; they served only to establish a new school of fiction. He was not at his best as a stylist in this long chain of interlinked novels, but when he took to writing short stories it was quite a different matter, and some of the short stories must live for all time.

The most famous of all these is "La Peau de Chagrin." I think you know that the word "chagrin" means grief, but it also means a particular preparation of leather for which we use the word "shagreen." The double signification in the title can be best valued through a notion of the story. A young man in a second-hand dealer's shop, finds exposed for sale a curious skin or parchment, covered with magical characters. He wishes to buy it, but is warned by the dealer that if he buys it it will destroy him. It is a magical

skin, and it has this extraordinary property that anybody who possesses it can gratify any wish which he may express. But so soon as the wish is gratified, two things happen—the skin shrinks and becomes much smaller, and the life of the wisher is shortened correspondingly. As you may well suppose, the young man buys the skin and proceeds to gratify a great number of wishes. He wishes to be rich, and he is rich; he wishes for power, and he obtains power; he wishes to have the most beautiful woman in the world, and the beautiful woman becomes his wife. By the time he begins to feel rather satisfied, the skin has become terribly small, and his life is apparently very near an end. Then he discovers that he must absolutely stop wishing for anything in order that he may be able to live a little longer. His physician warns him that he must not think about women at all, not even about his own wife. You can very well imagine the end of the story. One sensual wish comes, the skin disappears, and the life of the man departs. You can see that this is a very great story because of the great moral in it. It is quoted everywhere, and every student should at least remember the title.

Again Balzac produced two volumes of stories entitled “*Les Contes Drolatiques*,” translated into English under the title of “*Droll Stories from the Abbeys of Touraine*.” The English translation, with its 425 illustrations by Doré, is very fair; but it scarcely gives you an idea of the astonishing art of the original, written in the quaint French of the sixteenth century. These stories are certainly of the kind that remain immortal, notwithstanding the strangely immoral character of many of them. They reflect the life of the Middle Ages in all its horror and superstition, but also in all its tenderness and poetry. There are very extraordinary stories. They begin by making you laugh; a little further along they become very sensual, in the worst sense; then all at once they become so intensely human and pathetic as to bring tears to the eyes. Now there are very few stories of that sort in the literature of the world—grotesque,

immoral, comical, human and pathetic. But we feel that the life of the time described was really a life of this kind; the morals were not as now, many of the customs were atrocious, cruelty was the rule rather than an exception in the governing of cities, and yet the emotions of love and heroism and all the tender feelings existed very much as they exist to-day. Feeling this, we cease to find fault with the immoral parts of the story. These only tell the truth about the form of life that has passed away. You have that book in the English translation in the library; and it would be better to read the English version first before trying the French, for the French is of the sixteenth century and requires a little patience to become familiar with.

Another group of romantics came later who also influenced prose literature, though poetry much more. In fact, to be quite accurate, there were three groups; the French romantic movement passed in three great waves; but we need not make the distinction here, because we are not considering poetry, for want of time. The names of the second group especially to be considered are Gérard de Nerval, Louis Bertrand, Charles Baudelaire, Gustave Flaubert. Nerval, a friend of Gautier, figured much later than Gautier as a successful writer. His story is very extraordinary. Undoubtedly he was a little mad, and it is possible that he became mad by reason of a love affair. But he was never too mad to write the most wonderful books. As a mere boy he made a French translation of Goethe's "Faust" which Goethe himself judged to be the best translation in existence. At one time of his life he went to Egypt, declared himself a Mohammedan, adopted the customs of the country, went to the slave market and bought himself a wife. She appears to have been a Turkish girl of very decided character, and as soon as she perceived she had been bought by a madman, she set all laws and customs at defiance by leaving her would-be husband and fleeing to Damascus — at least such is the story. But in spite of this disappointment Nerval obtained plenty of inspiration from his experience in the

East. He travelled as far as Jerusalem, and returned to France to write his wonderful "Scènes de la Vie Orientale," in two volumes, one of the most beautiful books of travel and one of the strangest ever produced. There is contained in it perhaps his masterpiece in the way of romance, the history of King Solomon and of Balkis, the Queen of Sheba. This narrative is quite as grand as anything in "The Arabian Nights." Meyerbeer, the great musician, actually wrote music for it in the hope of producing it operatically upon the stage, before having discovered that no stage could ever be built large enough to produce such a drama. For the author's imagination was enormous; his pictures represented vastness of scenery such as really could be observed only from the tops of the highest mountains. I do not know whether many have found delight in this wonderful story, just because it happens to be in a book of travel. But the other books of Nerval are very well known. The most familiar is "Les Filles de Feu" (Daughters of Fire), terrible characters, you might suppose, but they are very gentle girls indeed. There are four stories each with a woman's name, and each delineating some particular charm of female character. Of course they are very queer, unearthly stories for the most part, but the first is astonishingly human. It is supposed to be the narrative of a damsel of the Middle Ages, who leaves her father's castle secretly in company with an adventurer, and suffers the bitter consequence of her folly. It is very touching, almost like the mediæval stories of Balzac, but very pure and told in a style wonderfully simple. Nerval went through France, learning peasants' songs from the peasants, just as Sir Walter Scott did when preparing his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The result of these pilgrimages was "La Bohème Galante," one of the most delightful books on folksong ever written. The chapter on folk-song is only a part of the book, but it is one of the notable books in French literature, and it had great effect in turning the attention of poets to the value of popular ballads. Miscellaneous works and essays by

Nerval were collected after his death into book form; and you will find charming things in the collection. The best of all is a wonderful short story called "La Main Enchantée," first entitled "La Main de Gloire," the story of a man who by making a particular contract with the devil obtains the gift of irresistible power in his sword arm. The grotesqueness of the fancy should not prejudice you against the story, for the value of the story is quite independent of the theme. It is as a picture of the Middle Ages that the tale is very great. You see that most of these French romantics went to the Middle Ages for their fiction, just as the English Pre-Raphaelites did.

De Nerval, romantic as he was, came by style closer to Mérimée than to Gautier; his method was very plain and very pure. A new kind of prose was, however, on the verge of appearing. This new kind of prose had been attempted in England a little by Blake, and a little by Coleridge, but it was only perfected in France. I mean prose poetry in the full sense of the word.

Louis Bertrand is an important name, though his only famous book, "Gaspard de la Nuit," is now out of print, and difficult to obtain. He died very young and left nothing else of importance. But this little book had very great influence upon French letters. It was a book of prose poems, or, if you like, a volume of prose sketches of the most romantic kind, in which every sentence had the rhythm and quality of poetry, and all the text was divided into paragraphs like the verses of the Bible. Bertrand played very much the same part in French literature as Macpherson did, with his Ossian, in England in the latter part of the previous century. There is no evidence of exactly to what extent Bertrand was influenced by Ossian, of which a prose translation was then very popular in France, but it is probable that he was to some degree inspired by it. Bertrand's book did not attract much attention with the public, but men of letters saw its merit, and the poet Baudelaire seized upon the suggestion which it offered for the creation of a

new kind of prose. The value of Bertrand was really the impulse which he gave to Baudelaire.

Charles Baudelaire, an eccentric and perhaps slightly mad man of letters, you have perhaps heard of as a poet. He wrote the most extraordinary volume of poetry called "Fleurs du Mal" (Flowers of Evil), and the book is not badly described by its title. As poetry, in regard to form, nothing better was produced by any romantic, but the subjects were most horrible, dealing with crimes and with remorse, despair and other unhealthy emotions. There was also a strange sensualism in the book, something quite exotic and new. But we are now dealing chiefly with Baudelaire as a prose writer, and you should know that he was quite as great in prose as in verse. He was also a great translator—translating into French the best of De Quincey and of Edgar Poe. He himself had very much of the imagination of Poe, but it did not take the form of strange stories. Instead of writing stories, he wrote very short romantic sketches, each representing some particular mood, experience or sorrow. And these, which he collected into one volume, under the title of "Petits Poèmes en Prose," represented the influence of Bertrand. But Baudelaire was much greater than Bertrand. He showed, as never has been shown before, the extraordinary resources of the French language in prose of poetical form. A year ago I translated for you one of these prose studies, a little composition about the moon, and you may remember what a strange thing it was. The new poetical prose was fairly established by the publication of this book. But such prose was not adapted to the writing of novels and long stories. It could only be used for very short studies of a highly emotional character. French men of letters have since been using the style only for such purposes, and perhaps the most striking follower of Baudelaire in this regard was the historian and scholar Edgar Quinet, whose wonderful bit of prose poetry about a cathedral, "La Cathédrale," you will find in Professor Saintsbury's "Specimens of French Literature."

Yet another kind of prose was attempted by Gustave Flaubert, the greatest of the second romantic group. He was very much influenced by both Gautier and Baudelaire, and he tried to invent a style that would combine both forms of excellence—that is, would give all the effect of the ornate prose of Gautier and of the melodious prose of Baudelaire. He therefore especially attempted the study of words in themselves, classing them according to colours, tones, qualities of hardness or softness; and he attempted to combine them into a musical mosaic of a new sort. In this he was only partially successful. There are two mistakes in the attempt to create such a style. The first is that the highest ornate results of it could only be understood by a few scholarly men of letters; its merits never could appeal to the public. The other mistake is due to the supposition that the same word will necessarily produce the same effect upon all cultured minds. Now, as a matter of fact, this is the mistake still shared by that modern class of small eccentric French poets called Decadents. The same word will not produce the same effect upon differently cultivated minds. On the contrary, the same word is likely to make a distinctly different impression upon nine hundred out of a thousand minds; for the impression produced will depend upon the mental experience of the reader, which is never the same in any two individuals. Some words there are, as Gautier well knew, which will produce extraordinary effects upon large classes of minds, but that is because such words make an appeal to certain fundamental feelings which are common to the mass of healthy imaginations. Flaubert's theory was wrong, but as he was a great genius, he could not be altogether wrong, but he gave the world a variety of new suggestions, as well as a prose scarcely less ornate than Gautier's, but with an irregular charm of a new kind. He broke down traditional conventions of form as boldly as did Carlyle in England. But he was wise enough to perceive that the same kind of prose would not suit all kinds of literary productions, and he did a great service to letters by

writing in three different styles, thus showing how plain or poetical or decorative prose was adapted to different subjects. He thought that the plain prose was especially suited to the novel of real life, and in this style he wrote his great realistic story, "Madame Bovary." He thought that an irregular, fantastic, highly coloured prose was best suited to romance of an exotic character, and in this style he wrote his "Salammbô," which is a story of ancient Carthage; also his wonderful "Trois Contes," three short stories of extraordinary merit as literature. Finally he had an idea that dreams, visions, speculations, notions of the supernatural world, could best be treated in poetical prose; and he wrote his "Tentation de Saint Antoine" in the style of Baudelaire's prose poems. This is a wonderful book, in dramatic form; all the gods, all the religions, all the philosophies that ever existed in the world appear in it, each being described in an utterance of a few lines, like a strain of music. Besides these books, Flaubert wrote a number of novels, not so good. His great novel, "L'Éducation Sentimentale," is not readable; it is a tiresome failure. But his "Bouvard et Pécuchet," the most terrible satire upon human folly ever written since the days of Jonathan Swift, is worth reading, and if read, it can never be forgotten. Bouvard and Pécuchet are two bachelors of means, who resolved to pass their lives in the endeavour to master some science, and to make people as happy as possible. One after another, medicine, law, botany, and other sciences are studied and abandoned, because the deeper problems underlying the sciences are never properly treated by the teachers of them, and because of the hypocrisy and sham connected with them. As for trying to make people happy, their experiences with the adoption of a child and some adventures with the other sex cure them of their faith in the goodness of human nature. Though no book was ever more funny to read, no book was ever written which leaves so sad an impression upon the reader.

The greatest followers of Flaubert in his attempt at a

fantastic style were the eccentric novelists known as the brothers Goncourt. These men dealt chiefly with the lives of artists; and in that direction their "tormented style" seems to harmonize a little with the subject. But they carried it to such an extravagant extent that they sometimes became unintelligible. The great novelist, Alphonse Daudet, often compared with the English Dickens, though he might be more justly compared with Thackeray, was also considerably influenced by Flaubert. At this period novelists began to swarm; I need not mention more names because I am only tracing the history of a movement. But in approaching the third and last period of French nineteenth century literature, I may call your attention to the remarkable fact that the great romantic Flaubert was the literary father of the greatest realist who ever lived, greater even than Mérimée—Guy de Maupassant. This is good proof of Flaubert's value as a teacher. He understood in what direction the young man's strength lay, and he bade him cultivate that. Regularly, for years, Maupassant used to bring him work to criticize, and as regularly Flaubert insisted that the work should be thrown into the fire. One knows not whether to admire more the patient severity of the master or the heroic submission of the pupil. The result justified the means.

And now while speaking of that result, a word about another movement in the direction of realism. Its chief apostle, Zola, called it "Naturalism." It had really no other father, and no other really great representative. Zola's theory was that life should be depicted exactly as it is, not only with natural truth, but with scientific truth; and that all the things which it is usually called wrong to write about, ought to be written about without shame. He pretends to follow the scientific method of Comte, which is not really a true scientific method; but what he did follow with more success was the scientific teaching of inherited character. Like Balzac, he conceived a vast series of novels, each of them forming a chapter in the history of a simple family,

Les Rougon-Macquart; and he showed how the result of some one vice in the life of an ancestor spread moral and physical misery through the lives of generations. No matter what critics may say—justly say—about Zola's immorality, filthiness, shamelessness, there can be no question of his genius. He is a very great artist. But he is a great artist not because he is a realist, or a naturalist, as he wished to be called; he is a great artist because in spite of all his theories, he is really a romantic—a man whose imagination is enormous and lurid, and perceives in exaggerated form all the horrible side of human existence. He is a romancer of vice, of foulness, of selfishness, of all the cruel passions and beastly follies that civilization produces. His realism lies only in the fact that he uses notes as they never were used before. For example, in one novel he tells about everything in the life of railways, everything about engines, about coaling, about the qualities of boilers used; in another novel he tells everything about the lives of boys and girls, men and women, working in a great dry-goods shop, and he explains all the thousand details of business. So far he taught realism, or at least realistic methods, even better than Charles Reade did in England. But he could not use his facts in a purely realistic way; his colossal imagination distorted and exaggerated. That was the reason why his followers—he once had a school—dropped away from him one after another. The naturalistic school is dead; only Zola lives, and he lives because of an individual genius which is not naturalistic at all. At one time Maupassant wrote under his direction, producing two or three marvelous stories that astonished the world. Everybody saw that Maupassant was greater than Zola; but everybody said, "This is not naturalism, this is realism; this brings us back to the days of Prosper Mérimée." Very soon Maupassant left the shadow of Zola, and worked for himself, and became the greatest story-teller that the European world has ever seen.

I have spoken of Maupassant before; you know that he

represents the purest realism and the simplest style. You have seen that the movement in France of prose has been a good deal like the movement in England. If we except the extreme forms in French prose—the prose poetry of Baudelaire and the so-called naturalism of Zola—the movements are very much alike. In both countries two kinds of prose struggled for the mastery, the ornate kind and the simple kind. In both countries the great masters have proved that with a simple style all the effects of an ornate style can be produced. In both countries the tendency seems to be toward sobriety of style. But the French remain a little in advance of the more conservative English; they have learned the teaching of Flaubert. That teaching, put into its simplest form, is this: “Change your style to suit your subject.” Undoubtedly his advice represents the ultimate truth, which Englishmen must accept at a later day. The same kind of style does not suit all possible subjects. Every style has a particular relative value of its own; and the efforts of different schools, even the follies and extravagances of them, have been of lasting service to the evolution of literary knowledge.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PROSE OF SMALL THINGS

THERE can be no doubt that in spite of what is called the "tyranny of fiction" the novel is slowly dying, and changing shape. There will be some new form of novel developed, no doubt, but it must be something totally different from the fiction which has been tyrannizing over literature for nearly a hundred years. Also poetry is changing; and the change is marked here, much more than it is in fiction, by a period of comparative silence.

Our business to-day is chiefly with prose; but some of the remarks which I shall have to make will also apply to poetry. A branch of literature dies only when the subject has been exhausted—at least this is the rule under natural conditions. What subjects have been exhausted in English literature to such a degree that further treatment of them has become impossible, or seemingly impossible? It is an interesting question, and will repay attention.

First of all we should remember that literature has its fashions, like everything else. Some fashions live but for a season, just like some particular fashion in dress. But there are other fashions or habits which last for very long periods,—just as the custom of wearing silk or wool, irrespective of the shape of the garments, may last for hundreds of years or even longer. We are apt, on account of the length of time during which certain literary customs last, to imagine them much more natural and indispensable than they really are. The changes now likely to take place in English literature are not changes in the form of the garment, so much as changes in the material of which the garment is to be made. But so long has this material been

used that many of us have been accustomed to think of the substance as literature itself, and as indispensable to literary creation.

To illustrate better what I mean let me ask you to think for a moment about what has most strongly impressed you as making a great difference between Western literatures generally and your own. You will understand at once that I am not speaking of form. When you read English poetry or fiction, French poetry or fiction, German poetry or fiction, and I might say drama as well, the impression you receive has a certain strangeness, a certain tone in it particularly foreign; and in every case or nearly every case this tone is about the same. Am I not right in suggesting that the sense of strangeness which you receive from foreign literature is particularly owing to the way in which the subject of sex-relations is treated in all literature of the West? Love has been the dominant subject throughout Western literature for hundreds of years, and that is why I think you feel that literature especially foreign to your own habits of thinking and feeling.

But the very fact that you do so find this difference, ought to have suggested to you that, after all, there must be something unnatural, artificial, in this passionate element of Western verse. Human character and human feeling are not essentially different on opposite sides of the world. The fundamental sentiments of society are everywhere pretty nearly the same, because they are based upon very nearly the same kinds of moral and social experience. If the descendant of one civilization finds something extremely different in the thinking and acting of the descendant of another civilization, he has a right to suppose that the difference is really a difference of custom. And customs must change just like fashions.

Fifty years ago — no, even twenty-five years ago — it would have been considered almost absurd to say that the subject of love in European literature was only a passing thing, a fashion, a custom assuredly destined to give place

to some other kind of material. Scholars and sociologists would have cried out in astonishment, and talked about the literatures of Greece and Rome, as testifying to the contrary. Even now there are many people who imagine that love must be eternally the theme of literature. But the greater thinkers, the men of to-day who can see, do not hesitate to declare that it is passing away. It was only a very, very old fashion.

Indeed, if you think about the history of English literature as it is now understood—and that is to say, about the history of European literature in general—you will find that the subject of love has not always been the dominant note, by any means. The earliest literature had very little to do with the subject at all; the old Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose, for example, dealt chiefly with heroic and sacred subjects. The Anglo-Norman literature touched the matter very sparingly indeed; and the great epic of the French conquerors, the *Song of Roland*, is remarkable for the fact that there are scarcely five lines in it with regard to the fair sex. But one incident of a tender character is mentioned—the death of the betrothed of Roland when she hears of the hero's fate. It was not until the time of the mediæval romances that the subject of love began to blossom and grow in European literature—so that, after all, the fashion is only some hundreds of years old. When the erotic literature began in earnest with the great singing period of Elizabeth, the inspiration was chiefly taken from the Latin and the Greek poets; it was not of the modern races at all, but was a renaissance from the past. What we call the Renaissance feeling accounted very much for the erotic literature between the Elizabethan period and the Classical period—the eighteenth century 'Augustan Age,' when the subject was considerably chilled in treatment by a new sense of the importance of restraint. But this tendency to restraint soon yielded before the charm of the freshly invented novel, and from the days of Richardson to our own, the dominant subject in English literature again became love. You see that

throughout the past it was not always the dominant note by any means. It was a fashion—and it is now passing away.

As a matter of fact the subject is entirely exhausted, all through Europe. Such branches of erotic literature as could not be exhausted in England, owing to the particular character of the race, have been entirely exhausted in France, in Italy, and elsewhere. The world has become tired of love-stories and tired of love-poetry. The story-tellers and the poets of the future will have to find other and higher subjects.

