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A LOVER OF BOOKS

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Lucy Harrison.  
1890.

# A LOVER OF BOOKS

THE LIFE AND LITERARY  
PAPERS OF LUCY HARRISON  
WRITTEN AND ARRANGED BY

AMY GREENER



WITH  
PORTRAITS  
& ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON, PARIS AND TORONTO  
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1916

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## PREFACE

THIS book was intended primarily for Lucy Harrison's old pupils and personal friends, but it is hoped that as the record of the life and thought of a woman of rare quality of mind and spirit, it may be of interest to a larger circle of readers.

The Memoir has been written by Amy Greener, her "devoted and beloved friend for many years." Valuable help has been given by Lady Macdonell, Miss Harrison's sister, and also by the various friends who have kindly lent letters for publication. It is to be regretted that many letters written to sisters and old friends, which would have been of great interest for the present purpose, have not been preserved.

Thanks are due to the Editor of *The Vineyard* for permission to print two papers contributed to that magazine, to the Editor of *The Friend*, from which two Reviews are reprinted and extracts quoted, and to the Editor of *The Friends' Quarterly Examiner* for the Review of Professor Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*.



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*Erratum.*—In footnote on page 46, in place of 296 read 301.

**PART I**

1711

# A LOVER OF BOOKS

## PART I

### I. CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

“ Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither;  
Can in a moment travel thither—  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.”

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN a rare and beautiful soul passes away from this earth into the silence and mystery of the Beyond, there is a natural wish on the part of friends to retain as far as possible the memory and fragrance of the life that during its earthly pilgrimage has been to them a source of strength and inspiration. Yet the more ethereal the subject, the more delicate should be the handling, and this truth was brought home to the writer by a friend who said: “ To try to tell of a wonderful person is like having to describe a great piece of music, or a great picture, instead of just saying ‘ listen to it ’ or ‘ look at it. ’ Still it is worth doing for the sake of other people, as you are one who has heard and seen.”

The outward life of Lucy Harrison was uneventful; there is no thrilling romance or exciting adventure to describe; it is in her mind's life that the interest centres, and hence it is more with personality than with experiences that this record attempts to deal. Wherever it is possible, the story is given in her own words.

She was the youngest child of Daniel and Anna Harrison, both members of the Society of Friends, though her mother

afterwards joined the Church of England. Daniel Harrison was a native of Yorkshire and was born in a fine old house still standing at Countersett in Wensleydale. Quakerism was strong in the Yorkshire Dales in those days; the family can be traced in the old records of the Richmond Monthly Meeting from the end of the seventeenth century. In 1760 and onwards Reuben Harrison, Lucy's great-grandfather, appears in the annual list of Friends who refused to pay tithes to the Established Church, and who were consequently distrained—the goods seized in one instance—to represent the sum of £1 6s. 8d.—being “Cheeses, a ham of bacon, and stockins.” In 1794 the marriage of his son Reuben Harrison with Margaret Thompson is recorded. While their son Daniel was still a youth, his parents removed from Countersett and settled in a Lancashire town—where, the mother was told by a sagacious neighbour, the atmosphere was ‘just what her kitchen would be like if she put a slate on the top of the chimney while the fire was burning.’

Daniel Harrison married Anna Botham of Uttoxeter, whose mother's maiden name was Ann Wood; she was the granddaughter of the William Wood who in 1722 obtained from George I. the sole privilege to coin half-pence and farthings for Ireland, and who was the victim of the keen satire of Swift in *The Drapier's Letters*. He was descended from a François Dubois, a French Protestant, who came to England after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572; he married an English wife, and, probably to escape his persecutors, he changed his name to Wood.

The Botham family were brought up in very strict Quaker discipline; the daughter Anna used to tell her children stories of the pious severity of her father. For instance, she was very fond of flowers and had some artistic gift, and once with childish pride she showed her father a brilliant scarlet geranium she had painted; he quietly took it out of her hand and put it on the fire, saying, “Anna, it is very well done,



House (with porch) at Countersett where Daniel Harrison was born.  
Old Meeting House (with 3 windows) in which George Fox preached in 1652.





but I think thou wouldst be better pleased if I burnt it: it savours of vanity, my dear!"

When Lucy Harrison was born on January 17, 1844, the family lived in a house in the country at Birkenhead; five years later they went to live at Springfield, Egremont. This was a fine old house in a beautiful garden with flowers and fruit trees, and what attracted the children still more—a pond and a hut.

"I was born in the country," she writes; "most of my early days were spent in a garden, where I did just what I liked, where I was very much alone, and where I made my own pleasures and my own toys; where I tried experiments and found out that certain causes would be followed by certain effects. I fancy the most telling experience of my life happened when I was about seven years old. I was very fond of throwing stones, an accomplishment which in those days earned for me, not a place in a cricket eleven, but the name of 'Tom-boy.' One day—I remember it as vividly, more vividly than what happened yesterday—I went down to a pond there was in the garden, at one end of which was a rockery; on this rockery was sitting a robin singing its best. I had a stone in my hand and without a moment's thought I flung it and, to my exquisite surprise and satisfaction, I hit the bird and it fell silent. After the first start of joy in the success of the action, the revulsion came, and I hardly think the horror of Cain could have exceeded my feeling as I raised the warm little body in my hand and guiltily buried the bird in a quiet corner. I never told that incident to any one for years after, but it haunted me for long enough."

She often used to tell of another tragedy of her childhood in this garden. She once bought a fine knife with her saved-up pence, and it was a very great treasure, but while the joy of possession was still new, she was cutting some sticks by the pond and throwing the pieces into the water; by mistake she threw the knife in too, and as it disappeared her

childish grief was very real. "I felt as if I had thrown my heart in!" she used to say.

Lucy was the youngest of a large family—three boys and five girls—"a family in which great variety of opinion was permitted, and in which two forms of religious belief—Anglicanism and Quakerism—moved harmoniously together."<sup>1</sup> The mother was a remarkable woman, and had the discretion to allow her children to develop naturally and happily in a home atmosphere of gentleness and freedom. She exercised a potent influence over their awakening intelligence, and early fostered in them a love of the best literature. She would gather them round her in the twilight and repeat to them poetry of all kinds—old English Ballads, some of Lockhart's Spanish Ballads, pieces from Wordsworth, Byron, Campbell, Scott, Milton, many of her sister Mary Howitt's verses for children, numerous hymns, besides an odd collection of queer old songs and rhymes she had learnt from a romantic and superstitious old nurse in her own childhood. "I can see in my mind's eye," wrote Lucy in her maturity, "a group of children round their mother's knee in the glinting firelight; one after the other chooses from the well-known and seemingly exhaustless store, first a ballad, a lyric or simple hymn; then some stirring narrative-piece, or humorous story or didactic poem—sometimes barely understood, but leaving on the children's minds as they go to bed clear image and lovely melody to mingle with their dreams, and insensibly to mould their estimate of what is beautiful or heroic, spiritual or humorous, and all hallowed by the sacred love of the mother—

"She who was the heart  
And hinge of all our learning and our loves."

Lucy was a pretty, attractive child with rosy cheeks and light golden hair. Her sister says:

"Her blue eyes were serious and her manner reserved, except at times when she was merry and very amusing. She

<sup>1</sup> Her sister, Lady Macdonell.



ANNA HARRISON (*née* BOTHAM)



used sometimes to show comic penetration about things. I remember once when she was about four years old, she came down at tea-time and there were guests at the table; one of them noticed the rather dilapidated doll she carried, exclaiming, 'Oh, what a pretty doll! what a lovely doll!' Lucy held up the blue kid arms of the doll, out of which all the stuffing was gone, and which hung like rags, and said, 'Nice little fat arms!' which made all the company laugh."

She had a lively imagination and a great love of adventure. This spirit of enterprise sometimes led her into danger, as when she and an equally young cousin lost themselves in a Fair at Birkenhead to which they had stolen off on their own account, and amidst the bewildering noise and confusion of which they were discovered by their anxious guardians.

On March 5, 1850, when Lucy was six years old, her mother wrote in her Diary:

"Gardening all day. What a sweet, healthy occupation it is, working in the mould and turning up the earth. Planted ranunculus and anemone roots. Laid out gardens for the children. Lucy uses her spade with great delight. She will make a good gardener if she sets her plants and watches them with the same zest as she turns over the earth."

Another entry runs: "Dear little Lucy was full of fun and very amusing."

The family always looked back with pleasure on their life at Egremont, as may be gathered from the following extract from a long letter written by Mrs. Harrison to her little daughter, after they had left, describing almost every room in the house and the changes the new tenants had made.

"MARTIN'S LANE, LISCARD,  
*September 12, 1856.*

"DEAREST LUCY,—I have been spending the morning at Springfield. . . . I set off after writing my letters to enjoy a stroll in the old garden and to see the house. . . . I went first to your little gardens—how the things had grown. Annie's

broom was taller than Papa, the flowers were flourishing in spite of weeds. I brought away some yellow fermatory from Agnes's garden, a root of Jacob's Ladder from Annie's, and a forget-me-not from yours. They are in a box which I now forward, and if you will set them each in your separate beds and water them, they will grow and do well. The colchicums are from the pond, and the root is for you because the poor forget-me-not looks rather fading. . . . I went down to the pond and sat in the arbour and thought of past times. Adieu, beloved Lucy, with dear love to you all, believe me,

“ Your ever loving Mother,

ANNA HARRISON.”