But what subjects? Almost every subject has been exhausted in fiction. No mortal man could now invent a new plot, or tell a story that has not been told before. It is true that every year hundreds of novels are published, but all of them are but repetitions of what has been told before. The only thing that the writer now can do is to make recombinations with old material; and even the possibility of such combinations has now become almost exhausted.

The men most competent to make a prediction do not seem to be inclined to predict what is going to happen. Professor Saintsbury frankly says he does not know, but he has faith in the genius of the English race and language to produce something new. Professor Dowden also says that he does not know, but he thinks there is going to be a new literature and that philosophy will have much to do with it. Professor Gosse is the only one who speaks out boldly. He thinks that the novel will become impossible except by the method of Zola, which consists in describing within a single volume some whole branch of industry, art or commerce. But the method of Zola could be adopted only by some man of extraordinary working strength, as well as genius, and even such subjects as Zola's method deals with must eventually become exhausted. There is the psychological novel; but the example of George Meredith has shown that it has no chance of ever becoming popular. Fiction in the old sense is probably doomed, or will be restricted to the short

story. As for poetry, that will leave the subject of love almost alone, and will chiefly interest itself with the higher emotional life. In other words, we are to have a new psychological poetry. These views of Mr. Gosse are very interesting, but I cannot take the time to talk about his arguments in favour of them. I am only anxious that you should recognize the opinion of the great critics in regard to this probability—first, that love will not be the subject of the future prose or the future poetry, and secondly, that the higher emotional life will almost certainly take the place formerly given to the passional life.

It may seem like the waste of a great many words to tell all this about what is still supposititious. But if any of you hope to make literature your profession, it is above all things necessary that you should be prepared to follow the tendency of the age. Any man of letters who strives against the natural current of change will almost certainly be wrecked in consequence. Any book produced, no matter how well written, which can be classed with the productions of a dead school by its thought and feeling, will soon be forgotten. Moreover, in your private reading it is very, very essential to read in modern directions. Indeed, among many great educators of to-day it is a matter for regret that so much attention is given exclusively to the literature of past centuries, because that literature in sentiment and imagination is foreign to our own time, notwithstanding the beauty of its expression.

In future prose, two fields are certainly sure to find much cultivation—the field of the essay, and the field of the sketch. You are aware that during the nineteenth century the essay and the sketch have been much less cultivated in England than in France; and the reason is that writers of essays and sketches could not possibly compete with the writers of novels. The novel practically crushed the essay. It was as if an immense mass of rocks had been thrown down upon a grassy field; in order that the grass and flowers could bloom again, it was necessary that the pressure should

be removed. And it is likely to be removed very soon. The more speedily the novel decays, the more the essay and the sketch will come again into blossom and favour. Slight as such literature may seem to the superficial eye, it is really far more durable and much more valuable than fiction, in the majority of cases. A single fine essay may live for thousands of years—witness the little essays by Cicero, now translated into all languages, and studied everywhere for their beauty of expression and thought.

As for the sketch, I think it has a very great future; even now it is able to struggle a little against a novel. By the word sketch I mean any brief study in prose which is either an actual picture of life as seen with the eyes, or of life as felt with the mind. You know that the word strictly means a picture lightly and quickly drawn. A sketch may be a little story, providing it keeps within the world of fact and sincere feeling. It may take the form of a dialogue between two persons, providing that the conversation recorded makes for us a complete dramatic impression. It might be a prose-monologue, inspired by the experience of some country or town. It might be only a record of something seen, but so well seen that, when recorded, it is like a water-colour. In short, the sketch may take a hundred forms, a thousand forms, and it offers the widest possible range for the expression of every literary faculty. You may exercise your utmost power in reflection, in description, or in emotional expression, within the limits of the sketch. Of course the sketch ought to be short; but the charm of the form is that there is no rule about how short. You may make a sketch of only fifty lines, or you can make a sketch ten or twelve pages long. I do not think that a purely literary sketch ought to represent in print more than from ten to sixteen pages. But there is no rule.

There is something more to say about the importance to you of studying this branch of literature, of exercising yourself in the production of it. Remember that we are living in a very busy age, in which the opportunity for leisurely

literary work can come to but few. No matter how rich a man may be, the new exigencies of social existence will not allow him to enjoy the patient dreamy life of the past. In a century full of hurry, where every man is expected to do more than three men would have been asked to do some fifty years ago, it is much more easy and profitable to attempt brief forms of literature than long ones. Neither will the writers of a future generation have any reason to fear the competition between short and lengthy works of literary art, for the great public, no less than the literary classes, will certainly become tired of lengthy productions; their preference will be given to works of small compass which can be read in intervals of leisure.

I have said so much about the sketch for two reasons. One is that, unlike the essay, its value does not necessarily depend upon scholarship or philosophical capacity. The other reason is that it happens to be one of those few forms of literature in which Japan can hold her own with Western countries. Judged by recent translations, the old Japanese sketch, as I should call it, might be very favourably compared with the same class of work in England and France, and not suffer much by comparison. And yet the Japanese language, the written language, was at that time far inferior to Western languages as a medium of expression. The fact is that the literature of the sketch depends for its merit a great deal upon what has nothing to do with ornate style; it depends upon good thinking and sincere feeling. Critics have said that neither Japanese drama nor Japanese fiction can compare with Western fiction and drama. Whether they are right or wrong I leave you to judge. But if any critic should say that the Japanese sketch cannot compare with the same kind of literature abroad, he would prove himself incompetent. This kind of literature seems to be exactly suited to the genius of the language as well as to the genius of the national character; and in an age when the sketch is again likely to make for itself a great place in European literature, it would be well to give all

possible attention to its cultivation in Japanese literature.

Of course I need not further insist upon the difference between the sketch—which always should be something of a picture—and the essay, which requires exact scholarship and is rather an argument or analysis than anything else. But since a sketch may at times be narrative, it is quite necessary that you should be able to distinguish between a sketch and an anecdote, which is also narrative. The anecdote proper is simply the record of an incident, without any emotional or artistic detail. This kind of composition lends itself to humour, especially, and therefore we find that a great proportion of what we call anecdotes in English literature are of the humorous kind. It does not require any psychological art or descriptive power to tell a short funny story. Such a story ordinarily is not a sketch. But in those rare cases where a humorous story is told from the psychological point of view, so as to make the reader share all the emotions of the experience, then the narrative of incident may rise to the dignity of the sketch. A good example is furnished by the late English poet, Frederick Locker, whose prose is scarcely less delicate than his verse, and very much the same in tone. He has told us about a little experience of his, which we must call a sketch because it is very much more than an anecdote. It is simply his own account of a blunder which he made in the house of an aristocratic friend, by upsetting a bottle of ink upon a magnificent carpet. You see the happening is nothing at all in itself; but the way in which it is told, the way in which the feelings of the writer are conveyed to the reader, is admirable. I cannot quote it all, nor would you readily understand some of the allusions to English customs. But a few extracts will show you what I mean. He first describes his reception at the house of his friends, by the maidservant; for the friends were not at home. He introduces us to the servant:*

“This hand-maid was past her giddy youth, but had

* Frederick Locker, *Patchwork*, pp. 47—52, “My Guardian Angel.”

not nearly arrived at middle age. Some people might have called her comely, and some attractive; *I* found her anything but cordial; in fact, she had a slightly chilling manner, as if she was not immensely pleased to see me, and would not break her heart if she never saw me again. However, in I walked, and was taken to a drawing-room."

This is only light fun; but we understand from it exactly the somewhat hard character of the girl and the uncomfortable feelings of the visitor. The author goes on to describe the room in a few bright sentences, each of which is a suggestive drawing. The visitor decides then to pass his waiting time in writing some poetry; and he looks for an inkstand. At last he finds one—an immense glass inkstand—of which he draws a picture for us. As he tries to lift up the inkstand by the top, the upper part breaks away from the lower part, and over the magnificent carpet pours the ink. And now the visitor, author of this awful mischief, finds himself obliged to be very, very humble to that servant-girl whom at first he spoke of so scornfully:

"Can you conceive my feelings? I spun around the room in an agony. I tore at the bell, then at the other bell, then at both the bells, then I dashed into the library and rang the bells there, and then back again to the drawing-room. The maid who had admitted me, came up almost immediately, looking as calm as possible, and when she saw the mischief, *she seemed, all at once, to rise to the gravity of the occasion.* She did not say a word—she did not even look dismayed—but, in answer to my frenzied appeal, she smiled and vanished. In the twinkling of an eye,* however, she was back again with hot water, soap, sponge, &c., and was soon mopping up the copious stains with a damp flannel, kneeling, and looking beautiful as she knelt.

"Then did I throw myself into a chair, exhausted with excitement, and, I may say agony of mind, and I exclaimed† to myself, 'Good heavens, if the blessed creature does really help me in this frightful emergency, I will give her a

* † Hearn's emendations for *In the twinkling of a bed-post*, and *I said*.

sovereign. It will be cheap at a sovereign; yes, she shall have 20 s.' ”

How well this is all told—the sudden respect which the visitor feels, in the moment of his humiliation, for the somewhat hard girl who alone can help him. And the first impulse which he has is of course to make her a handsome present. One pound, or ten yen, is a big present for a servant-girl. But we are only at the beginning of the psychological part of the story. As the girl sponges, gradually the stains upon the carpet disappear. It is a labour of twenty minutes, but it is successful. At last the stains entirely disappear, and the poet says that his Guardian Angel rise to her feet, and asks him with a quiet smile, as if it were all the most natural thing in the world, “if I should like to have a cup of tea.” So the agony is over. But the gratitude is not now quite so strong as at first. He now thinks that he must certainly give her fifteen shillings.

Presently his friends come back; and of course they tell him how terribly particular they are about their carpet. And he describes all the agitation which their remarks produce in his mind, with admirable humour. But the end of the story is this—

“I forgot to say that I presented my Guardian Angel with a handsome donation of five shillings. And this is the end of a true story.”

There is a fine little study of human nature here; and this study is what raises the narrative far above anecdote. The truth to actual life of the feelings described is unimpeachable. Probably every one of us has had the same waxing and waning of generous impulse—gratitude first impelling us to be too kind, and reason and selfishness combining later on to reduce the promised reward.

There is a comic sketch for you; it is trifling, of course, because the humorous side of things must always be trifling. But a trifling subject does not necessarily mean a trifling sketch. A philosopher can write about a broom-stick, and a really artistic sketch-writer can deal with almost any sub-

ject. One of the best sketch-writers, though not the best of modern times, was the great French novelist, Alphonse Daudet. Daudet is chiefly known through his novels; but that is only because it requires more than popular taste to appreciate his delightful little sketches. Now, talking about trifling subjects, what do you think of eating as a subject? Surely that is trifling enough. But a number of Daudet's sketches are all about eating; he made a series of them, each describing the memory relating to some one national dish eaten in a foreign country. I may attempt to indicate the character of the set, by roughly translating to you the sketch entitled "La Bouillabaisse," the name of a famous dish about which the English poet Thackeray wrote a very beautiful meditative poem. Here is an illustration of how two great artistic minds, though very differently constituted, can alike find inspiration in small and commonplace things.

"We were sailing along the Sardinian coast. It was early morning. The rowers were rowing very slowly; and I, leaning over the edge of the boat, looked down into the sea, which was as transparent as a mountain spring, and illuminated by the sun even to the very bottom. Jelly-fish and star-fish were visible among the weeds below. Immense lobsters were resting there motionless as if asleep, with their long horns resting upon the fine sand. And all this was to be seen at a depth of eighteen or twenty feet, in a queer artificial way that made one think of looking into a great aquarium of crystal. At the prow of the boat a fisherman, standing erect, with a long split reed in hand, suddenly made a sign to the rowers—*piano, piano!* (go softly—softly)—and suddenly between the points of his fishing-trident he displayed suspended a beautiful lobster, stretching out his claws in a fit of terror which showed that he was still imperfectly awakened. Beside me another boatman kept throwing his line on the surface of the water, in the wake of the boat, and continually brought up marvellous little fishes, which, in dying, took a thousand different shapes of changing colour. It was like an agony looked a through a prism.

“The fishing was over; we went on shore and climbed amongst the great high grey rocks. Quickly a fire was lighted—a fire that looked so pale in the great light of the sun!—large slices of bread were cut and heaped upon little plates of red earthenware; and there we took our places, seated, around the cooking pot, each with his plate held in readiness, inhaling with delight the odour of the cooking. . . . And was it the landscape—or the earth—or that great horizon of sky and water? I do not know, but I never in my life ate anything better than that lobster Bouillabaisse, and afterwards what a delightful siesta we had upon the sand!—our sleep still full of the rocking sensation of the sea, whose myriad little scale-flashings of light still seemed to be palpitating before our eyes.”

That is all, but it tells you all the feelings of one happy day, and the incidents, and the things heard and smelled and seen; and you cannot forget. That is the sketch in the very best meaning of the word. How short it is, and how bright. And Daudet has written a great many sketches. Perhaps you do not know that one of them, or a series of them, treat of Japanese subjects. In Paris Daudet made the acquaintance of Philipp Franz von Siebold, whose name is well known as a scientific explorer of Japan. Siebold was then trying to interest Napoleon III in the project of a great European commercial company, to be organized for the purpose of trading with Japan. Daudet was very much interested by Siebold, not in the commercial company which he was attempting to form, but in Japanese literature and art, of which scarcely anything was then known. Siebold especially delighted Daudet by stories of the Japanese theatre. “I will give you,” he said to Daudet, “a beautiful Japanese tragedy, called ‘The Blind Emperor’; we shall translate it together, and you will publish it in French, and everybody will be delighted.” Daudet wanted very much to do so. But at that time Siebold was seventy-two years of age, his memory a little weak, and his energies rapidly failing. He kept putting off the fulfilment of his promise,

up to the time when he left Paris for ever; and Daudet actually went to Germany after him, in order to get that Japanese tragedy. He found Siebold; and Siebold had the tragedy all ready, he said, to give him—but he died only the night after. So Daudet never got the tragedy. I wonder if there is any tragedy of that name.* But I was going to tell you that Daudet told his Siebold experiences in a series of delicious little sketches whose value happens to be quite independent of the existence of the tragedy. Perhaps you will not be uninterested in a free translation of the prose, which is touching. Daudet is describing the house of Siebold on the morning of his death.

“People were going in and coming out, looking very sad. One felt that in that little house something had happened, too much of a catastrophe for so small a house to contain, and therefore issuing from it, overflowing from it, like a source of grief. On arriving I heard sobs inside. It was at the end of the little corridor, the room where he was lying—a large room, encumbered and low-lighted like a class-room. I saw there a long table of plain white wood—heaps of books and manuscripts—a glass case containing collections—picture-books bound in embroidered silks; on the wall were hanging Japanese weapons, some prints, several large maps; and in the midst of all this disorder of travel and of study, the Colonel was lying in his bed with his long white beard descending over his dress, and his poor niece kneeling and weeping in a corner. Siebold had died suddenly in the night.

“I left Munich the same evening, not having the courage to intrude upon all that grief merely in order to gratify a literary whim; and that is how it happened that I never knew anything about the marvellous Japanese tragedy except its title, *l'Empereur Aveugle.*’ But since that time we had to see the performance of another tragedy to which that title might very well have been given—a terrible tragedy

* *Imoseyama* by Hanji Chikamatsu. Siebold saw it acted at Osaka, June 12. 1826.

full of blood and tears; and that was not a Japanese tragedy at all."

He is referring to the Franco-Prussian War and the folly of Napoleon III who caused it. It was Napoleon III who was really the blind emperor.

Altogether it may be said that the sketch is particularly French, as a special department of literature, and I think that it ought to become especially Japanese, because the genius of the race is in the direction of the sketch. But at present the best models to study are nearly all French. Daudet is but one of a host. Maupassant is another and a greater — many of his wonderful so-called stories being really sketches, not stories. For example, three of his compositions described three different things which he happened to see while travelling on a train. Incidents of human life thus seen and powerfully described, may have an emotional interest much greater than that of the average story; and yet we must not call them stories. Anatole France, perhaps the greatest French man of letters to-day, and Jules Lemaitre, the greatest living French critic, are both of them admirable sketch-writers, as well as story-tellers. The first great realistic attempt in this direction was probably that of Prosper Mérimée; and Flaubert carried the method to great perfection. I spoke of these men before as story-tellers, not as sketch-writers. The best example of the sketch by Mérimée is the account of the storming of a fort, told by a soldier who was one of the storming party. As a sketch that has never been surpassed. But to-day in France there are published every month hundreds of sketches, and a very considerable number of them are good. In England the novel has been too popular to allow of the same development. But there are good English sketch-writers; and these are particularly noticeable in books of travel—for example, "Eothen," by Kinglake, the historian,—a little book entirely formed of exquisite sketches which will certainly live after Kinglake's historical work has been entirely forgotten.

Of course this book is representative only of the travel-sketch—a kind apart. Now there is one thing to notice about the conservatism of English literary feeling, as compared to the French, in regard to the sketch. In England a volume of sketches will be favourably considered only upon condition that the sketches be consecutive—that they figure in one series of events, or that they all have some other form of interconnection. Thus the little book of travel by Kinglake and the travel-sketches by Stevenson depended much for their popularity upon the fact that they were all upon kindred subjects, and strung together by a train of narrative. This is true even of the older sketch work in England—that of Thackeray; that of the famous Dr. Brown of Edinburgh, who wrote the delicious book about the feelings and thoughts of a little girl; that of the eighteenth century sketch-writers of the school of Addison and Steele. But it is quite different with French work. The French artist of to-day can make a volume of sketches no one of which has the least relation to the other; and his work is never criticized upon that score. All that is insisted upon is the quality of the production; each sketch should be a complete work of art in itself. This being the case, it is of no more importance whether the sketches be related to each other than whether the paintings in a picture gallery happen all to be on the same subject. This freedom will certainly be enjoyed later on by men of letters—that is the tendency. But there is still a great deal of foolish conservatism, and writers like Kipling, who attempt to make sketches the material of their books, are judged to have broken the literary canons unless the sketches have some connection between them.

As I have said before, the various capabilities of the sketch cannot be properly suggested without some illustrative fragments; and I must quote one or two examples more. The humorous sketch, the little sketch of incident, the little sketch of memory—the memory of acquaintanceship or travel—we have noticed. You can easily imagine a

hundred kinds of each. But I have not yet said anything about another kind of sketch which is now likely to come into fashion—the sketch of psychological impressions. It must be interesting, even if scientific; and it may be both. The best usually are. American literature first gave strong examples of work in this particular direction—that is, in English literature proper. But it is significant that Dr. Holmes, the pioneer in it, studied a long time in France, and, though no imitator, he was no doubt much influenced by the best quality of French sketch work. Then again, his training in science—first as a practising physician and afterwards as a professor of anatomy in a medical school—naturally inclined him to the consideration of matter altogether outside of the beaten tracks. Very slight happenings take, in such a mind, an importance which extends far beyond the range of the common mind. And his great book, “The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table,” now known wherever the English language is spoken, entirely consists of little sketches about very ordinary things considered in a very extraordinary way—for example, the mystery of the charm that exists in certain human voices. He hears a child speak, or a woman, and asks himself why the sweetness of the tone pleases so much—and tells us at the same time of memories which the voice awakens in his mind. We all have vague notions about these things, but we seldom try to define them. Indeed, it requires a very great talent to define them to any literary purpose. But listen to this:*

“There are sweet voices among us, we all know, and voices not musical, it may be, to those who hear them for the first time, yet sweeter to us than any we shall hear until we listen to some warbling angel in the overture to that eternity of blissful harmonies we hope to enjoy.—But why should I tell lies? . . . I never heard but two voices in my life that frightened me by their sweetness. . . . Yes, frightened me. They made me feel as if there might be constituted a creature with such a chord in her voice to some string in

* From *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, IX.

another's soul, that, if she but spoke, he would leave all and follow her, though it were into the jaws of Erebus. . . .