In the autumn of 1854 the Harrisons removed to Marshalls, the old Manor House of Romford, Essex. The three brothers were much older than the younger girls and were away at school or business, and hence came little in contact with them. But there were several young cousins who were frequent visitors, and who shared in all the children's fun and games and their wild enterprises in the garden.

The eldest daughter, Mary, now undertook the education of her three younger sisters, but as usual with home lessons, the interruptions to work were frequent and Lucy learnt little. She preferred playing alone in the garden, her only companions being “ Hector,” a huge bloodhound, and “ Prinny,” a tiny dog given to her by her aunt Mary Howitt. “ Though an expert in top-whipping, boat-building, very precocious in the use of a knife and tools, she was peculiarly gentle in her movements and the tone of her voice. She loved animals and was fearless with them. On one occasion an enraged monkey which had escaped from its cage sprang upon her, to the horror of its pursuers. To their surprise she gently unwound its arms from her neck and held it quietly till its master came and took it.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lady Macdonell.

The severity of the winter of 1854 will long be remembered in connection with the sufferings of those engaged in the Crimean War. This winter the lake in the garden was frozen over for six weeks, and Lucy, who was then ten years old, had intense enjoyment in playing with her sister Annie at Robinson Crusoe on a small island in this frozen lake, especially when they were allowed to take out their lunch—which consisted of “bread and rum-butter and hunks of Dutch cheese.”

While the family lived at Romford there were many visitors from London, and the children had the educational advantage of intercourse with cultivated and distinguished people of the literary and artistic world—D. G. Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown were amongst these—as well as with some of the pioneers in social work. In the summer of 1855 Miss Octavia Hill went down with a number of her Toy Factory girls to have tea in the beautiful garden. Later on she and her sister Miranda were frequent visitors and a close friendship sprang up between them and the Harrisons, which lasted throughout their lives. Forty years later, in 1899, on the death of Mary Harrison, the invalid sister, who was her special friend, Octavia Hill wrote to one of the family:

“My mind goes back to such memories of intellectual companionship, of high ideal, of generous sympathy. I remember Marshalls and all it was to me as a poor struggling girl, our first day there, when we arrived in pouring rain, and the welcome you gave us and the poor children; memories of Mary, of Mary Harris, of your Mother and Father, and of you and Annie and Lucy. Then on and on through the years at Leicester and Highgate and Beckenham, what a friend she was! And what a noble figure of enthusiasm and energy and generosity. There was something royal in her nature, while its sweet serviceableness grudged none of the small services that made daily life bright.” . . .

When Lucy was thirteen she and two sisters went in charge

of Miss Mary Harrison to Heidelberg, where they spent a delightful two years. They came in contact in various ways with the simple, pleasant life of the Germany of that time, and studied German with great interest. "Had the course of study been tested by examination, the result would not have been striking, but they breathed an atmosphere of intellectual fulness, and there was intercourse with the families of many of the Professors of the University, and with the circle that revolved round the amiable household of the Chevalier de Bunsen, who was then living at Charlottenburg just over the Neccar."<sup>1</sup> Their parents joined them at Heidelberg, and in 1859 they all went to Dieppe, where Mr. and Mrs. Harrison stayed with their daughters for six months in the Faubourg de la Barre, and the three younger girls went daily to a good Roman Catholic School. Here they were taught French extremely well; Madame La Tour, the Head, was a very clever woman, whose art of espionage reminded the English pupils of Madame Beck in *Villette*. When their parents left them, the sisters lived for another six months in a little house in the School garden, where Lucy was allowed to keep her dog, Waltmann, and where they had a German maid who took the girls for long walks in the beautiful country round Dieppe, while the less-favoured Roman Catholic pupils scarcely ever left the School grounds.

Meanwhile a new home had been prepared in England and they rejoined their father and mother at Highgate—in a fine old house next door to where S. T. Coleridge used to live with Mr. Gilman. The garden sloped down to Lord Mansfield's Park, and beyond this there was a splendid view of London. Mrs. Harrison's sister and her husband, Mary and William Howitt, lived near, and at this time the Howitts were greatly interested in Spiritualism, and Lucy heard many a strange discussion on the subject.