"Whose were those two voices that bewitched me so? They both belonged to German women. One was a chamber-maid, not otherwise fascinating. The key of my room at a certain great hotel was missing, and this Teutonic maiden was summoned to give information respecting it. The simple soul was evidently not long from her motherland, and spoke with sweet uncertainty of dialect. But to hear her wonder and lament and suggest with soft, liquid inflections, and low, sad murmurs, in tones as full of serious tenderness for the fate of the lost key as if it had been a child that had strayed from its mother, was so winning, that, had her features and figure been as delicious as her accents, — if she had looked like the marble Clytie, for example, — why, I should have drowned myself."

Why would he have drowned himself? Because, he tells us, in that case he would want to marry her; and if he had married her, it would have been a case of *mésalliance*, according to the rules of society to which he belonged,— and that would have made a great deal of unhappiness for both of them and for their children. And it would therefore have been better for the sake of future generations, as well as his own, that he should have drowned himself. But now let us hear him describe the other voice of another German woman:

"That voice had so much of *woman* in it, — *muliebrity*, as well as *femineity*; — no self-assertion, such as free suffrage introduces into every word and movement; large, vigorous nature, running back to those huge-limbed Germans of Tacitus, but subdued by the reverential training and tuned by the kindly culture of fifty generations." And he goes on to tell us no American woman could possibly have such a beautiful voice, because no American woman has had the cultured ancestors whose influences combined to make the sweetness of that voice. Remember that it is an American who is speaking — but he speaks the truth. He means that

in the voice of this lady there was at once sweetness and a strength that gave the impression of everything at once wifely and womanly, — of everything that is implied in the beautiful German term “mother soul” and of “centuries of habitual obedience and delicacy and desire to please.”

He has one more reminiscence to give us, about the voice of a child; and the experience is a painful one. It is not every doctor who can write of such a memory with such fine feeling.

“Ah, but I must not forget that dear little child I saw and heard in a French hospital. Between two and three years old. Fell out of her chair and snapped both thigh-bones. Lying in bed, patient, gentle. Rough students round her, some in white aprons, looking fearfully business-like; but the child was placid, perfectly still. I spoke to her, and the blessed little creature answered me in a voice of such heavenly sweetness, and with that reedy thrill in it which you have heard in the thrush’s even-song, that I seem to hear it at this moment, while I am writing, so many, many years afterwards. *C’est tout comme un serin*, (It is quite like a canary bird), said the French student at my side.”

He goes on to say that there was an old story to the effect that most human beings were devils, who were born for a respite into the state of men and women, and that considering the wicked side of human nature the story might seem true; but those who have heard certain sweet voices must be assured that all human beings have not been devils—and that some heavenly spirits must have been born among them, as by accident. This is a very pretty example of a little sketch of sensation. The whole book is made of dainty reflections and memories of this sort, interspersed with bits of arguments and conversation and commentary. However, the fact that all the parts are united by the thinnest possible thread of a story certainly helped the book to the great success which it obtained in conservative England.

Yet another kind of sketch work is that which offers us a picture of something very large within a very small space,

like a glimpse of the heavens by night, or the geographical configuration of a whole country. This can be done quite as certainly as it might be done in mosaic, or in very skilful painting, or by a coloured photograph. For example, Ruskin has described the whole of Italy in about half a page. Of course in order to do such a thing as this, complete knowledge of the subject, with all its details, must first be acquired; only then can we know how to make the great lines of the picture quite accurate and to give the proper sense of proportion. See how Ruskin does it. We all have in our minds a vague picture or idea of Italy. This helps us to collect and to define. It was not written originally as a sketch; but it is a sketch quite detached from its context, and altogether complete in itself.

“We are accustomed to hear the south of Italy spoken of as a beautiful country. Its mountain forms are graceful above others, its sea bays exquisite in outline and hue; but it is only beautiful in superficial aspect. In closer detail it is wild and melancholy. Its forests are sombre-leaved, labyrinth-stemmed; the carubbe, the olive, laurel, and ilex, are alike in that strange feverish twisting of their branches, as if in spasms of half human pain:—Avernus forests; one fears to break their boughs, lest they should cry to us from the rents; the rocks they shade are of ashes, or thrice-molten lava; iron sponge whose every pore has been filled with fire. Silent villages, earthquake shaken, without commerce, without industry, without knowledge, without hope, gleam in white ruin from hillside to hillside; far-winding wrecks of immemorial walls surround the dust of cities long forsaken: the mountain streams moan through the cold arches of their foundations, green with weed, and rage over the heaps of their fallen towers. Far above, in thunder-blue serration, stand the eternal edges of the angry Apennine, dark with rolling impendence of volcanic cloud.”*

There is here not merely a suggestion of beauty seen far away and of ghastliness seen near at hand but also

* *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Pt. IX, Ch. IV, § 12.

suggestions of old mythology, old Greek primal settlements on the Italian coasts, old cataclysms, old decay of wealth and commerce—in short, suggestions about everything characteristic of the modern state of the country. To produce this kind of work one must know imagination does not help us. The sentences each and all represent successive personal experience. From the first example which I gave you to the last there is a range of extraordinary possibility. The very simplest power may here be contrasted with the very greatest. I think we did well to begin with the playful and end with the majestic. All these are possible within the compass of the sketch.

Now I may close with a brief suggestion about a modern tendency in the literature of the sketch. It is not my own; I found it the other day in the work of the greatest sketch-writer at present living—in the work of that wonderful French author who has given an account of what he saw on the way to Peking, after the late war.* He describes a great many things too horrible even to mention in a lecture, and many very touching things, and many strange things; and the general effect of the book is to leave in the reader's mind a very great feeling of regret and sympathy for China. In spite of the weather and the horrors, and difficulties of many kinds, he was able to visit the great memorial temple of Confucius, and to give us wonderful pictures representing every part of it. Now the most impressive thing was a sentence inscribed upon some tablets in one of the rooms there—in inscribed from very ancient time; and it was translated to him as signifying these words: "The literature of the Future will be the literature of Pity." Very probably the effect of reading this ancient prophecy was greatly increased by the previous experiences of the writer, who had passed out of the waste of horrors and death, and absence of all pity, out of the plains where dogs were devouring the dead, into that solemn quietude, where the tablet was suspended. I do not know

* That of the Boxers' agitation, 1900.

whether the translation would be questioned by scholars or not. But if the rendering of the characters was correct, that old Chinese prophecy about the future of literature certainly startles us by its truth. That is the tendency of the best thought and the best feeling of this literary age in the West. The literature of the future will be the literature of pity—pity in the old Roman sense, and in the old Greek sense, which did not mean contempt mixed with pity, but pure sympathy with all forms of human suffering. I think that the modern word “humanity” would best express what the Greeks meant by pity. Now the kind of writing which has been the subject of this lecture is especially suited to the Literature of Pity. It is by giving to the world little pictures of life and thought and feeling, joy and sorrow, gladness and gloom, that the average mind can best be awakened to a final sense of what the age most profoundly needs—the sense of unselfish sympathy. And here we may end our lecture on the Sketch.

CHAPTER XXIX

A KING'S ROMANCE

THERE belongs to the history of fifteenth century English literature a very pretty story not to be found in literary text books, but important to know, because thousands of references are made to it year after year. The story is the story of a king's love, written by himself in a book well known to scholars, but scarcely known at all to the public, and entitled "The King's Quhair." This extraordinary word is only a corruption of a French word of which you know the modern form *cahier* very well. So the title means, "The King's Copy-book, or Writing-book."

This king was James I of Scotland, the son of king Robert III; and the story begins about the year 1402. Scotland was at that time in a very strange condition indeed. The country was almost without civilization; and its fierce people were divided into a number of clans which were perpetually at war with each other. Every clan had its chief; each chief had power of life and death over his people; and each clansman considered himself bound to obey only to his chief, and nobody else except God. As a matter of fact, the clansman did not even obey God. Much less did he obey his king, except when it seemed to him to his interest to do so. Besides being at war with England perpetually, and at war with each other, the clans would occasionally even make war against their king, when he tried to enforce his authority. This had been the way from very ancient times. Really the king was only the greatest of a number of feudal princes, and had never been strong enough—except in time of war against a common enemy—to enforce his authority. Such had been the condition when

England was under Roman rule; and the Romans did not try to conquer the Scotch, whom they called Picts: it would have been too difficult an undertaking. They simply built a great wall, like the wall of China, right across the northern part of England to defend themselves against the terrible mountaineers. Part of this wall still exists. The Norsemen were more successful; they established themselves along the Scotch coast and the outlying islands, and then shrewdly made friends with the Scotch and intermarried with them. For a time Northern rule welded the Scotch into a single people; but the primitive natural tendency soon reasserted itself, and the clans resumed their original savage independence of action. They could unite only for war against the English; and the English never succeeded in conquering them. There were some things in the social system of the Scotch—fine things—which remind us of conditions in feudal Japan. If they had not the refinement of Japanese civilization, they had at least some of its virtues. One of these was a loyalty of the most absolute and self-sacrificing kind to their chiefs. Another was irreproachable courage in battle; and you may be interested to know that the Scotch weapon of war,—even into the seventeenth century,—was the sword, used with both hands, very long and heavy. Many times a force of Scotch mountaineers, even without their arms, were able to defeat and to cut to pieces an invading force. The last example occurred in the time of Dr. Johnson, who was so moved by it that he actually wrote a Latin poem on the subject.

But in spite of these virtues, the Scotch were otherwise a very rude people in the year 1402. Their previous kings had been mostly unfortunate; and when the father of James I was about to ascend the throne, he determined to change his real name, because he thought it unlucky. His real name was John. But there had been so many unfortunate kings of that name in different countries, that he thought it would be better to call himself Robert; and he began his reign as Robert III. His family name was Stuart. Mis-

fortune, however, continued to pursue him through his whole life; and when he died, there was engraved upon his tomb at his own request the words "Here lies the most unfortunate of kings."

Now we come to our story proper. While King Robert was yet alive, he found that the lives of his own children were in danger by the jealousy of his own relatives, and by the political ambition of the clans. His own brother got one of the children into his power, and starved the boy to death. Other ill-fortune further diminished the king's household. In 1402 he had but one boy left, James; and he became so frightened lest somebody should kill James, that he put the boy into a monastery under the care of a pious bishop, rather than keep him at home in the palace, where he might have been poisoned at any moment. For some years the lad remained in the monastery; but then the king began to be afraid that means would be found to kill him even in the monastery—therefore he resolved to send him to France in 1405; accordingly the boy took passage aboard a ship for France, after many tender farewells with his father. But the king's enemies had been on the watch. They sent word overland to the English that the king's son had sailed for France; and an English ship attacked and captured the Scotch vessel, and brought the boy to England. The king of England at that time was Henry IV,—the strong usurper, not a man likely to be pitiful towards an enemy. He had the lad imprisoned in the Tower of London, and afterwards in different other places. James was not harshly treated;—he was not considered as a common, but as a princely captive, and his life was not without some pleasures and comforts. But he remained a prisoner for 19 years. He was a little boy when he entered England; he was a well grown man before he obtained his liberty.

In the Tower, and in other prisons, he had a comfortable room, with permission to exercise himself as much as he pleased in the garden of the castle, under guard. Also he was allowed books to read. There were plenty of books, con-

sidering that it was the fifteenth century—books in manuscript mostly; but what a delight to a prisoner! There was Chaucer, whose English is now almost impossible to read without a glossary; but the language of Chaucer was at that time the language of James. There were also many translations from the Latin authors. There were French romances of the kind we should now find enormously prolix and tiresome; but they were not tiresome in that age. Then there were the wonderful book, “Gesta Romanorum”, which we still read with delight. And there were the poems of Gower,—the great successor of Chaucer.

Next to books, the greatest comfort of solitude is music; and the prisoner was furnished with musical instruments, which privilege must have been a very great pleasure for him. He had a natural taste for music, and had been taught to play a little while he was studying at the monastery in Scotland. Now in the prison, by constant practice, he made himself one of the most skilful players of his time. One of his chroniclers compares him to Orpheus; and behind the flattery we have reason to believe that there was a good deal of truth.

James was too vigorous a youth to be physically injured by imprisonment. He had inherited the great strength of the Scotch mountaineer; and instead of moping all day in his room, or fretting about his fate, he gave a great deal of his time to exercise,—riding (at which he became famous even in a country of horsemen), playing ball, throwing heavy weights, and developing his muscles in every possible way. Thus he converted his imprisonment into a long term of mental and physical education. By the time he became a man, he could hold his own with almost any knight in manly exercises as well as in other accomplishments.

Some of these accomplishments were of rare kind. The youth had a natural taste for poetry as well as for music; and he gave a part of his time of literary study to the composition of poetry. Chaucer’s work especially fired and influenced his imagination; but he had too much good

judgment and independence to make himself only an imitator of Chaucer. He had studied also many other forms of verse, and eventually, as we shall see, invented a form of his own which is still known to this day by the name of "Royal Rhyme" (*Rime Royal*),—because it was the royal poet who first imagined it.

So, many years passed; and he began to feel his imprisonment weighing more upon him. From home he learned that his father had died of grief after hearing of his son's imprisonment. He also heard of many wicked things that his wicked uncle had been doing. Presently also he had news from other directions, brought to him by fellow-prisoners; for at Windsor, his most agreeable place of imprisonment, he was allowed to have companions. One of these companions was the French prince Charles of Orleans, who had been at the terrible battle of Agincourt, where the flower of the French army was destroyed by a small determined band of Englishmen. This was bad news for James—since France was the friend of Scotland. And other bad news was given to him by the son of a Welsh prince, kept as a hostage. England had everywhere triumphed; and Scotland was in a state of hopeless disorder. But James felt that he must have patience, and wait for his time. He tried to keep from thinking about misfortune, by reading and writing and self-training of all kinds.

Yet he found this, all of a sudden, become a little more difficult than formerly. Other things were entering his mind with his advent to manhood. Dreams of women and of love were beginning to haunt him. Hitherto he had only had men for companions. Of women he knew absolutely nothing except what he had been reading in books. But these women of the romances and the poems, how adorable they were! If he could only become the happy lover of some such lady, he would be willing to give up everything for the privilege—except his duty to his country. And he would never treat the woman whom he loved unkindly—no, not even by one cross-word. He would be always her

devoted knight, and love to the very end of his existence just as truly as on the day of betrothal.

These were his fancies; but they were not fancies likely to make a prisoner happy. He was wishing exactly for the one thing that his position as well as his rank rendered impossible. He could not marry; he could not even talk to ladies; he was a prisoner.

It was his custom to get up very early in the morning, in order to enjoy the pleasure of seeing the early sunrise from the window of his room. One morning, as he opened the window and looked out, he felt such a shock of pleasure and surprise as he had never experienced before. There, in the garden, under his window, in the first gold-light of the sun, stood a being that more than realized all his dreams and wishes. Not even any of the ladies sung by Chaucer, could have been half so beautiful. Was she really a woman,—or a fairy,—or a dream? He did not know until she looked up the window, and smiled at him. Then, after picking a few flowers in the garden, she turned and went away—he could not tell where; leaving him absolutely enamoured and utterly bewildered.

Really James had seen a very beautiful girl—though he may have imagined her more beautiful than she was. She was only a visitor at Windsor. Her name was Jeanne de Beaufort, according to the aristocratic French form of the original name: in plainer English Jane Beaufort;—and she was a niece of King Henry IV—the same terrible king that had been keeping James in prison. She was accomplished, amiable, and of strong character notwithstanding—just the girl for a king's wife. She belonged to the great family of Lancaster; and one of her grand-nephews was to become Henry VII. But the house of Lancaster was not lucky. During nearly one hundred years all the male representatives of that house had either been killed in battle, or executed upon the scaffold. Jane herself was not to be altogether happy.

The king had been, nevertheless, fortunate in his choice.

The next thing to do was to make his love known to the object of it. But how? Between himself and the rest of the world were the walls of his prison, and guards set to watch his movements. Doubtless, also, so beautiful a person as the woman he had seen must have already many admirers; and his rivals would be no common men—but princes, dukes, and barons of high degree. Yet there was one chance for him—that she might approve of him as a man, and that his kingship would offset the claims of other adorers. Full of courage in a situation that would have made other men despair, he quietly sat down to make known to the unknown lady his hopes and fears in the form of a poem. He had read that the troubadours did such things; he had read also about kings in prison—like Richard I of England—composing and singing poems. He thought that he could do perhaps a little better than these singers of long ago, because he had studied Chaucer. Chaucer would inspire him; and he wrote his poem in imitation of Chaucer—all in stanzas of seven lines each.

As a matter of fact he really surpassed Chaucer. Chaucer never wrote anything so tender, so pretty as some of this king's verses. Chaucer had written wonderfully natural pen-pictures of persons and places,—of character and contrasts of character; but Chaucer never had the deep strength of affection which belonged to James. In some respects we may say that the king's poem was the very finest composition of its kind that appeared in English before the age of Elizabeth.

The poem begins with an account of James' early misfortunes, capture, and imprisonment. Then he tells of his life in confinement; the ways in which he tried to occupy his time and forget his sorrow. Then he speaks of the first enchanting vision of the young lady in the garden of Windsor Castle; and this is very beautiful indeed. He asks her, in a burst of song,—

“Ah! sweet, are ye a worldly creature,
Or heavenly thing in form of nature?”

He envies the little pet dog that he saw trotting after her, with a bell round its neck. When she vanished, he says that the world became dark for him. He remained at his window thinking. Sleep came to him; and in a dream he ascended to heaven to ask the help of the gods in obtaining the love of the charming creature that he had seen. Naturally he goes first to the court of Queen Venus—as poets of the Middle Ages were wont to call the goddess of love. He gives a very curious description of Venus and of her attendants, according to the imagination of his time; and he makes some amusing mythological mistakes, quite in keeping with the imperfect scholarship of the century. But the whole effect is quaintly pretty to an astonishing degree. Venus says in answer to his prayer, that she will help him on condition that he promises to be a very faithful lover—and never to cause pain or sorrow to his lady. She also tells him that he must take an oath to this effect before the goddess of wisdom, Minerva;—and then we have a description of Minerva, very amusing and mediæval—the goddess replying to the king's words by quoting from "The Proverbs of Solomon" and other parts of the Bible. The thing is a medley of ancient and mediæval beliefs and fancies,—somewhat as Tennyson's "Princess" is a medley. Next the king visits the terrible goddess of Fortune, who receives him with every kindness, and assures him that she is going to make him truly a king, by restoring him to the throne of his fathers. (This was James' delicate way of hinting to the lady of his love that she might become a queen by marrying him.) At last the dreamer returns from heaven to earth, and finds himself in a wonderful garden,—full of beautiful flowers of strange forms, and watered by streams of crystal in which are swimming marvellous fish with scales of rubies and gold. Is it a fairy garden? No, it is only the garden of Windsor Castle; but it seems a very garden of Eden, because it was here that he saw first the lady of his heart. Suddenly a white dove brings him in its beak a little branch covered with leaves and flowers; and he finds that there are

characters upon the leaves which he can read. These characters suggest that all his desires will be fulfilled; the dove was a messenger from his beloved.

So much for the poem. It was placed in the hands of the fair one for whom it had been written; and the wished-for message, imagined in the poem, was really sent to the prisoner—not by a dove, indeed, but by a letter from which James learned that the girl loved him and would marry. In one instant he had passed, as he says himself, “from hell to heaven.” In the year 1423, not long after the events here described, the English government was induced to release James. Of course the government had heard of his wooing, and approved of it. The lady was a woman of strong character; and it was believed that she could influence her husband, as king of Scotland, to keep peace with England—which actually she did. Immediately after leaving the prison James was married to his betrothed, and allowed to return to Scotland on promise of paying the sum of sixty thousand marks in gold. He paid down nine thousand, and agreed to pay the rest; several Scottish noblemen offering themselves as hostages for the discharge of the king's debt. It is, unfortunately, not to James' credit that this debt was never paid. It is one of a few stains upon his reputation for integrity.

Now comes the third and saddest part of the romance.

James was received in Scotland with great rejoicing, and was crowned king. His wife was liked, and shared all the honours of the position of her husband. The promises that he had made to her were never broken. James was the best of husbands and fathers; he was invariably kind and loving at home, and a more romantic marriage life could not be imagined. The affection lasted until death. But James at home and James abroad were two entirely different persons. This difference constitutes a peculiarity of the race to which the king belonged—the unfortunate race of the Stuarts.

Under all the courtliness, affection, grace, and affability which the king had been showing during his youth, was

concealed a character of iron, a will that would brook no opposition, and a courage that was as rash as it was great. You will remember what I told you of the condition of Scotland at the outset of this little lecture. One might have supposed that James would have at least acted with caution when called to govern so savage a people. But it was quite otherwise. From the outset James determined to do what none of his predecessors had been strong enough to do—to master the clans, and to centralize all the power of the country under himself. He established the first Scotch parliament—a parliament of chiefs; but the reason that he did it was in order that the heads of the clans should not only be obliged to obey the laws devised by the king, but also be obliged to pass those laws themselves. Then he set to work to put an end to civil war. Knowing the character of his countrymen, he believed that kindness would be mistaken for cowardice; and he attempted no conciliation. When chiefs disobeyed him, he had them killed, or put into prison without ceremony. He avenged all the wrongs that had been done to his family. He was sometimes quite unscrupulous in his methods of dealing with refractory princes—using treachery when force could not be used. Counts, barons, petty kings of clans—he hanged them all when they declined to obey. And he succeeded in forcing his will upon the country. But it was inevitable in such a country, where men cared much more for liberty than they feared death, that strong measures would be met by attempt at assassination. The king was not afraid, and not cunning enough to deal with certain types of men. Men that he should have killed he only imprisoned; and men that he only imprisoned, he ought to have killed. Only a genius of the highest order could have attempted what James attempted without being killed; and it is a wonder that he was able to live so long. A chief of the name of Graham, whom he had treated rather too severely, boldly sent him word that he intended to kill him at the first opportunity. The opportunity occurred at the time of

Christmas holidays, when the king was accustomed to visit a certain monastery, for the purpose of celebrating the season. James was warned that treachery was impending; but he paid no attention to the warning. He went to the monastery; and at midnight Graham forced his way to the king's room. The locks and bars had previously been stolen from the doors. A brave girl named Douglas, one of the queen's attendants, put her own arm into the iron rings through which the door bar used to be pushed, and endeavoured to hold the door against the men; but the bones of her arm were immediately broken to pieces, and the murderers attacked the king. Although he had no weapon and was undressed, he fought them naked for a long time, throwing them down as fast as they approached him—for he was a great wrestler. But at last they wounded him in such a manner that he could not make further resistance and he fell covered with wounds. The queen in trying to protect him was herself wounded. It is a curious fact that in the king's poem, written so many years before, he had made a sort of prediction of the event, writing—

“Unto my help her heart hath tended
And even from death the man defended.”

Save him she could not; but she avenged him in the most terrible fashion long afterwards. This is the subject of Rossetti's Poem “The King's Tragedy”; and without knowing the story, you could not understand the poem.

In that poem we have Rossetti's own judgment of the king's composition:—

“And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,
He framed a sweeter Song,
More sweet than ever a poet's heart
Gave yet to the English tongue.”

That is before the sixteenth century. It is certainly noteworthy that the best poem of love, in the form of narrative, written between the beginnings of English literature and the age of Elizabeth should have been by a king in exile; and

that its beauty should have been but a natural reflection of the beauties of a character superior to its time and country. Should one read, without knowing the historical truth of the incident, such a romance as the romance of King James might well seem only imagined — a poetical fable — a bit of clever emotional literature. But truth is much more strange than fiction. In this case the truth remains in the king's own handwriting — in the manuscript of his poem, and in the strange little pictures which he drew, in colours and gold, representing the young girl who became his wife as he first saw her in the garden of Windsor, among birds and flowers: very slender and pretty, in the quaint dress of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ROMANCE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

THE value of romantic literature, which has been, so far as the Middle Ages are concerned, unjustly depreciated, does not depend upon beauty of words or beauty of fact. To-day the immense debt of modern literature to the literature of the Middle Ages is better understood; and we are generally beginning to recognize what we owe to the imagination of the Middle Ages, in spite of the ignorance, the superstition and the cruelty of that time. If the evils of the Middle Ages had really been universal, those ages could not have imparted to us lessons of beauty and lessons of nobility having nothing to do with literary form in themselves, yet profoundly affecting modern poetry of the highest class. No; there was very much of moral goodness, as well as of moral badness in the Middle Ages; and what was good happened to be very good indeed. Commonly it used to be said (though I do not think any good critic would say it now) that the fervid faith of the time made the moral beauty. Unless we modify this statement a great deal, we cannot now accept it at all. There was indeed a religious beauty, particularly mediæval, but it was not that which created the romance of the period. Indeed, that romantic literature was something of a reaction against the religious restraint upon imagination. But if we mean by mediæval faith only that which is very much older than any European civilization, and which does not belong to the West any more than to the East—the profound belief in human moral experience—then I think that the statement is true enough. At no time in European history were men more sincere believers in the value of certain virtues than during the

Middle Ages — and the very best of the romances are just those romances which illustrate that belief, though not written for a merely ethical purpose.

But I cannot better illustrate what I mean than by telling a story, which has nothing to do with Europe or the Middle Ages or any particular form of religious belief. It is not a Christian story at all; and it could not be told you exactly as written, for there are some very curious pages in it. But it is a good example of the worth that may lie in a mere product of imagination.

There was a king once, in Persia or Arabia, who, at the time of his accession to power, discovered a wonderful subterranean hall under the garden of his palace. In one chamber of that hall stood six marvellous statues of young girls, each statue being made out of a single diamond. The beauty as well as the cost of the work was beyond imagination. But in the midst of the statues, which stood in a circle, there was an empty pedestal, and on that pedestal was a precious casket containing a letter from the dead father of the king. The letter said:

“O my son, though these statues of girls are indeed beyond all praise, there is yet a seventh statue incomparably more precious and beautiful which I could not obtain before I died. It is now your duty, O my son, to obtain that statue, that it may be placed upon the seventh pedestal. Go, therefore, and ask my favourite slave, who is still alive, how you are to obtain it.” Then the young king went in all haste to that old slave, who had been his father’s confidant, and showed him the letter. And the old man said, “Even now, O master, I will go with you to find that statue. But it is in one of the three islands in which the genii dwell; and it is necessary, above all things, that you do not fear, and that you obey my instructions in all things. Also, remember that if you make a promise to the Spirits of that land, the promise must be kept.”

And they proceeded upon their journey through a great wilderness, in which “nothing existed but grass and the

presence of God." I cannot try now to tell you about the wonderful things that happened to them, nor about the marvellous boat, rowed by a boatman having upon his shoulders the head of an elephant. Suffice it to say that at last they reached the palace of the king of the Spirits; and the king came to meet them in the form of a beautiful old man with a long white beard. And he said to the young king, "My son, I will gladly help you, as I helped your father; and I will give you that seventh statue of diamond which you desire. But I must ask for a gift in return. You must bring to me here a young girl, of about 16 years old; and she must be very intelligent; and she must be a true maiden, not only as to her body, but as to her soul, and heart, and all her thoughts." The young king thought that was a very easy thing to find, but the king of the Spirits assured him that it was not, and further told him this, "My son, no mortal man is wise enough to know by his own wisdom the purity that is in the heart of a young girl. Only by the help of this magical mirror, which I now lend you, will you be able to know. Look at the reflection of any maiden in this mirror, and then, if her heart is perfectly good and pure, the mirror will remain bright. But if there be any fault in her, the mirror will grow dim. Go now, and do my bidding."

You can imagine, of course, what happened next. Returning to his kingdom, the young king had brought before him many beautiful girls, the daughters of the noblest and highest in all the cities of the land. But in no case did the mirror remain perfectly clear when the ghostly test was applied. For three years in vain the king sought; then in despair he for the first time turned his attention to the common people. And there came before him on the very first day, a rude man of the desert, who said, "I know of just such a girl as you want." Then he went forth and presently returned with a simple girl from the desert, who had been brought up in the care of her father only, and had lived with no other companion than the members of

her own family and the camels and horses of the encampment. And as she stood in her poor dress before the king, he saw that she was much more beautiful than any one whom he had seen before; and he questioned her, only to find that she was very intelligent; and she was not at all afraid or ashamed of standing before the king, but looked about her with large wondering eyes, like the eyes of a child; and whoever met that innocent gaze, felt a great joy in his heart, and could not tell why. And when the king had the mirror brought, and the reflection of the girl was thrown upon it, the mirror became much brighter than before, and shone like a great moon.

There was the maid whom the Spirit-king wished for. The king easily obtained her from her parents; but he did not tell her what he intended to do with her. Now it was his duty to give her to the Spirits; but there was a condition he found very hard to fulfil. By the terms of his promise he was not allowed to kiss her, to caress her, or even to see her, except veiled after the manner of the country. Only by the mirror had he been able to know how fair she was. And the voyage was long; and on the way, the girl, who thought she was going to be this king's bride, became sincerely attached to him, after the manner of a child with a brother; and he also in his heart became much attached to her. But it was his duty to give her up. At last they reached the palace of the Spirit-king; and the figure of the old man came forth and said, "My son, you have done well and kept your promise. This maiden is all that I could have wished for; and I accept her. Now when you go back to your palace, you will find on the seventh pedestal the statue of the diamond which your father desired you to obtain." And, with these words, the Spirit-king vanished, taking with him the girl, who uttered a great and piercing cry to heaven at having been thus deceived. Very sorrowfully the young king then began his journey home. All along the way he kept regretting that girl, and regretting the cruelty which he had practised in deceiving her and

her parents. And he began to say to himself, "Accursed be the gift of the king of the Spirits! Of what worth to me is a woman of diamond any more than a woman of stone? What is there in all the world half so beautiful or half so precious as a living girl such as I discovered? Fool that I was to give her up for the sake of a statue!" But he tried to console himself by remembering that he had obeyed his dead father's wish.

Still, he could not console himself. Reaching his palace, he went to his secret chamber to weep alone, and he wept night and day, in spite of the efforts of his ministers to comfort him. But at last one of them said, "O my king, in the hall beneath your garden there has appeared a wonderful statue upon the seventh pedestal; perchance if you go to see it, your heart will become more joyful."

Then with great reluctance the king properly dressed himself, and went to the subterranean hall.

There indeed was the statue, the gift of the Spirit-king; and very beautiful it was. But it was not made of diamond, and it looked so strangely like the girl whom he had lost, that the king's heart leapt in his breast for astonishment. He put out his hand and touched the statue, and found it warm with life and youth. And a sweet voice said to him, "Yes, it is really I—have you forgotten?"

Thus she was given back to him; and the Spirit-king came to their wedding, and thus addressed the bridegroom, "O my son, for your dead father's sake I did this thing. For it was meant to teach you that the worth of a really pure and perfect woman is more than the price of any diamond or any treasure that the earth can yield."

Now you can see at once the beauty of this story; and the moral of it is exactly the same as that of the famous verse, in the Book of Proverbs, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." But it is simply a story from the "Arabian Nights"—one of those stories which you will not find in the ordinary European translations, because it is written in such a way that no English

translator except Burton would have dared to translate it quite literally. The obscenity of parts of the original does not really detract in the least from the beauty and tenderness of the motive of the story; and we must remember that what we call moral or immoral in style depends very much upon the fashion of an age and time.

Now it is exactly the same kind of moral charm that distinguishes the best of the old English romances—a charm which has nothing to do with the style, but everything to do with the feeling and suggestion of the composition. But in some of the old romances, the style too has a very great charm of quaintness and simplicity and sincerity not to be imitated to-day. In this respect the older French romances, from which the English made their renderings, are much the best. And the best of all is said to be “Amis et Amile,” which the English rendered as “Amis and Amiloun.” Something of the story ought to interest you.

The whole subject of this romance is the virtue of friendship, though this of course involves a number of other virtues quite as distinguished. Amis and Amile, that is to say Amicus and Amelius, are two young knights who at the beginning of their career become profoundly attached to each other. Not content with the duties of this natural affection, they imposed upon themselves all the duties which chivalry also attached to the office of friend. The romance tells of how they triumph over every conceivable test to which their friendship was subjected. Often and often the witchcraft of woman worked to separate them, but could not. Both married, yet after marriage their friendship was just as strong as before. Each has to fight many times on account of the other, and suffer all things which it is most hard for a proud and brave man to bear. But everything is suffered cheerfully, and the friends are such true knights that, in all their trials, neither does anything wrong, or commits the slightest fault against truth—until a certain sad day. On that day it is the duty of Amis to fight in a trial by battle. But he is sick, and cannot fight; then to

save his honour his friend Amile puts on the armour and helmet of Amis, and so pretending to be Amis, goes to the meeting place, and wins the fight gloriously. But this was an act of untruthfulness; he had gone into battle under a false name, and to do anything false even for a good motive is bad. So heaven punishes him by afflicting him with the horrible disease of leprosy.

The conditions of leprosy in the Middle Ages were of a peculiar kind. The disease seems to have been introduced into Europe from Asia—perhaps by the Crusaders. Michelet suggests that it may have resulted from the European want of cleanliness, brought about by ascetic teachings—for the old Greek and Roman public bath-houses were held in horror by the mediæval church. But this is not at all certain. What is certain is that in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries leprosy became very prevalent. The disease was not then at all understood; it was supposed to be extremely contagious, and the man afflicted by it was immediately separated from society, and not allowed to live in any community under such conditions as could bring him into contact with other inhabitants. His wife or children could accompany him only on the terrible condition of being considered lepers. Every leper wore a kind of monk's dress, with a hood covering the face; and he had to carry a bell and ring it constantly to give notice of his approach. Special leper-houses were built near every town, where such unfortunates might obtain accommodation. They were allowed to beg, but it was considered dangerous to go very near them, so that in most cases alms or food would be thrown to them only, instead of being put into their hands.

Now when the victim of leprosy in this romance is first afflicted by the disease, he happens to be far away from his good friend. And none of his own family is willing to help him; he is regarded with superstitious as well as with physical horror. There is nothing left for him to do but to yield up his knighthood and his welfare and his family, to

put on the leper's robe, and to go begging along the roads, carrying a leper's bell. And this he does. For long, long months he goes begging from town to town, till at last, by mere chance, he finds his way to the gate of the great castle where his good friend is living—now a great prince, and married to the daughter of the king. And he asks at the castle gate for charity and for food.

Now the porter at the gate observes that the leper has a very beautiful cup, exactly resembling a drinking cup belonging to his master, and he thinks it his duty to tell these things to the lord of the castle. And the lord of the castle remembers that very long ago he and his friend each had a cup of this kind, given to them by the bishop of Rome. So, hearing the porter's story, he knew that the leper at the gate was the friend who "had delivered him from death, and won for him the daughter of the King of France to be his wife."* Here I had better quote from the French version of the story, in which the names of the friends are changed, but without changing the beauty of the tale itself:

"And straightway he fell upon him, and began to weep greatly, and kissed him. And when his wife heard that, she ran out with her hair in disarray, weeping and distressed exceedingly, for she remembered that it was he who had slain the false Andres. And thereupon they placed him in a fair cell, and said to him, Abide with us until God's will be accomplished in thee, for all that we have is at thy service. So he abode with them."*

You must understand, by the allusion to "God's will," that leprosy was in the Middle Ages really considered to be a punishment from heaven—so that in taking a leper into his castle, the good friend was not only offending against the law of the land, but risking celestial punishment as well, according to the notions of that age. His charity, therefore, was true charity indeed, and his friendship without fear. But it was going to be put to a test more terrible than any

* Walter Pater *The Renaissance*, pp. 11—12.

ever endured before. To comprehend what followed, you must know that there was one horrible superstition of the Middle Ages—the belief that by bathing in human blood the disease of leprosy might be cured. Murders were often committed under the influence of that superstition. I believe you will remember that the “Golden Legend” of Longfellow is founded upon a mediæval story in which a young girl voluntarily offers up her life in order that her blood may cure the leprosy of her king. In the present romance there is much more tragedy. One night while sleeping in his friend’s castle, the leper was awakened by an angel from God—Raphael—who said to him:

“I am Raphael, the angel of our Lord, and am come to tell thee how thou mayst be healed; for thy prayers are heard. Thou shalt bid Amile, thy comrade, that he slay his two children and wash thee in their blood, and so thy body shall be made whole.” And Amis said to him, “Let not this thing be, that my comrade should become a murderer for my sake.” But the angel said, “It is convenient that he do this.” And thereupon the angel departed.

The phrase, “it is convenient,” must be understood as meaning, “it is ordered.” For the mediæval lord used such gentle expressions when issuing his commands; and the angel talked like a feudal messenger. But in spite of the command, the sick man does not tell his friend about the angel’s visit, until Amile, who has overheard the voice, forces him to acknowledge whom he had been talking with during the night. And the emotion of the lord may be imagined, though he utters it only in the following gentle words—“I would have given to thee my man-servants and my maid-servants and all my goods, and thou feignest that an angel hath spoken to thee that I should slay my two children. But I conjure thee by the faith which there is between me and thee, and by our comradeship, and by the baptism we received together, that thou tell me whether it was man or angel said that to thee.”

Amis declares that it was really an angel, and Amile

never thinks of doubting his friend's word. It would be a pity to tell you the sequel in my own words; let me quote again from the text, translated by Walter Pater. I think you will find it beautiful and touching:

"Then Amile began to weep in secret, and thought within himself: If this man was ready to die before the king for me, shall I not for him slay my children? Shall I not keep faith with him who was faithful to me even unto death? And Amile tarried no longer, but departed to the chamber of his wife, and bade her go hear the Sacred Office. And he took a sword, and went to the bed where the children were lying, and found them asleep. And he lay down over them and began to weep bitterly and said, Hath any man yet heard of a father who of his own will slew his children? Alas, my children! I am no longer your father, but your cruel murderer.

"And the children awoke at the tears of their father, which fell upon them; and they looked up into his face and began to laugh. And as they were of the age of about three years, he said, Your laughing will be turned into tears, for your innocent blood must now be shed; and therewith he cut off their heads. Then he laid them back in the bed, and put the heads upon the bodies, and covered them as though they slept: and with the blood which he had taken he washed his comrade, and said, Lord Jesus Christ! who hast commanded men to keep faith on earth, and didst heal the leper by Thy word! cleanse now my comrade, for whose love I have shed the blood of my children." And of course the leper is immediately and completely cured. But the mother did not know anything about the killing of the children; we have to hear something about her share in the tragedy. Let me again quote, this time giving the real and very beautiful conclusion—

"Now neither the father nor the mother had yet entered where the children were; but the father sighed heavily, because they were dead, and the mother asked for them, that they might rejoice together; but Amile said, Dame! let

the children sleep. And it was already the hour of Tierce. And going in alone to the children to weep over them, he found them at play in the bed; only, in the place of the sword-cuts about their throats was as it were a thread of crimson. And he took them in his arms and carried them to his wife and said, Rejoice greatly, for thy children whom I had slain by the commandment of the angel are alive, and by their blood is Amis healed."

I think you will all see how fine a story this is, and feel the emotional force of the grand moral idea behind it. There is nothing more to tell you, except the curious fact that during the Middle Ages, when it was believed that the story was really true, Amis and Amile—or Amicus and Amelius—were actually considered by the Church as saints, and people used to pray to them. When anybody was anxious for his friend, or feared that he might lose the love of his friend, or was afraid that he might not have strength to perform his duty as friend—then he would go to church to implore help from the good saints Amicus and Amelius. But of course it was all a mistake—a mistake which lasted until the end of the seventeenth century! Then somebody called the attention of the Church to the unmistakable fact that Amicus and Amelius were merely inventions of some mediæval romancer. Then the Church made investigation, and greatly shocked, withdrew from the list of its saints those long-loved names of Amicus and Amelius—a reform in which I cannot help thinking the Church made a very serious mistake. What matter whether those shadowy figures represented original human lives or only human dreams? They were beautiful, and belief in them made men think beautiful thoughts, and the imagined help from them had comforted many thousands of hearts. It would have been better to have left them alone; for that matter, how many of the existent lives of saints are really true? Nevertheless the friends are not dead, though expelled from the heaven of the church. They still live in romance; and everybody who reads about them feels a little better for their acquaintance.

What I read to you was from the French version—that is much the more beautiful of the two. You will find some extracts from the English version in the pages of Ten Brink. But as that great German scholar pointed out, the English story is much rougher than the French. For example, in the English story, the knight rushes out of his castle to beat the leper at the gate, and to accuse him of having stolen the cup. And he does beat him ferociously, and abuses him with very violent terms. In fact, the English writer reflected too much of mediæval English character, in trying to cover, or to improve upon, the French story, which was the first. In the French story all is knightly smooth, refined as well as simple and strong. And where did the mediæval imagination get its material for the story? Partly, perhaps, from the story of Joseph in the Bible, partly from the story of Abraham; but the scriptural material is so admirably worked over that the whole thing appears deliciously original. That was the great art of the Middle Ages—to make old, old things quite new by the magic of spiritual imagination. Men then lived in a world of dreams. And that world still attracts us, for the simple reason that happiness chiefly consists in dreams. Exact science may help us a great deal, no doubt, but mathematics do not make us any happier. Dreams do, if we can believe them. The Middle Ages could believe them; we, at the best, can only try.

CHAPTER XXXI

OLD GREEK FRAGMENTS

THE other day when we were reading some of the poems in "Ionica," I promised to speak in another short essay of Theocritus and his songs or idyls of Greek peasant life, but in speaking of him it will be well also to speak of others who equally illustrate the fact that everywhere there is truth and beauty for the mind that can see. I spoke last week about what I thought the highest possible kind of literary art might become. But the possible becoming is yet far away; and in speaking of some old Greek writers I want only to emphasize the fact that modern literary art as well as ancient literary art produced their best results from a close study of human nature.

Although Theocritus and others who wrote idyls found their chief inspiration in the life of the peasants, they sometimes also wrote about the life of cities. Human nature may be studied in the city as well as in the country provided that a man knows how to look for it. It is not in the courts of princes nor the houses of nobles nor the residences of the wealthy that such study can be made. These superior classes have found it necessary to show themselves to the world very cautiously; they live by rule, they conceal their emotions, they move theatrically. But the ordinary, everyday people of cities are very different; they speak their thoughts, they keep their hearts open, and they let us see, just as children do, the good or the evil side of their characters. So a good poet and a good observer can find in the life of cities subjects of study almost as easily as in the country. Theocritus has done this in his fifteenth idyl. This idyl is very famous, and it has been translated hun-

dreds of times into various languages. Perhaps you may have seen one version of it which was made by Matthew Arnold. But I think that the version made by Lang is even better.

The scene is laid in Alexandria, probably some two thousand years ago, and the occasion is a religious holiday—a *matsuri*, as we call it in Japan. Two women have made an appointment to go together to the temple, to see the festival and to see the people. The poet begins his study by introducing us to the chamber of one of the women.

Gorgo. "Is Praxinoë at home?"

Praxinoë. "Dear Gorgo, how long is it since you have been here! She *is* at home. The wonder is that you have got here at last! Eunoë, see that she has a chair. Throw a cushion on it too."

G. "It does most charmingly as it is."

P. "Do sit down."

How natural this is. There is nothing Greek about it any more than there is Japanese; it is simply human. It is something that happens in Tokyo every day, certainly in houses where there are chairs and where it is a custom to put a cushion on the chair for the visitor. But remember, this was two thousand years ago. Now listen to what the visitor has to say.

"Oh, what a thing spirit is! I have scarcely got to you alive, Praxinoë! What a huge crowd, what hosts of carriages! Everywhere cavalry boots, everywhere men in uniform! And the road is endless: yes, you really live *too* far away!"

Praxinoë answers:

"It is all the fault of that madman of mine. Here he came to the ends of the earth and took—a hole, not a house, and all that we might not be neighbours. The jealous wretch, always the same, anything for spite!"

She is speaking half in jest, half in earnest; but she forgets that her little boy is present, and the visitor reminds her of the fact:

“Don’t talk of your husband like that, my dear girl, before the little boy,—look how he is staring at you! Never mind, Zopyrion, sweet child, she is not speaking about papa.”

P. “Our Lady! (Persephone) The child takes notice.”

Then the visitor to comfort the child says “Nice papa!” and the conversation proceeds. The two talk about their husbands, about their dresses, about the cost of things in the shops; but in order to see the festival Praxinoë must dress herself quickly, and woman, two thousand years ago, just as now, takes a long time to dress. Hear Praxinoë talking to her maid-servant while she hurries to get ready:

“Eunoë, bring the water and put it down in the middle of the room, lazy creature that you are. Cats like always to sleep soft! Come, bustle, bring the water; quicker. I want water first, and how she carries it! give it me all the same; don’t pour out so much, you extravagant thing. Stupid girl! Why are you wetting my dress? There, stop, I have washed my hands as heaven would have it. Where is the key of the big chest? Bring it here.”

This is life, natural and true; we can see those three together, the girlish young wife hurrying and scolding and chattering naturally and half childishly, the patient servant-girl smiling at the hurry of her mistress, and the visitor looking at her friend’s new dress, wondering how much it cost and presently asking her the price. At last all is ready. But the little boy sees his mother go out and he wants to go out too, though it has been decided not to take him, because the crowd is too rough and he might be hurt. Here the mother first explains, then speaks firmly:

“No, child, I don’t mean to take you. Boo! Bogies! There’s a horse that bites! Cry as much as you please, but I cannot have you lamed.”

They go out, Praxinoë and Gorgo and the maid-servant Eunoë. The crowd is tremendous, and they find it very hard to advance. Sometimes there are horses in the way, sometimes wagons, occasionally a legion of cavalry. We

know all this, because we hear the chatter of the women as they make their way through the press.

“Give me your hand, and you, Eunoë, catch hold of Eutythis; never lose hold of her, for fear lest you get lost. . . . Here come the King’s war-horses! My dear man, don’t trample on me. . . . Eunoë, you foolhardy girl, will you never keep out of the way? . . . Oh! How tiresome, Gorgo, my muslin veil is torn in two already! For heaven’s sake, sir, if you ever wish to be fortunate, take care of my shawl!”

Stranger. “I can hardly help myself, but for all that I will be as careful as I can.”

The strange man helps the women and children through the pushing crowd, and they thank him very prettily, praying that he may have good fortune all his life. But not all the strangers who come in contact with them happen to be so kind. They come at last into that part of the temple ground where the image of Adonis is displayed; the beauty of the statue moves them, and they utter exclamations of delight. This does not please some of the male spectators, one of whom exclaims, “You weariful women, do cease your endless cooing talk! They bore one to death with their eternal broad vowels!”

They are country women, and their critic is probably a purist—somebody who has studied Greek as it is pronounced and spoken in Athens. But the women bravely resent this interference with their rights.

Gorgo. “Indeed! And where may this person come from? What is it to you if we *are* chatterboxes? Give orders to your own servants, sir. Do you pretend to command ladies of Syracuse? If you must know, we are Corinthians by descent, like Bellerophon himself, and we speak Peloponnesian. Dorian women may lawfully speak Doric, I presume?”

This is enough to silence the critic, but the other young woman also turns upon him, and we may suppose that he is glad to escape from their tongues. And then everybody becomes silent, for the religious services begin. The priestess,

a comely girl, chants the psalm of Adonis, the beautiful old pagan hymn, more beautiful and more sensuous than anything uttered by the later religious poets of the West; and all listen in delighted stillness. As the hymn ends, Gorgo bursts out in exclamation of praise:

“Praxinoë, the woman is cleverer than we fancied! Happy woman to know so much, thrice happy to have so sweet a voice. Well, all the same, it is time to be making for home. Diocleides has not had his dinner, and the man is all vinegar, — don’t venture near him when he is kept waiting for dinner. Farewell, beloved Adonis, may you find us glad at your next coming!”

And with this natural mingling of the sentimental and the commonplace the little composition ends. It is as though we were looking through some window into the life of two thousand years ago. Read the whole thing over to yourselves when you have time to find the book in the library, and see how true to human nature it is. There is nothing in it except the wonderful hymn, which does not belong to to-day as much as to the long ago, to modern Tokyo as much as to ancient Greece. That is what makes the immortality of any literary production—not simply truth to the life of one time, but truth to the life of every time and place.

Not many years ago there was discovered a book by Herodas, a Greek writer of about the same period. It is called the “Mimes,” a series of little dramatic studies picturing the life of the time. One of these is well worthy of rank with the idyl of Theocritus above mentioned. It is the study of a conversation between a young woman and an old woman. The young woman has a husband, who left her to join a military expedition and has not been heard of for several years. The old woman is a go-between, and she comes to see the young person on behalf of another young man, who admires her. But as soon as she states the nature of her errand, the young lady becomes very angry and feigns much virtuous indignation. There is a quarrel. Then the two become friends, and we know that the old

woman's coming is likely to bring about the result desired. Now the wonder of this little study also is the play of emotion which it reveals. Such emotions are common to all ages of humanity; we feel the freshness of this reflection as we read, to such a degree that we cannot think of the matter as having happened long ago. Yet even the city in which these episodes took place has vanished from the face of the earth.

In the case of the studies of peasant life, there is also value of another kind. Here we have not only studies of human nature, but studies of particular social conditions. The quarrels of peasants, half good-natured and nearly always happily ending; their account of their sorrows; their gossip about their work in the fields—all this might happen almost anywhere and at almost any time. But the song contest, the prize given for the best composition upon a chosen subject, this is particularly Greek, and has never perhaps existed outside of some place among the peasant folk. It was the poetical side of this Greek life of the peasants, as recorded by Theocritus, which so much influenced the literatures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France and in England. But neither in France nor in England has there ever really been at any time, any life resembling that portrayed by Theocritus; to-day nothing appears to us more absurd than the eighteenth century habit of picturing the Greek shepherd life in English or French landscapes. What really may have existed among the shepherds of the antique world could not possibly exist in modern times. But how pretty it is! I think that the tenth idyl of Theocritus is perhaps the prettiest example of the whole series, thirty in number, which have been preserved for us. The plan is of the simplest. Two young peasants, respectively named Battus and Milon, meeting together in the field, talk about their sweethearts. One of them works lazily and is jeered by the other in consequence. The subject of the jeering acknowledges that he works badly because his mind is disturbed—he has fallen in love. Then

the other expresses sympathy for him, and tells him that the best thing he can do to cheer himself up will be to make a song about the girl, and to sing it as he works. Then he makes a song, which has been the admiration of the world for twenty centuries and has been translated into almost every language possessing a literature.

“Ye Muses Pierian, sing ye with me the slender maiden, for whatsoever ye do but touch, ye goddesses, ye make wholly fair.

“They all call thee a *gipsy*, gracious Bombyca, and *lean*, and *sunburnt*, 'tis only I that call thee *honey-pale*.

“Yea, and the violet is swart, and swart the lettered hyacinth, but yet these flowers are chosen the first in garlands.

“The goat runs after cytissus, the wolf pursues the goat, the crane follows the plough, but I am wild for love of thee.

“Would it were mine, all the wealth whereof once Cræsus was lord, as men tell! Then images of us twain, all in gold, should be dedicated to Aphrodite, thou with thy flute, and a rose, yea, or an apple, and I in fair attire, and new shoon of Amyclæ on both my feet.

“Ah, gracious Bombyca, thy feet are fashioned like carven ivory, thy voice is drowsy sweet, and thy ways, I cannot tell of them!”

Even through the disguise of an English prose translation, you will see how pretty and how simple this little song must have been in the Greek, and how very natural is the language of it. Our young peasant has fallen in love with the girl who is employed to play the flute for the reapers, as the peasants like to work to the sound of music. His comrades do not much admire Bombyca; one calls her “a long grasshopper of a girl”; another finds her too thin; a third calls her a gipsy, such a dark brown her skin has become by constant exposure to the summer sun. And the lover, looking at her, is obliged to acknowledge in his own mind that she is long and lean and dark and like a gipsy; but he finds beauty in all these characteristics, nevertheless.

What if she is dark? The sweetest honey is darkish, like amber, and so are beautiful flowers, the best of all flowers, flowers given to Aphrodite; and the sacred hyacinth on whose leaves appear the letters of the word of lamentation "Ai! Ai!"—that is also dark like Bombyca. Her darkness is that of honey and flowers. What a charming apology! He cannot deny that she is long and lean, and he remains silent on these points, but here we must all sympathize with him. He shows good taste. It is the tall slender girl that is really the most beautiful and the most graceful, not the large-limbed, strong-bodied peasant type that his companions would prefer. Without knowing it, he has fallen in love like an artist. And he is not blind to the grace of slenderness and of form, though he cannot express it in artistic language. He can only compare the shape of the girl's feet to the ivory feet of the divinities in the temples—perhaps he is thinking of some ivory image of Aphrodite which he has seen. But how charming an image does he make to arise before us! Beautiful is the description of the girl's voice as "drowsy sweet." But the most exquisite thing in the whole song is the final despairing admission that he cannot describe her at all—"and thy ways, I cannot tell of them!" This is one of the most beautiful expressions in any poem ancient or modern, because of its supreme truth. What mortal ever could describe the charm of manner, voice, smile, address, in mere words? Such things are felt, they cannot be described; and the peasant boy reaches the highest height of true lyrical poetry when he cries out "I cannot tell of them!" The great French critic Sainte-Beuve attempted to render this line as follows—"Quant à la manière, je ne puis la rendre!" This is very good; and you can take your choice between it and any English translation. But good judges say that nothing in English or French equals the charm of the original.

You will find three different classes of idyls in Theocritus; the idyl which is a simple song of peasant life, a pure lyric expressing only a single emotion; the idyl which is a little

story, usually a story about the gods or heroes; and lastly, the idyl which is presented in the form of a dialogue, or even of a conversation between three or four persons. All these forms of idyl, but especially the first and the third, were afterwards beautifully imitated by the Roman poets; then very imperfectly imitated by modern poets. The imitation still goes on, but the very best English poets have never really been able to give us anything worthy of Theocritus himself.

However, this study of the Greek model has given some terms to English literature which every student ought to know. One of these terms is *amœbæan*,—*amœbæan* poetry being dialogue poetry composed in the form of question and reply. The original Greek signification was that of alternate speaking. Please do not forget the word. You may often find it in critical studies, in essays upon contemporary literature; and when you see it again, remember Theocritus and the school of Greek poets who first introduced the charm of *amœbæan* poetry. I hope that this little lecture will interest some of you in Theocritus sufficiently to induce you to read him carefully through and through. But remember that you cannot get the value of even a single poem of his at a single reading. We have become so much accustomed to conventional forms of literature that the simple art of poetry like this quite escapes us at first sight. We have to read it over and over again many times, and to think about it; then only we feel that wonderful charm.

CHAPTER XXXII

“THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT”

I HAVE spoken to you a great deal about the poetry of George Meredith, but I have not yet found an opportunity to tell you about his having written what I believe to be one of the greatest fables—certainly the greatest fable imagined during the nineteenth century. I imagine also that this fable will live, will even become a great classic,—after all his novels have been forgotten. For his novels, great as they are, deal almost entirely with contemporary pictures of highly complicated English and Italian aristocratic society. They picture the mental and moral fashions of a generation, and all such fashions quickly change. But the great fable pictures something which is, which has been, and which always will be in human nature; it touches the key of eternal things, just as his poetry does—perhaps even better; for some of his poetry is terribly obscure. Mr. Gosse has written a charming essay upon the fable of which I am going to speak to you; but neither Mr. Gosse nor anybody else has ever attempted to explain it. If the book is less well known, less widely appreciated than it deserves, the fact is partly owing to the want of critical interpretation. Even to Mr. Gosse the book makes its appeal chiefly as a unique piece of literary art. But how many people in conservative England either care for literary art in itself, or are capable of estimating it? So long as people think that such or such a book is only a fairy tale, they do not trouble themselves much to read it. But prove to them that the fairy tale is the emblem of a great moral fact, then it is different. The wonderful stories of Andersen owe their popularity as much to the fact that they teach moral fact, as to the fact that they please children.

Meredith's book was not written to please children; there is perhaps too much love-making in it for that. I do not even know whether it was written for a particular purpose; I am inclined to think that there was no particular purpose. Books written with a purpose generally fail. Great moral stories are stories that have been written for art's sake. Meredith took for model the manner of the Arabian story-tellers. The language, the comparisons, the poetry, the whole structure of his story is in the style of "The Arabian Nights." But as Mr. Gosse observes, "The Arabian Nights" seem to us cold and pale beside it. You cannot find in "The Arabian Nights" a single page to compare with certain pages of "The Shaving of Shagpat"; and this is all the more extraordinary because the English book is written in a tone of extravagant humour. You feel that the author is playing with the subject, as a juggler plays with half a dozen balls at the same time, never letting one of them fall. And yet he has done much better than the Orientals who took their subject seriously. Even the title, the names of places or of persons, are jokes,—though they look very much like Arabian or Persian names. "Shagpat" is only the abbreviation of "shaggy pate," "pate" being an old English word for head—so that the name means a very hairy and rough looking head. When you begin to see jokes of this kind even in the names, you may be inclined to think that the book is trifling. I thought so myself before reading it; but now that I have read it at least half a dozen times, and hope to read it many times more, I can assure you that it is one of the most delightful books ever written, and that it cannot fail to please you. With this introduction, I shall now begin to say something about the story itself, the fantastic plot of it.

Who is Shagpat? Shagpat is a clothing merchant and the favourite of a king. Shagpat wears his hair very long, contrary to the custom of Mohammedan countries, where all men shave their heads, with the exception of one tuft on the top of the head, by which tuft, after death, the true

believer is to be lifted up by angels, and carried into Paradise. Mohammedans are as careful about this tuft as the Chinese are careful about their queues. How comes it that in a Mohammedan city a true believer should thus wear his hair long? It is because in his head there has been planted one magical hair taken out of the head of a Djinn or Genie; and this hair, called the Identical, has the power to make all men worship the person on whose head it grows. Therefore it is that the king reverences this clothing merchant, and that all the people bow down before him. Also an order is given that all men in that country must wear their hair long in the same manner, and that no barbers are to be allowed to exercise their trade in any of the cities.

A barber, not knowing these regulations, — a barber of the name of Shibli Bagarag — comes to the principal city and actually proposes to shave Shagpat. He is at once seized by slaves, severely beaten, and banished from the city. But outside the city he meets a horrible old woman, so ugly that it pains him to look at her; and she tells him that she can make his fortune for him if he will promise to marry her. Although he is in a very unhappy condition, the idea of marrying so hideous a woman terrifies him; nevertheless he plucks up courage and promises. She asks him then to kiss her. He has to shut his eyes before he can do that, but after he has done it she suddenly becomes young and handsome. She is the daughter of the chief minister of the king, and she is ugly only because of an enchantment cast upon her. This enchantment has been caused by the power of Shagpat, who desired to marry her. For her own sake and for the sake of the country and for the sake of all the people, she says that it is necessary that the head of Shagpat should be shaved. But to shave Shagpat requires extraordinary powers — magical powers. For the magical hair in that man's head cannot be cut by any ordinary instrument. If approached with a knife or a razor, this hair suddenly develops tremendous power as of

an electric shock, hurling far away all who approach it. It is only a hair to all appearances at ordinary times, but at extraordinary times it becomes luminous, and stands up like a pillar of fire reaching to the stars. And the daughter of the minister tells Bagarag that if he has courage she can teach him the magic that shall help him to cut that hair,—to shave the shaggy pate of Shagpat.

I have gone into details this far only to give you a general idea of the plan of the story. The greater part of the book deals with the obstacles and dangers of Shagpat, and recounts, in the most wonderful way, the struggle between the powers of magic used on both sides. For Shagpat is defended against barbers by evil spirits who use black magic; while Bagarag is assisted by his wife, and her knowledge of white magic. In his embraces she has become the most beautiful woman in the world, and the more he loves her the more beautiful she becomes. But he is given to understand that he must lose her if his courage fails in the fight against Shagpat. To tell you here how his courage is tested, and how he triumphs over all tests, would only spoil your pleasure in the story when you come to read it. Here I shall only say that the grandest chapter in the part of the book recounting Bagarag’s adventures is the chapter on the Sword of Aklis, the magical sword with which the head of Shagpat at last is shaved. The imagining of this sword is one of the most wonderful things in any literature; for all the ancient descriptions of magical swords are dull and uninteresting compared with the description of the sword of Aklis. It can only be looked at by very strong eyes, so bright it is; it can be used as a bridge from earth to sky; it can be made so long that in order to use it one must look through a telescope; it can be made lighter than a moon beam, or so heavy that no strength could lift it. I want to quote to you a few sentences of the description of the sword, because this description is very beautiful, and it will give you a good idea of Meredith’s coloured prose style. The passages which I am going to read describe the first

appearance of the sword to Bagarag, after he has washed his eyes with magical water :

His sight was strengthened to mark the glory of the Sword, where it hung in slings, a little way from the wall, outshining the lights of the cave, and throwing them back with its superior force and steadfastness of lustre. Lo! the length of it was as the length of crimson across the sea when the sun is sideways on the wave, and it seemed full a mile long, the whole blade sheening like an arrested lightning from the end to the hilt; the hilt two large live serpents twined together, with eyes like sombre jewels, and sparkling spotted skins, points of fire in their folds, and reflections of the emerald and topaz and ruby stones, studded in the blood-stained haft. Then, the seven young men, sons of Aklis, said to Shibli Bagarag, "Surrender the Lily!" And when he had given into their hands the Lily, they said, "Grasp the handle of the Sword!"

Now, he beheld the Sword and the ripples of violet heat that were breathing down it, and those two venomous serpents twined together, and the size of it, its ponderousness; and to essay lifting it appeared to him a madness, but he concealed his thought, and, setting his soul on the safety of Noorna, went forward to it boldly, and piercing his right arm between the twists of the serpents, grasped the jewelled haft. Surely, the Sword moved from the slings as if a giant had swayed it! But what amazed him was the marvel of the blade, for its sharpness was such that nothing stood in its way, and it slipped through everything as we pass through still water,—the stone columns, blocks of granite by the walls, the walls of earth, and the thick solidity of the ground beneath his feet. They bade him say to the Sword, "Sleep!" and it was no longer than a knife in the girdle. Likewise, they bade him hiss on the heads of the serpents, and say, "Wake!" and while he held it lengthwise it shot lengthening out.*

In fact, it lengthens across the world, if the owner so desires, to kill an enemy thousands of miles away. With this wonderful sword at last Shagpat is shaved. But notwithstanding the power of thousands of good spirits who help the work, and the white magic of the beautiful Noorna, the shaving is an awfully difficult thing to do. The chapter describing it† reads as magnificently as the description of

* *The Shaving of Shagpat*, "The Sword of Aklis."

† *Ibid.*, "The Flashes of the Blade."

the Judgment Day, and you will wonder at the splendour of it.

What does all this mean, you may well ask. What is the magical hair? What is the sword? What is every impossible thing recounted in this romance? Really the author himself gives us the clue, and therefore his meaning ought to have been long ago clearly perceived. At the end of the story is this clue, furnished by the words—

The Sons of Aklis were now released from the toil of sharpening of the Sword a half-cycle of years, to wander in delight on the fair surface of the flowery earth, breathing its roses, wooing its brides; for the mastery of an Event lasteth among men the space of one cycle of years, and after that a fresh Illusion springeth to befool mankind, and the seven must expend the concluding half-cycle in preparing the edge of the Sword for a new mastery.*

From this it is quite evident to anybody who has read the book that the sword of Aklis is the sword of science,—the power of exact scientific knowledge, wielded against error, superstition, humbug, and convention of every injurious kind.

Do not, however, imagine that this bit of interpretation interprets all the story; you must read it more than once, and think about it a great deal, in order to perceive the application of its thousand incidents to real human nature.

When Bagarag first, in his ignorance, offers to shave Shagpat, he has no idea whatever of the powers arrayed against him. What he wants is not at all in itself wrong; on the contrary it is in itself quite right. But what is quite right in one set of social conditions may seem to be quite wrong in another. Therefore the poor fellow is astonished to discover that the whole nation is against him, that the king is particularly offended with him, that all public opinion condemns him, would refuse him even the right to live in its midst. Is not Bagarag really the discoverer, the scientific man, the philosopher with a great desire to benefit other men, discovering that his kind wish arouses against him the

* *Ibid.*, “Conclusion.”

laws of the government, the anger of religions, and all the prejudice of public opinion? Bagarag is the reformer who is not allowed to reform anything,—threatened with death if he persists. Reformers must be men of courage, and Bagarag has courage. But courage is not enough to sustain the purpose of the philosopher, the reformer, the man with new ethical or other truth to tell mankind. Much more than courage is wanted—power. How is power to come? You remember about the horrible old woman who asks Bagarag to kiss her, and when he kisses her she becomes young and divinely beautiful. We may suppose that Noorna really represents Science. Scientific study seems very ugly, very difficult, very repellent at first sight, but if you have the courage and the capacity to master it, if you can bravely kiss it, as Bagarag kissed the old woman, it becomes the most delightful mistress; nor is that all—it finds strange powers and forces for you. It can find for you even a sword of Aklis.

Now certain subjects are supposed to be beneath the dignity of literary art; and some of the subjects in this extraordinary book might appear to you too trivial for genius to busy itself with. The use of a barber as hero is not at all inartistic; it is in strict accordance with the methods of the Arabian story-tellers to make barbers, fishermen, water-carriers, and other men of humble occupations, the leading characters in a tale. But that the whole plot of the narrative should turn upon the difficulty of cutting one hair; and that this single hair should be given so great an importance in the history—this might very well seem to you beneath the dignity of art—that is, until you read the book. Yet the manner in which the fancy is worked out thoroughly excuses such triviality. The symbol of the hair is excellent. What is of less seeming importance than a hair? What is so frail and light and worthless as a hair? Now to many reformers and teachers the errors, social, moral, or religious, which they wish to destroy really appear to have less value, less resistance than a hair. But, as a

great scientific teacher observed a few years ago, no man is able to conceive the strength in error, the force of error, the power of prejudice, until he has tried to attack it. Then all at once the illusion, the lie, that seems frail as a hair, and even of less worth, suddenly reveals itself as a terrible thing, reaching from Earth to Sky, radiating electricity and lightning in every direction. Observe in the course of modern European history what an enormous effort has been required to destroy even very evident errors, injustices, or illusions. Think of the hundreds of years of sturdy endeavour which we needed before even a partial degree of religious freedom could be obtained. Think of the astonishing fact that one hundred years ago the man risked his life who found the courage to say that witchcraft was an illusion. One might mention thousands of illustrations of the same truth. No intellectual progress can be effected within conservative countries by mere discovery, mere revelation of facts, nor by logic, nor by eloquence, nor even by individual courage. The discovery is ridiculed; the facts are denied; the logic is attacked; the eloquence is met by greater eloquence on the side of untruth; the individual courage is astounded, if not defeated, by the armies of the enemies summoned against it. Progress, educational or otherwise, means hard fighting, not for one lifetime only but for generations. You are well aware how many generations have elapsed since the educational system of the Middle Ages was acknowledged by all men of real intelligence as inadequate to produce great results. One would have thought that the mediæval fetish would have been thrown away in the nineteenth century, at least. But it is positively true that in most English speaking universities, even at the present time, a great deal of the machinery of mediæval education remains, and there is scarcely any hope of having it removed even within another hundred years. If you asked the wise men of those universities what is the use of preserving certain forms of study and certain formalities of practice that can only serve to increase the

obstacles to educational progress, they would answer you truthfully that it is of no use at all, but they would also tell you something about the difficulty that would attend any attempted change; and you would be astonished to learn the extent and the immensity of those difficulties.

Now you will perceive that the single hair in our study actually represents, perhaps, better than any more important object could do, the real story of any social illusion, any great popular error. The error seems so utterly absurd that you cannot understand how any man in his senses can believe it, and yet men quite as intelligent as yourselves, perhaps even more so, speak of it with respect. They speak of it with respect simply because they perceive better than you do what enormous power would be needed to destroy it. It appears to you something so light that even a breath would blow it away for ever, or the touch of pain break it so easily that the breaking could not even be felt. You think of wisdom crushing it as an elephant might crush a fly, without knowing that the fly was there. But when you come to put forth your strength against this error, this gossamer of illusion, you will find that you might as well try to move a mountain with your hand. You must have help: you must have friends to furnish you with the sword of Aklis. Even with that mighty sword the cutting of the hair will prove no easy job.

Afterwards what happens? Why, exactly the same thing that happens before. Men think that because the world has made one step forward in their time, all illusions are presently going to fade away. This is the greatest of social mistakes that a human being can possibly make. The great sea of error immediately closes again behind the forms that find strength to break out of it. It is just the same as before. One illusion may indeed be eventually destroyed, but another illusion quickly forms behind it. The real truth is that wisdom will be reached when human individuals as well as human society shall have become infinitely more perfect than they now are; and such perfection can scarce-

ly be brought about before another million of years at least.

These are the main truths symbolized in this wonderful story. But while you are reading “The Shaving of Shagpat,” you need not consider the moral meanings at all. You will think of them better after the reading. Indeed, I imagine that the story will so interest you that you will not be able to think of anything else until you have reached the end of it. Then you find yourself sorry that it is not just a little bit longer.

CHAPTER XXXIII

NOTE UPON ROSSETTI'S PROSE

AS we are now studying Rossetti's poetry in other hours, you may be interested in some discussion of the merits of his prose—for this is still, so far as the great public are concerned, almost an unknown topic. The best of the painters of his own school, and the most delicate poet of the Victorian period, Rossetti might also have become one of the greatest prose writers of the century if he had seriously turned to prose. But ill-health and other circumstances prevented him from doing much in this direction. What he did do, however, is so remarkable that it deserves to be very carefully studied. I do not refer to his critical essays. These are not very remarkable. I refer only to his stories; and his stories are great because they happen to have exactly the same kind of merit that distinguishes his poetry. They might be compared with the stories of Poe; and yet they are entirely different, with the difference distinguishing all Latin prose fiction from English fiction. But there is certainly no other story-writer, except Poe, with whose work that of Rossetti can be at all classed. They are ghostly stories—one of them a fragment, the other complete. Only two—and the outline of the third. The fragment is not less worthy of attention because it happens to be a fragment—like the poet's own "Bride's Prelude," or Coleridge's "Christabel," or Poe's "Silence." The trouble with all great fragments, and the proof of their greatness, is that we cannot imagine what the real ending would have been; and this puzzle only lends additional charm to the imaginative effect. Of the two consecutive stories, it is the fragment which has the greater merit.

The first story, called "Hand and Soul," has another interest besides the interest of narrative. It contains the whole æsthetic creed of Rossetti's school of painting,—a little philosophy of art that is well worth studying. That is especially why I want to talk about it. The so-called Pre-Raphaelite school of English painting, whereof Rossetti was the recognized chief, were not altogether disciples of Ruskin. They did not believe that art must have a religious impulse in order to be great art; and they did not exactly support the antagonistic doctrine of "Art for Art's sake." They considered that absolute sincerity in one's own conception of the beautiful, and wide toleration of all æsthetic ideas, were axiomatic truths which it was necessary to accept without reserve. They had no detestation for any school of art; they practically banished prejudice from their little circle. I may add that they were not indifferent to Japanese art, even at a time when it found many enemies in London, and when the great Ruskin himself endeavoured to help the prejudice against it. In that very time Rossetti was making Japanese collections, and Burne-Jones and others were discovering new methods by the help of this Eastern art.

Now the story of "Hand and Soul" is, in a small way, a history of man's experience with Painting. It is supposed to be the story of a real picture. The picture is only the figure of a woman in a grey and green dress, very beautiful. But whoever looks at that picture for a minute or two, suddenly becomes afraid—afraid in exactly the same way that he would be on seeing a ghost. The picture could not have been painted from imagination; that figure must have been seen by somebody; and yet it could not have been a living woman! Then what could have been the real story of that picture? Did the artist see a ghost; or did he see something supernatural?

The answer to these questions is the following story. The artist who painted that picture, four hundred years ago, was a young Italian of immense genius, so passionately devoted to his art that he lived for nothing else. At first

he wished only to be the greatest painter of his time; and that he became without much difficulty. He painted only what he thought beautiful; and he painted beautiful faces that he saw passing by in the street, and beautiful sunsets that he saw from his window, and beautiful fancies that came into his mind. Everybody loved his pictures; and princes made him great gifts of money.

Then a sudden remorse came to this painter, who was at heart a religious man. He said to himself: "Here, God has given me the power to paint beautiful things; and I have been painting only those beautiful things which please the senses of men. Therefore I have been doing wrong. Henceforward I will paint only things which represent eternal truth, the things of Heaven."

After that he began to paint only religious and mystical pictures, and pictures which common people could not understand at all. The people no longer came to admire his work; the princes no longer paid him honour or brought him gifts; and he became as one forgotten in the world.

Moreover, he found himself losing his power as an artist. And then, to crown all his misfortunes, some of his most famous pictures were ruined one day by the extraordinary incident of a church fight; for two great Italian clans between whom a feud existed, happened to meet in the church porch, and a blow was struck and swords were drawn—and there was such killing that the blood of the fighters was splashed upon the paintings on the wall.

When all these things had happened, the artist despaired. He became weary of life, and thought of destroying himself. And while he was thus thinking, there suddenly entered his room, without any sound, the figure of a woman robed in green and grey; and she stood before him and looked into his eyes. And as she looked into his eyes, an awe came upon him such as he had never before known; and a great feeling of sadness also came with the awe. But he could not speak, any more than a person in a dream, who wants to cry out, and cannot make a sound. But the

woman spoke and said to him, "I am your own soul—that soul to whom you have done so much wrong. And I have been allowed to come to you in this form, only because you have never been of those men who make art merely to win money. To win fame, however, you did not scruple; and that was not altogether good, although it was not altogether bad. What was much worse was the pride which turned you away from me—religious pride. You wanted to do what God did not ask you to do—to work against your own soul, and to cast away your love of beauty. Into me God placed the desire of loveliness and the bliss of the charm of the world. Wherefore then should you strive against His work? And what pride impelled you to imagine that heaven needed the help of your art to teach men what is good? When did God say to you, Friend, let me lean upon you, or I shall fall down? No; it is by teaching men to seek and to love the beautiful things in this beautiful world that you make their hearts better within them—never by preaching to them with allegories that they cannot understand; and because you have done this, you have been punished. Be true to me, your own very soul; then you will do marvellous things. Now paint a picture of me, just as I am, so that you may know that your power of art is given back to you."

So the artist painted a picture of his own soul in the likeness of a woman clad in green and grey; and all who see that picture even to-day feel at once a great fear and a great charm, and find it hard to understand how mortal men could have painted it.

That is the story of "Hand and Soul"; and it teaches a great deal of everlasting truth. Assuredly the road to all artistic greatness is the road of sincerity—truth to one's own emotional sense of what is beautiful. And just to that degree in which the artist or poet allows himself to be made insincere, either by desire of wealth and fame, or by religious scruples, just to that extent he must fail. I have only given a very slight outline of the tale; to give more might be to spoil your pleasure of reading it.

The second story will not seem to you quite so original as the first, though, to English minds, it probably seems stranger. It is a story of pre-existence. Now, a very curious fact is that this idea of pre-existence, expressed by Rossetti in many passages of his verse, as well as in his prose story, did not come to him from Eastern sources at all. He never cared for, and perhaps never read, any Oriental literature. His idea regarding re-birth and the memory of past lives belongs rather to certain strangely imaginative works of mediæval literature, than to anything else. Even to himself they appeared novel—something dangerous to talk about. Unless you understand this, you will not be able to account for the curious thrill of terror that runs through "St. Agnes of Intercession." The writer writes as if he were afraid of his own thought.

The story begins with a little bit of autobiography, Rossetti telling about his thoughts as a child, when he played at his father's knee on winter evenings. Of course these memories did not appear as his own; but as those of the painter supposed to tell the story. As a child this painter was very fond of picture books. In the house there was one picture book containing a picture of a saint—St. Agnes—which pleased him in such a way that he could spend hours in contemplating it with delight. But he did not know why. He grew up, was educated, became a man and became a painter; and still he could not forget the charm of the picture that had pleased him when a child. One day a young English girl, a friend of his sister's, comes to the house on a visit. He is greatly startled on seeing her, because her face is exactly like the face of the saint in the picture book. He falls in love with her, and they are engaged to be married. But before that time he paints her portrait, and as her portrait happens to be the best work of the kind that he ever did, he sends it to the Royal Academy to be put on exhibition. Critics greatly praise the picture, but one of them remarks that at Bologna in Italy there is a painting of St. Agnes that very much

resembles it. Upon this he goes to Italy to find the picture, and does find it after a great deal of trouble. It is said to be the work of a certain Angiolieri, who lived some four hundred years ago. Every detail of the face proves to be exactly like that of the living face which he painted in London. Being greatly startled by this discovery, he examines the catalogue of paintings, which he bought at the door, in order to find out whether there is anything else said in it about the model from whom Angiolieri painted that St. Agnes. He cannot find any information about the model; but he finds out that in another part of the building there is a portrait of Angiolieri, painted by himself. I think you know that many famous artists have painted portraits of themselves. Greatly interested, he hurries to where the picture is hanging, and finds, to his amazement, that the portrait of Angiolieri is exactly like himself—the very image of him. Was it then possible that, four hundred years before, he himself might have been Angiolieri, and had painted that picture of St. Agnes?

A fever seizes upon him, one of those fevers only too common in Italy. While he is still under its influence, he dreams a dream. He is in a picture gallery; and on the wall he sees Angiolieri's painting hanging up; and there is a great crowd looking at it. In that crowd he sees his betrothed, leaning upon the arm of another man. Then he feels angrily jealous, and says to the strange man, tapping him on the shoulder, "Sir, I am engaged to that lady!" Then the man turns round; and as he turns round, his face proves to be the face of Angiolieri, and his dress is the costume of four hundred years ago, and he says, "She is not mine, good friend—but neither is she thine." As he speaks his face falls in, like the face of a dead man, and becomes the face of a skull. From this dream we can guess the conclusion which the author intended.

On returning to England, when the painter attempted to speak of what he had seen and learned, his family believed him insane, and forbade him to speak on the subject

any more. Also he was warned that should he speak of it to his betrothed, the marriage would be broken off. Accordingly, though he obeys, he is placed in a very unhappy position. All about him there is the oppression of a mystery involving two lives; and he cannot even try to solve it—cannot speak about it to the person whom it most directly concerns. . . . And here the fragment breaks.

If this admirable story had been finished, the result could not have been more impressive than is this sudden interruption. We know that Rossetti intended to make the betrothed girl also the victim of a mysterious destiny; but he did not intend, it appears, to elucidate the reason of the thing in detail. That would have indeed destroyed the shadowy charm of the recital. While the causes of things remain vague and mysterious, the pleasurable fear of the unknown remains with the reader. But if you try to account for everything, at once the illusion vanishes, and the art becomes dead. It seems to me that Rossetti has given in this unfinished tale a very fine suggestion of what use the old romances still are. It was by careful study of them, combined with his great knowledge of art, that he was able to produce, both in his poetry and in his prose, the exquisite charm of reality in unreality. Reading either, you have the sensation of actually seeing, touching, feeling, and yet you know that the whole thing is practically impossible. No art of romance can rise higher than this. And speaking of that soul-woman, whose portrait was painted in the former story, reminds me of an incident in Taine's wonderful book "De l'Intelligence," which is *à propos*. It is actually on record that a French artist had the following curious hallucination:

He was ill, from overwork perhaps, and opening his eyes after a feverish sleep, he saw a beautiful lady seated at his bedside, with one hand upon the bed cover, and he said to himself, "This is certainly an illusion caused by my nervous condition. But how beautiful an illusion it is! And how wonderfully luminous and delicate is that hand!

If I dared only put my hand where it is, I wonder what would happen. Probably the whole thing would vanish at once, and I should lose the pleasure of looking at it."

Suddenly, as if answering his thought, a voice as clear as the voice of a bird said to him, "I am not a shadow; and you can take my hand and kiss it if you like." He did lift the lady's hand to his lips and felt it, and then he entered into conversation with her. The conversation continued until interrupted by the entrance of the doctor attending the patient. This is the record of an extraordinary case of double consciousness—the illusion and the reason working together in such harmony that neither in the slightest degree disturbed the other. Rossetti's figures, whether of the Middle Ages or of modern times, seem also like the results of a double consciousness. We can touch them and feel them, although they are ghosts.

As I said before, he might have been one of the greatest of romantic story-tellers had he turned his attention in that direction and kept his health. No better proof of this could be asked for than the printed plans of several stories which he never had time to develop. He collected the material from the study of Old French and Old Italian poets chiefly; but that material, when thrown into the crucible of his imagination, assumed totally novel and strange forms. I may tell you the outline of one story by way of conclusion. It was a beautiful idea; and it is a great regret that it could not have been executed in the author's lifetime:

One day a king and his favourite knight, while hunting in a forest, visited the house of a woodcutter, or something of that kind, to ask for water—both being very thirsty. The water was served to them by a young girl of such extraordinary beauty that both the king and the knight were greatly startled. The knight falls in love with the maid, and afterwards asks the king's leave to woo her. But when he comes to woo, he finds out that the maid has become enamoured of the king, whom she does not know to be the king. She says that, unless she can marry him she will

never become a wife. The king therefore himself goes to her to plead for his friend. "I cannot marry you," he says, "because I am married already. But my friend, who loves you very much, is not married; and if you will wed him I shall make him a baron and confer upon him the gift of many castles."

The young girl to please the king accepts the knight; a grand wedding takes place at the king's castle; and the knight is made a great noble, and is gifted with many rich estates. Then the king makes this arrangement with the bride: "I will never visit you or allow you to visit me, because we love each other too much. But, once every year, when I go to hunt in the forest with your husband, you shall bring me a cup of water, just as on the first day, when we saw you."

After this the king saw her three times;—that is to say, in three successive years she greeted him with the cup of water when he went hunting. In the fourth year she died, leaving behind her a little daughter.

The sorrowing husband carefully brought up the little girl—or, at least caused her to be carefully brought up; but he never presented her to the king, or spoke of her, because the death of the mother was a subject too painful for either of them to talk about.

But when the girl was sixteen years old, she looked so exactly like her mother, that the father was startled by the resemblance. And he thought, "To-morrow I shall present her to the king." And to his daughter he said, "To-morrow I am going to hunt with the king. When we are on our way home, we shall stop at a little cottage in the wood—the little cottage in which your mother used to live. Do you then wait in the cottage, and when the king comes, bring him a cup of water, just as your mother did."

So next day the king and his baron approached the cottage after their hunt; and the king was greatly astonished and moved by the apparition of a young girl offering him a cup of water—so strangely did she resemble the girl

whom he had seen in the same place nearly twenty years before. And as he took the cup from her hand, his heart went out toward her, and he asked his companion, "Is this indeed the ghost of her?—or another dear vision?" But before the companion could make any answer—lo! another shadow stood between the king and the girl; and none could have said which was which, so exactly each beautiful face resembled the other—only the second apparition wore peasant's clothes. And she that wore the clothes of a peasant girl kissed the king as he sat upon his horse, and disappeared. And the king immediately, on receiving that kiss and returning it, fell forward and died.

This is a vague, charming romance indeed, for some one to take up and develop. Of course the figure in peasant's clothes is the spirit of the mother of the girl. There are many pretty stories somewhat resembling this in the old Japanese story-books, but none quite the same; and I venture to recommend anybody who understands the literary value of such things to attempt a modified version of Rossetti's outline in Japanese. Some things would, of course, have to be changed; but no small changes would in the least affect the charm of the story as a whole.

In conclusion, I may observe that the object of this little lecture has not been merely to interest you in the prose of Rossetti, but also to quicken your interest in the subject of romance in general. Remember that no matter how learned or how scientific the world may become, romance can never die. No greater mistake could be made by the Japanese student than that of despising the romantic element in the literature of his own country. Recently I have been thinking very often that a great deal might be done toward the development of later literature by remodelling and reanimating the romance of the older centuries. I believe that many young writers think chiefly about the possibility of writing something entirely new. This is a great literary misfortune; for the writing of something entirely new is scarcely possible for any human being. The greatest Western writers have

not become great by trying to write what is new, but by writing over again in a much better way, that which is old. Rossetti and Tennyson and scores of others made the world richer simply by going back to the literature of a thousand years ago, and giving it re-birth. Like everything else, even a good story must die and be reborn hundreds of times before it shows the highest possibilities of beauty. All literary history is a story of re-birth—periods of death and restful forgetfulness alternating with periods of resurrection and activity. In the domain of pure literature nobody need ever be troubled for want of a subject. He has only to look for something which has been dead for a very long time, and to give that body a new soul. In romance it would be absurd to think about despising a subject, because it is unscientific. Science has nothing to do with pure romance or poetry, though it may enrich both. These are emotional flowers; and what we can do for them is only to transplant and cultivate them, much as roses or chrysanthemums are cultivated. The original wild flower is very simple; but the clever gardener can develop the simple blossom into a marvellous compound apparition, displaying ten petals where the original could show but one. Now the same horticultural process can be carried out with any good story or poem or drama in Japan, just as readily as in any other country. The romantic has nothing to gain from the new learning except in the direction of pure art; the new learning, by enriching the language and enlarging the imagination, makes it possible to express the ancient beauty in a new and much more beautiful way. Tennyson might be quoted in illustration. What is the difference between his two or three hundred lines of wondrous poetry entitled "The Passing of Arthur," and the earliest thirteenth or fourteenth century idea of the same mythical event? The facts in either case are the same. But the language and the imagery are a thousand times more forcible and more vivid in the Victorian poet. Indeed, progress in belles-lettres is almost altogether brought about by making old things con-

form to the imagination of succeeding generations; and poesy, like the human race, of which it represents the emotional spirit, must change its dress and the colour of its dress as the world also changes.

CHAPTER XXXIV

GREAT TRANSLATORS

FOR a long time I have been intending to give a short lecture on the subject of the great English translators of Foreign Poetry; but it is only now that the chance offers itself. In speaking of this kind of translation, I want first to impress upon you that it is a very difficult and very uncommon art. Of course there are thousands of people who translate or try to translate foreign poetry into English verse; but there have not been more than a dozen in the whole history of English literature who have done this well. To do it well, it is necessary that the translations should be in a form corresponding to the foreign form as closely as the English language will permit;—it is necessary that the translator should be as good a poet or nearly as good a poet as the foreign poet;—it is necessary, in fine, that we should get the spirit rather than the exact literal meaning of the foreign poem. The man capable of doing all these things, and of being a genius as well, is seldom found. The French are better advanced in literary knowledge and practice than perhaps any other people; and they have long recognized that to translate poetry into poetry is the privilege of few men indeed. Therefore French translations of foreign poets are now wisely made in prose, not in verse. The English stupidly keep to the habit of translating verse into verse, even to the present time, and this bad fashion results in the publication every year of a vast mass of rhymed rubbish. No other people have done so much bad work. If there is anything to admire about the production of such a man as Sir John Bowring, who translated into English the German poets and many others, it is simply the capacity

for producing verse by the mile. And in spite of all the translation of Goethe that have been made into English, by American as well as British translators, we prefer to read the prose translation of "Faust" made by Hayward and revised by Buchheim. I might quote a thousand examples. Who, for example, cares to read the English translations of the Persian poets,—Hafiz, Saadi, etc.? Nobody—because these men who made the translations, though scholars, were not poets for the most part. We prefer the French and German prose translations. There is indeed one astonishing exception—Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyām. But this is much more than a mere translation: it is a recombination, and the work of a very rare genius. For one Fitzgerald, you have a hundred Bowrings. Another notable exception is to be found in the translations of Arabian poetry by Palmer; but still one rather goes to the French prose in order to obtain the exact spirit of the original. This is enough of preliminary. I only want to remind you that great translators are very few.

Of those few, some are so familiar that I need not say much about them. For example, I need not quote Carlyle's magnificent "Luther's Psalm" (*Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott*). That is equal to Luther himself; for it was the work of a mind and heart very much like his own. Individual examples of this kind may be mentioned; but it is not necessary to dwell upon them for the moment. Let me rather first illustrate exactly what a perfect translation is,—taking Rossetti for a guide. He is perhaps the greatest of all translators (English)—considering the immense volume of his work, far exceeding that of Fitzgerald, and in every case his translation is a re-creation. I have read to you the translation from Villon—"The Ballad of Dead Ladies;" but an example from more modern French will better show the nature of the art that we are considering. In Victor Hugo's drama "Les Burgraves" you will find two little songs,—one on Page 14 of the Hetzel-Quantin edition and one on Page 46 of the same volume. The first is this:

Dans les guerres civiles
 Nous avons tous les droits.
 —Nargue à toutes les villes,
 Et nargue à tous les rois!

Le Burgrave prospère.
 Tout est dans la terreur.
 —Barons, nargue au saint-père,
 Et nargue à l'empereur!

Règnons, nous sommes braves,
 Par le fer, par le feu!
 —Nargue à Satan, burgraves!
 Burgraves, nargue à Dieu!

The word “narguer” meaning originally to wrinkle up the nose as a sign of contempt, cannot be literally rendered into English: there is no equivalent for it. In order to appreciate Rossetti’s rendering of this fierce song, you must remember that in singing French verse the final “e,” though soundless in prose, becomes a syllable:

In the time of the civil broils
 Our swords are stubborn things.
 A fig for all the cities!
 A fig for all the kings!

The Burgrave prospereth:
 Men fear him more and more.
 Barons, a fig for his Holiness!
 A fig for the Emperor!

Right well we hold our own
 With the brand and the iron rod.
 A fig for Satan, Burgraves!
 Burgraves, a fig for God!

You may say that line by line the translation is not the same as the original. But the verse is—the stanza is: it gives exactly the same sense and spirit of the French, even while changing certain words. “Saint-père” (Holy Father) is

well enough represented by the equivalent English term "His Holiness"; and the expression "nargue à" is excellently rendered by the English term of contempt "a fig for"—originally borrowed from the Italian. The measure is as much the same as English permits. And there is another thing to notice; the English verses are much stronger than the French; for instance, notice the splendid effect of the word "stubborn" in the second line of the first stanza. Anything translated by a genius from a Latin tongue into a Northern tongue ought, by virtue of the qualities inherent in the Northern speech, to gain in strength and it does so in this case. The strength of French becomes doubled in English.

This first song is intended to express the recklessness of strength and pride in rebellion. The next is intended to express the recklessness of passion in youth—a passion that devours the life of the person possessed by it:

L'hiver est froid, la bise est forte,
 Il neige là-haut sur les monts.
 Aimons, qu'importe!
 Qu'importe, aimons!

Je suis damné, ma mère est morte,
 Mon curé me fait cent sermons.
 Aimons, qu'importe!
 Qu'importe, aimons!

Belzébuth, qui frappe à ma porte,
 M'attend avec tous ses démons.
 Aimons, qu'importe!
 Qu'importe, aimons!

Here Rossetti has been obliged to leave the French measure as far as the first two lines of each stanza are concerned—he has had to lengthen these lines. If he could not reproduce the force of the original in an equally short line, we may doubt whether any other poet could have done

it. But remark that he keeps the burden within the same short compass as the French, syllable for syllable:—

Through the long winter the rough wind tears;
 With their white garment the hills look wan.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.

My mother is dead; God's patience wears;
 It seems my chaplain will not have done.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.

The Devil, hobbling up the stairs,
 Comes for me with his ugly throng.
 Love on: who cares?
 Who cares? Love on.

If there is anything lost in French, the loss is more than made up for by added strength in English. "It seems my chaplain will not have done" (meaning "I wonder if that priest will never get tired of wasting his time in talking to me") takes an irony that greatly surpasses the French irony. "The Devil" with the capital D does very well as the substitute for "Belzébuth", and the description suggested of the friends coming up the stairs led by their "hobbling chief" has a medieval grotesqueness not to be found in the French at all.

The last stanza is incomparably stronger than that of Victor Hugo. But, in his own way, Rossetti was greater than Hugo: and he understood Hugo perfectly. It was the case of one genius reading another. I put you to the trouble of comparing these texts only for illustrative purposes. Any English poem, which is a great translation of a foreign poem, ought to stand comparison equally well, and to gain in strength if the original express strength. If the original poem, on the other hand, be in Latin, and express tenderness, grace, delicacy, it will lose in English, not gain, no matter how clever be the translator. The English translation can give a force impossible to the Italian, French or

Spanish, but is much inferior to it in delicacy. No better example of this could be given than by Austin Dobson's attempt to translate Gautier's "Ars Victrix" (Art, the Victorious).*

The translation is pretty, of course, and gives a meaning, but there is not one stanza that even faintly could compare with the French in music and color and luminous grace. Yet Dobson is an excellent and delicate poet. But the subject is art and beauty; and the English language is not refined enough to express what the French can express on these subjects. It is still too harsh and stiff. Yet there have been English translators who came very near the beauty of the French in the renderings of light emotional verse. The rendering of emotion and memory is a much less difficult thing to accomplish than the rendering of the French art sense; and Thackery did the thing so well that, at all events, his verses have become famous for all time. The subject was chosen from Béranger,† and is entitled "The Garret". Béranger wrote a great many touching songs of student life; and the song translated by Thackery is one of the very best of these. Here is the English, describing the feelings of the student returning, when an old man, to look at the garret, where he lived in his student life:—

With pensive eyes the little room I view,
 Where, in my youth, I weathered it so long;
 With a wild mistress, a staunch friend or two,
 And a light heart still breaking into song:
 Making a mock of life, and all its cares,
 Rich in the glory of my rising sun,
 Lightly I vaulted up four pair of stairs,
 In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

Yes, 'tis a garret—let him know 't who will—
 There was my bed—full hard it was and small;
 My table there—and I decipher still
 Half a lame couplet charcoaled on the wall.
 Ye joys, that time hath swept with him away,
 Come to mine eyes, ye dreams of love and fun;

* Note A. † Note B.

For you I pawned my watch how many a day,
 In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

One jolly evening, when my friends and I
 Made happy music with our songs and cheers,
 A shout of triumph mounted up thus high,
 And distant cannon opened on our ears :
 We rise,—we join in the triumphant strain,—
 Napoleon conquers—Austeritz is won—
 Tyrants shall never tread us down again,
 In the brave days when I was twenty-one.

Let us begone—the place is sad and strange—
 How far, far off, these happy times appear ;
 All that I have to live I'd gladly change
 For one such month as I have wasted here—
 To draw long dreams of beauty, love, and power,
 From founts of hope that never will outrun,
 And drink all life's quintessence in an hour,
 Give me the days when I was twenty-one !

That is as near to the tender seriousness of the French as English can allow. On the whole, however, few English translators have done well with French. They have done better in translating other languages, and in translating German, they have been wonderfully successful at times. Perhaps because the genius of German is so much nearer to the genius of English. At all events Coleridge so found it: and his very finest translations are from Schiller. One of them, "The Visit of the Gods," is quite as good as Schiller*: you can make the comparison for yourselves. It is a very difficult form of verse—extremely difficult; and for that very reason it will best serve us as an example of Coleridge's place as a great translator:—

Never, believe me,
 Appear the Immortals,
 Never alone :
 Scarce had I welcomed the Sorrow-beguiler,
 Iacchus! but in came Boy Cupid the Smiler ;

* Note C.

Lo! Phoebus the Glorious descends from his throne!
 They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
 With Divinities fills my
 Terrestrial hall!

How shall I yield you
 Due entertainment,
 Celestial quire?

Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
 Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,
 That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
 Hah! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my soul!
 O give me the nectar!
 O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!
 Pour out for the poet,
 Hebe! pour free!

Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
 That Styx the detested no more he may view,
 And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be!
 Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Pæan, I cry!
 The wine of the Immortals
 Forbids me to die!

This kind of measure, apparently, wild and irregular, but really full of music and requiring great art to perfect, is called "dithyrambic." The reason that it is called "dithyrambic" is that one of the Greek names for the Wine God was Διθύραμβος; and the songs sung in his honor were called after his name, διθύραμβος. But the origin of the name is not known and the etymology of the word seems to have been lost.

As all the allusions are classical, this may require explanation:

The poem is founded upon the old Greek idea that the poet was inspired by the Gods. They came to visit him;—they came to bring of their immortal wine. Some said that a particular poem was inspired by a particular God. But the German poet says to us, "Never, believe it! the poet is

never visited by only one God at a time; the Gods come always in company. I know it, because they visited me the other day. I had scarcely time to welcome the Wine God, when the smiling God of Love came in; and then suddenly descended from Heaven, the great God of Song and Poetry himself,—the Sun God Apollo. Then presently my house became filled with them. But I cried out: ‘How can I welcome you Gods in such a poor house as this? Rather lift me up into heaven that I may sing to you there’; and they lifted me up with them to Olympus; and I cried out for the wine of the Gods. Then they told Hebe the wine-giver, to pour out free, and to brighten my eyes with the dew of heaven, so that I might never see the River of Death and might think myself to be even as the Gods. And I thanked the wine-giver, and drank, and uttered the sacred cry, ‘Io Pæan’—knowing that I had drunk of immortality, and could not die.”

There is a double meaning in this beautiful spirits fancy—the immortality of the poet—through his work, being referred to equally with the immortality which is personal divinity. As for the name, Iacchus, it is the same as Bacchus, a name of the God of Wine;—Phoebus is an appellation of Apollo, God of Song and God of Sun; Olympus, the sacred mountain of Greece, was also supposed to be the home of the gods;—Styx was the river over which the souls of the dead had to pass, and ancient poets commonly spoke of it as the hated Styx; Hebe was the Goddess of Youth, who poured out the wine for the gods; she was given as a wife to Hercules after his apotheosis. The cry ‘Io Pæan’ was the cry of joy uttered at religious festivals, and often appears in the ancient lyric poetry. The meaning of the second word is, I believe, still disputed. So much for explanation. Every time you read this poem over, the more you ought to admire it. The choice of words is exceedingly beautiful—as in the use of the verb “float” in the 7th line of the 1st stanza; and the use of the verb “waft” in the 7th line of the 2nd stanza; and the use of the verb

“quaff” in the 7th line of the 3rd stanza. It is a wonderful translation—though rendering the spirit of the original more than the mere letter.

Among the early groups of the nineteenth century poets few were great translators except Scott and Coleridge, who loved both German and Italian study. Scott also translated some things which will never be dissociated from his name. From the German, for example, there are the ballads of Bürger, “Lenore” and “The Wild Huntsman.” In the case of “Lenore,” Scott actually improved upon the original. You will find his translation under the title of “William and Helen.” Scott also translated some Scandinavian prose and verse; but in this he has been made old-fashioned by later and more exact scholarship. He was most successful with ballads and songs—for his real genius was in that direction. Speaking of song, I must remind you that he translated admirably, and in identical measure (so that his words are still sung to the French air), the famous “Chant du Depart,” composed by Hortense de Beauharnais, sister of the Empress Josephine, and afterwards herself a queen. She is said to have composed both the music and words herself, while quite a young girl. If this be true, it is perhaps the only instance of a young girl composing both the words and music of a national song—a song that after more than a hundred years appeals to the ear and heart as strongly as ever. You will find Sir Walter Scott’s translation* beginning with “*It was Dunois*” in the volumes devoted to the poetry of France, among Longfellow’s great collection, “Poems of Places,” which is in the library.

Wordsworth was little or nothing of a translator,—he did not trouble himself much about the subject. Keats was too busy with original poetry and died too young. Shelley also died too young, but young as he was he left some Homeric poems which show how very great a translator he might have become. There are seven or eight of these. The best is “Homer’s Hymn to Venus,” but remember that none

* Note D.

of his work was fully finished. There are gaps in the lines; showing that Shelley intended to go over the poems again, supplying the missing words which had escaped him at first. Byron made translations from the Italian; but as a translator, Byron did not rise to the highest rank. When we come to the great group of Victorian poets, with Tennyson, there we naturally find great translators — for these groups carried form to a perfection never known before or since, and study of form especially demanded a study of classic and foreign models. Tennyson's translation of a passage from Homer's "Illiad" is one of the immortal things which he did, showing us how great a translator of Homer he might have been if he wished. Tennyson's translation from the Anglo-Saxon of "The Battle of Brunanburh," is also an immortal thing. Still translation was not Tennyson's particular field; he went there sometimes, just to amuse himself. Browning did better and more; for he translated Greek plays in a most astonishing way. Perhaps the best of this work is the version of the "Alcestis" of Euripides. Rossetti translated from Old French, Modern French, German (a whole romance) and Italian (a whole school of poets). He ranks as the greatest of translators, so far as modern languages are concerned. Swinburne's translations are chiefly from the Old French; and we have a right to regret that the best of Greek scholars among modern poets should have attempted no translation from the Greek. For the Greek anthology, the best translator of the age was Symonds, and the best translator of Latin was Calverley. Morris was a translator; and his great version of the Niblung Saga will probably always live. But in all the above bulk of work the very great things are not the long translations, but the short. The translations that rise into the very highest sphere of art are small fragments or detached lyrics.

I must say a word about Calverley's work. Greatest of modern translators from Latin his scholarship was nevertheless rather in the direction of exactness than in the direction of emotional values. He translated often in a very

curious way, always for the benefit of his students; for he became translator only because of his being a teacher at Cambridge University. He knew most of the English poets by heart; and he could take, without scruple, any phrase from Tennyson, or Browning, or Swinburne, or anybody else, that would give exactly the classical meaning and make harmony with the measure of the line. Thus some of his work is patch work. But it is greatly admired and thoroughly successful, and I ought to give you some examples of it. Here is an example translated from Virgil (Georgics III), entitled "The Dead Ox."

Lo! smoking in the stubborn plough, the ox
 Falls, from his lip foam gushing crimson-stained,
 And sobs his life out. Sad of face the ploughman
 Moves, disentangling from his comrade's corpse
 The lone survivor; and its work half-done,
 Abandoned in the furrow stands the plough.
 Not shadiest forest-depths, not softest lawns,
 May move him now; not river amber-pure,
 That tumbles o'er the cragstones to the plain.
 Powerless the broad sides, glazed the rayless eye,
 And low and lower sinks the ponderous neck.
 What thank hath he for all the toil he toiled,
 The heavy-clodded land in man's behoof
 Upturning? Yet the grape of Italy,
 The stored-up feast hath wrought no harm to him:
 Green leaf and taintless grass are all their fare;
 The clear rill or the travel-freshened stream
 Their cup; nor one care mars their honest sleep.

Another very fine example of Calverley's work may be found in the translation of Lucretius (Book II),—not the easier part, but the most difficult philosophical passages. Here is a part of the passage on the subject of superstition:—

For, as a young boy trembles, and in that mystery, Darkness,
 Sees all terrible things: so do we too, ev'n in the daylight,

Ofttimes shudder at that, which is not more really alarming
Than boys' fears, when they waken, and say some danger
is o'er them.

So this panic of mind, these clouds which gather around us,
Fly not the bright sunbeam, nor the ivory shafts of the Day-star:
Nature, rightly revealed, and the Reason only, dispel them.

Here are some lines translated from the magnificent
pages of Lucretius about the impermanence of all sub-
stance:—

Matter mingled and massed into indissoluble union
Does not exist. For we see how wastes each separate substance;
So flow piecemeal away, with the length'ning centuries, all things,
Till from our eye by degrees that old self passes, and is not.
Still Universal Nature abides unchanged as aforesaid.

* * * * *

Let but a few years
Pass, and a race has arisen which was not: as in a racecourse
One hands on to another, the burning torch of Existence.

Independent of exactness—though it is very exact—this
kind of translation rises into the first rank as noble poetry.
I suppose you know that the allusion in the last line of the
above translation is to the old Greek torch-race.

I did not intend to make this lecture even quite so
long. But I hope that it has some interest for you, because
the subject of literature in translation is too often slighted
by the student, who may imagine that no translation really
belongs to English literature as much as original poetry
does. This is a mistake. There are translated poems of
the very first rank in lyrical production. But there are not
many. Great translation is perhaps the hardest of all things
to do—except pure creation, which is almost impossible.

NOTE A

* THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

L'ART

QUI, l'œuvre sort plus belle
 D'une forme au travail
 Rebelle,
 Vers, marbre, onyx, émail.

Point de contraintes fausses!
 Mais que pour marcher droit
 Tu chausses,
 Muse, un cothurne étroit.

Fi du rythme commode,
 Comme un soulier trop grand,
 Du mode
 Que tout pied quitte et prend!

Statuaire, repousse
 L'argile que pétrit
 Le pouce
 Quand flotte ailleurs l'esprit;

Lutte avec le carrare,
 Avec le paros dur
 Et rare,
 Gardiens du contour pur;

Emprunté à Syracuse
 Son bronze où fermement
 S'accuse
 Le trait fier et charmant;

D'une main délicate
 Poursuis dans un filon
 D'agate
 Le profil d'Apollon.

Peintre, fuis l'aquarelle,
 Et fixe la couleur
 Trop frêle
 Au four de l'émailleur.

AUSTIN DOBSON

ARS VICTRIX

(Imitated from Théophile Gautier)

YES; when the ways oppose—
 When the hard means rebel,
 Fairer the work out-grows,—
 More potent far the spell.

O POET, then, forbear
 The loosely-sandalled verse,
 Choose rather thou to wear
 The buskin—strait and terse;

Leave to the tyro's hand
 The limp and shapeless style;
 See that thy form demand
 The labour of the file.

SCULPTOR, do thou discard
 The yielding clay,—consign
 To Paros marble hard
 The beauty of thy line;—

Model thy Satyr's face
 For bronze of Syracuse;
 In the veined agate trace
 The profile of thy Muse.

PAINTER, that still must mix
 But transient tints anew,
 Thou in the furnace fix
 The firm enamel's hue;

Fais les sirènes bleues,
Tordant de cent façons
Leurs queues,
Les monstres des blasons ;

Dans son nimbe trilobe
La Vierge et son Jésus,
Le globe
Avec la croix dessus.

Tout passe.—L'art robuste
Seul a l'éternité.
Le buste
Survit à la cité.

Et la médaille austère
Que trouve un laboureur
Sous terre
Révèle un empereur.

Les dieux eux-mêmes meurent.
Mais les vers souverains
Demeurent
Plus forts que les airains.

Sculpte, lime, ciselle ;
Que ton rêve flottant
Se scelle
Dans le bloc résistant !

—*Émaux et Camées*, édition
critique, publiée par Jacques
Madeleine (1927), pp. 94-96.

Let the smooth tile receive
Thy dove-drawn Erycine ;
Thy Sirens blue at eve
Coiled in a wash of wine.

All passes. ART alone
Enduring stays to us ;
The Bust out-lasts the throne,—
The Coin, Tiberius ;

Even the gods must go ;
Only the lofty Rhyme
Not countless years o'erthrow,—
Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel, then, or write ;
But, that the work surpass,
With the hard fashion fight,—
With the resisting mass.

—*Collected Poems*, Vol. I, pp.
214-216.

NOTE B

P.-J. DE BÉRANGER

LE GRENIER

AIR du Carnaval, de MEISSONNIER

Je viens revoir l'asile où ma jeunesse
De la misère a subi les leçons.
J'avais vingt ans, une folle maîtresse,
De francs amis et l'amour des chansons.

Bravant le monde, et les sots et les sages,
 Sans avenir, riche de mon printemps
 Leste et joyeux je montais six étages.
 Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!

C'est un grenier, point ne veux qu'on l'ignore.
 Lâ fut mon lit bien chétif et bien dur;
 Lâ fut ma table, et je retrouve encore
 Trois pieds d'un vers charbonnés sur le mur.
 Apparaissent, plaisirs de mon bel âge,
 Que d'un coup d'aile a fustigés le Temps.
 Vingt fois pour vous j'ai mis ma montre en gage.
 Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!

Lisette ici doit surtout apparaître,
 Vive, jolie, avec un frais chapeau :
 Déjà sa main à l'étroite fenêtre
 Suspend son châle en guise de rideau.
 Sa robe aussi va parer ma couchette;
 Respecte, Amour, ses plis longs et flottants.
 J'ai su depuis qui payait sa toilette.
 Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!

A table un jour, jour de grande richesse,
 De mes amis les voix brillaient en chœur,
 Quand jusqu'ici monte un cri d'allégress :
 A Marengo Bonaparte est vainqueur !
 Le canon gronde, un autre chant commence ;
 Nous célébrons tant de faits éclatants.
 Les rois jamais n'envahiront la France.
 Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!

Quittons ce toit où ma raison s'enivre.
 Oh! qu'ils sont loin, ces jours si regrettés!
 J'échangerais ce qu'il me reste à vivre
 Contre un des mois qu'ici Dieu m'a comptés.
 Pour rêver gloire, amour, plaisir, folie,
 Pour dépenser sa vie en peu d'instant,
 D'un long espoir pour la voir embellie,
 Dans un grenier qu'on est bien à vingt ans!

NOTE C

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

DITHYRAMBE

Nimmer, das glaubt mir, erscheinen die Götter,
Nimmer allein.

Kaum dass ich Bacchus den lustigen habe,
Kommt auch schon Amor, der lächelnde Knabe,
Phöbus der herrliche findet sich ein.

Sie nahen, sie kommen, die Himmlischen alle,
Mit Göttern erfüllt sich die irdische Halle.

Sagt, wie bewirt' ich, der Erdegeborne,
Himmlischen Chor?

Schenket mir euer unsterbliches Leben,
Götter! Was kann euch der sterbliche geben?
Hebet zu eurem Olymp mich empor!

Die Freude, sie wohnt nur in Jupiters Saale,
O füllet mit Nektar, o reicht mir die Schale!

Reich' ihm die Schale! Schenke dem Dichter,
Hebe, nur ein!

Netz' ihm die Augen mit himmlischen Taue,
Dass er den Styx, den verhassten, nicht schaue,
Einer der Unsern sich dünke zu sein.

Sie rauschet, sie perlet, die himmlische Quelle,
Der Busen wird ruhig, das Auge wird helle.

NOTE D

(The following is quoted from the author's copy in the Hearn Library, Toyama Koto-gakko, in which Hearn annotated in Japanese *kana*, that his son might appreciate the original with greater ease.)

ROMANCE OF DUNOIS

The original of this little Romance makes part of a manuscript collection of French songs, probably compiled by some young officer, which was found on the field of Waterloo, so much stained with clay and blood as sufficiently to indicate what had been the fate of its late owner.

IT was Dunois, the young and brave,
Was bound for Palestine,
But first he made his orisons
Before St. Mary's shrine:

“And grant, immortal queen of heaven,” ナクナラヌ
 Was still the soldier’s prayer,
 “That I may prove the bravest knight,
 And love the fairest fair.”

His oath of honour on the shrine タツトキ
 He graved it with his sword,
 And followed to the holy land キヨイクニ
 The banner of his lord;
 Where, faithful to his noble vow,
 His war-cry filled the air,
 “Be honored aye the bravest knight,
 Beloved the fairest fair.”

They owed the conquest to his arm, カチイクサ
 And then his liege-lord said,
 ハ
 ウ
 ビ
 ト
 シ
 テ
 ヨ
 ロ
 コ
 ビ
 オ
 ヤ
 ル
 ゼ
 ヒ
 “The heart that has for honor beat,
 By bliss must be repaid,— ハウビ オヤル
 My daughter Isabel and thou
 Shall be a wedded pair,
 For thou art bravest of the brave,
 She fairest of the fair.”
 And then they bound the holy knot
 Before St. Mary’s shrine,
 That makes a paradise on earth,
 If hearts and hands combine;
 And every lord and lady bright
 That were in chapel there,
 Cried, “Honored be the bravest knight,
 Beloved the fairest fair!”

Queen Hortense. Tr. Sir Walter Scott.

CHAPTER XXXV

FAREWELL ADDRESS

NOW that the term comes to a close, I think that it would be well to talk about the possible values of the studies which we have made together, in relation to Japanese literature. For, as I have often said, the only value of foreign literary studies to you (using the word literary in the artistic sense) must be that of their effect upon your own capacity to make literature in your own tongue. Just as a Frenchman does not write English books or a German French books, except in the way of scientific treatise, so the Japanese scholar who makes literature will not waste time by attempting to make it in another language than his own. And as his own is so very differently constructed in all respects from the European language, he can scarcely hope to obtain much in the way of new form from the study of French or English or German. So I think that we may say the chief benefit of these studies to you must be in thought, imagination and feeling. From western thought and imagination and feeling very much indeed can be obtained which will prove helpful in enriching and strengthening the Japanese literature of the future. It is by such studies that all western languages obtain—and obtain continually—new life and strength. English literature owes something to almost every other literature, not only in Europe, but even in the whole civilized world. The same can be said of French and German literature—perhaps also, though in less degree, of modern Italian. But notice that the original plant is not altered by the new sap; it is only made stronger and able to bear finer flowers. As English literature remains essentially English in spite of the riches gained from all other literatures, so should future Japanese literature remain

purely Japanese, no matter how much benefit it may obtain from the ideas and the arts of the West.

If you were to ask me, however, whether I knew of any great changes so far, I fear that I should be obliged to say, "No." Up to the present I think that there has been a great deal of translation and imitation and adoption into Japanese, from western literatures, but I do not think that there has been what we call true assimilation. Literature must be creative; and borrowing, or imitating, or adapting material in the raw state—none of this is creative. Yet it is natural that things should be so. This is the period of assimilation; later on the fine result will show, when all this foreign material has been transmuted, within the crucible of literature, into purely Japanese materials. But this cannot be done quickly.

Now I want to say something about the manner in which I imagine that these changes, and a new literature, must come about. I believe that there will have to be a romantic movement in Japan, of a much more deep-reaching kind than may now appear credible. I think that—to say the strangest thing first—the language of scholarship will have to be thrown away for purposes of creative art. I think that a time must come when the scholar will not be ashamed to write in the language of the common people, to make it a vehicle of his best and strongest thought, to enter into competition with artists who would now be classed as uneducated, perhaps even vulgar, men. Perhaps it will seem a strange thing to say, yet I think that there is no doubt about it. Very probably almost any university scholar consciously or unconsciously despises the colloquial art of the professional story-teller and the writer of popular plays in popular speech; nevertheless, if we can judge at all by the history of literary evolutions in other countries, it is the despised drama and the despised popular story and the vulgar song of the people which will prove the sources of future Japanese literature—a finer literature than any which has hitherto been produced.

I have not the slightest doubt that Shakespeare was considered very vulgar in the time when he wrote his plays—at least by common opinion. There were a few men intelligent enough to feel that his work was more alive than any other drama of the time. But these were exceptional men. And you know that in the eighteenth century the classical spirit was just as strong in England as it is now, or has been, in Japan. The reproach of the “vulgar,” I mean the reproach of vulgarity, would have been brought in Pope’s time against anybody who should have tried to write in the form which we now know to be much superior. I have told you also how the great literatures of France and Germany were obliged to pass through a revolution against classical forms, which revolution brought into existence the most glorious work, both in poetry and prose, that either country ever produced.

But remember how the revolution began to work in all these countries of the West. It began with a careful and loving study of the despised oral literature of the common people. It meant the descent of great scholars from their thrones of learning to mix with peasants and ignorant people, to speak their dialects, to sympathize with their simple but deep and true emotions. I do not say that the scholar went to live in a farmhouse, or to share the poverty and misery of the wretched in great cities; I mean only that he descended to them in spirit—sympathized with them—conquered his prejudices—learned to love them for the simple goodness and the simple truth in their uneducated natures. I think I told you before that even at one period of old Greek literature the Greek had to do something of very nearly the same kind. So I say that, in my humble opinion, a future literature in this country must be more or less founded upon a sympathy with and a love for the common, ignorant people, the great mass of the national humanity.

Now let me try to explain how and why these things have come to pass in almost every civilized country. The

natural tendency of society is to produce class distinctions, and everywhere the necessary tendency in the highest classes must be to conservatism—elegant conservatism. Conservatism and exclusiveness have their values; and I do not mean to suggest the least disrespect toward them. But conservatism invariably tends to fixity, to mannerism, to a hard crystallization. At length refined society obliges everybody to do and say according to rule—to express or to repress thought and feeling in the same way. Of course men's hearts cannot be entirely changed by rule; but such a tyranny of custom can be made that everybody is afraid to express thought or to utter feeling in a really natural way. When life becomes intensely artificial, severely conventional, literature begins to die. Then, western experience shows that there is one cure; nothing can bring back the failing life except a frank return to the unconventional, a frank return to the life and thought of the common people, who represent after all the soil from which everything human springs. When a language becomes hopelessly petrified by rules, it can be softened and strengthened and vivified by taking it back to its real source, the people, and soaking it there as in a bath. Everywhere this necessity has shown itself; everywhere it has been resisted with all the strength of pride and prejudice; but everywhere its outcome has been the same. French or German or English alike, after having exhausted all the resources of scholarship to perfect literature, have found literature beginning to dry and wither on their hands; and have been obliged to remove it from the atmosphere of the schools and to resurrect it by means of the literature of the ignorant. As this has happened everywhere else, I cannot help believing that it must happen here.

Yet do not think that I mean to speak at all slightly about the value of exact learning. Quite the contrary. I hold that it is the man of exact learning who best—providing that he has a sympathetic nature—can master to good result the common speech and the unlettered poetry. A Cambridge

education, for example, did not prevent Tennyson from writing astonishing ballads or dramatic poems in ballad measure in the difficult dialect of the northern English peasant. Indeed, in English literature the great Romantic reformers were all, or nearly all, well schooled men, but they were men who had artistic spirit enough to conquer the prejudices with which they were born, and without heeding the mockery of their own class, bravely worked to extract from simple peasant lore those fresh beauties which give such desirable qualities to Victorian poetry. Indeed, some went further—Sir Walter Scott, for example, who rode about the country, going into the houses of the poorest people, eating with them and drinking with them, and everywhere coaxing them to sing him a song or tell him a story of the past. I suppose there were many people who would then have laughed at Scott. But those little peasant songs which he picked out started the new English poetry. The whole literary tone of the eighteenth century was changed by them. Therefore I should certainly venture to hope that there yet may be a Japanese Walter Scott, whose learning will not prevent him from sympathizing with the unlearned.

Now I have said quite enough on that subject; and I have ventured it only through a sense of duty. The rest of what I have to say refers only to literary work.

I suppose that most of you, on leaving the University, will step into some profession likely to absorb a great deal of your time. Under these circumstances many a young man who loves literature resigns himself foolishly to give up his pleasures in this direction; such young scholars imagine that they have no time now for poetry or romance or drama—not even for much private study. I think that this is a very great mistake, and that it is the busy man who can best give us new literature—with the solitary exception perhaps of poetry. Great poetry requires leisure, and much time for solitary thinking. But in other departments of literature I can assure you that the men-of-letters throughout the West have been, and still are, to a great extent,

very busy men. Some are in the government service, some in post offices, some in the army and navy (and you know how busy military and naval officers have to be), some are bankers, judges, consuls, governors of provinces, even merchants—though these are few. The fact is that it is almost impossible for anybody to live merely by producing fine literature, and that the literary man must have, in most cases, an occupation. Every year the necessity for this becomes greater. But the principle of literary work is really not to do much at one time, but to do a little at regular intervals. I doubt whether any of you can ever be so busy that you will not be able to spare twenty minutes or half an hour in the course of one day to literature. Even if you should give only ten minutes a day, that will mean a great deal at the end of the year. Put it in another way. Can you not write five lines of literary work daily? If you can, the question of being busy is settled at once. Multiply three hundred and sixty-five by five. That means a very respectable amount of work in twelve months. How much better if you could determine to write twenty or thirty lines every day. I hope that if any of you really love literature, you will remember these few words, and never think yourselves too busy to study a little, even though it be only for ten or fifteen minutes every day. And now good-bye.

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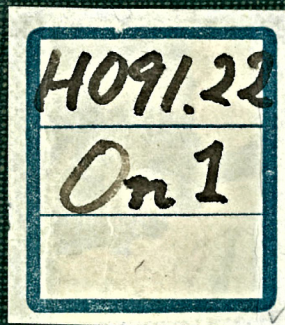
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