In 1861 she and her sister Annie went to Bedford College,

<sup>1</sup> Lady Macdonell.



and they lived in town in a boarding-house for students. Lucy stayed two years at college where she studied with great interest, especially Latin, History, and English Literature. She said that this was really the conscious starting-point of all her intellectual activities. She often regretted in later life that she had not had a more systematic education, and had not studied Science and Mathematics more thoroughly, but may it not be true in her case that to this very lack of educational "System" was due the preservation of her freshness of mind and originality of expression?

Lady Macdonell writes:

"The bias of the teaching at Bedford College was liberal and unsectarian, and it was also very varied. Latin was taught by Professor Beesly, a positivist; English Literature by Dr. George Macdonald; Dr. Kinkel, the most popular of the teaching staff, whose brilliant lectures on Geography were always crowded, was an exile patriot and quondam Professor of Bonn University; lectures on Modern History were given by Professor S. R. Gardiner, and the Professor of Mathematics was Richard Holt Hutton—subsequent editor and proprietor of *The Spectator*—a man of rare spirituality of mind. Such a group of teachers could not but stimulate, and exert a great influence on their classes. It was at this time that Lucy drew the attention of Dr. George Macdonald, whose generous appreciation and wide spiritual perception were illuminating qualities in his teaching, and whose views—on Shakespeare's Plays, for instance—roused independent thought. He quickly detected the unusual instinct for the great things in Literature in his diffident pupil, and his authoritative praise and encouragement gave her perhaps the first knowledge of her own powers. She was often invited, with other students, to his house at Hammersmith, with its picturesque garden looking on the Thames, and later on as a guest she shared from time to time in the beautiful household life of this large family. She saw scenes from *The Pilgrim's Progress* acted by

father, mother, and children, and was deeply impressed by this original performance, coming as it did before the revival in England of the old Morality Plays."

One of this family writes:

"I have been asked if I can give some reminiscences of the times when Miss Lucy Harrison was so frequent a visitor at my father's house on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith.

"Miss Harrison began to come to our house while she was a pupil of my father at Bedford College where he lectured on English Literature and allied subjects. Upon one occasion, in 1869, she took charge of the whole house for a few weeks while our parents were in Scotland.

"All I can hope to do is to convey some idea of the way in which Lucy Harrison's quite wonderful personality shone upon the home and family of George and Louisa Macdonald. To call hers a spiritual presence would, I think, be altogether apposite; her person was illumine with strength and gentleness and merriment. Her finely proportioned figure, upright as any healthy girl's should be, could not have been rightly dominated by any other head and face than hers. There was strength in the poise of her head, with its short curly hair, and sweetness about the firm lips and their wonderful smile, and her clear blue eyes with their steadfast look seemed as if they shed light upon all they beheld. A favourite attitude was with hands clasped behind her—an attitude that made one feel her reliance upon what was given from above rather than upon the environment which frailer beings clutch at and blame for its fickle help. That she was a skilful carpenter was in that day a surprising fact, adding much to her claim for admiration.

"She was, I suppose, some ten or twelve years older than one of that family—he being but a shy and silent boy, beginning to awake from a rather dull and backward childhood into a new world of mental adventure. How much Lucy Harrison had to do with lifting that boy out of his school hopelessness

I do not know; but that she lifted him out of a moral apathy I am entirely persuaded. Thereafter the world began to have meaning: how could it be otherwise with that luminous adorable girl leading him—all unknown to herself and him—out from dark caves of groping into the sunlight of romance?

“ Few can know the richness of the seed that they scatter, nor the fruit it brings forth. With the utmost desire for truthfulness, the story of one person’s husbandry can nohow be written. The good women who make no clamour do more tilling and sowing than they, or the world, know of; and they do no reaping. But the seed that must be sown because it comes from the starry barns is always miraculous; and the hand that scatters it wherever it finds a bit of hungry soil, cannot know the harvests that spring from its labour.

“ Boys and girls are more susceptible to spiritual impressions, good or bad, perhaps, than when the cares and duties of manhood or womanhood master their lives. They lie passive and hungry: it is the seed that counts.

“ That one boy of whom I write is more grateful to Lucy Harrison than he can tell; in spite of failures and flickerings of the Light, his work at least, so far as it has been of use to the world, owes her a debt that he has no desire to repay.”

Fifty years after the date to which these reminiscences go back, the same writer says, “ I was happy in meeting her a couple of years ago and therein being reminded that my boyhood’s impression of her beautiful personality needed no renewal.”

When she left Bedford College she went to Leicester, where her family lived from 1862-64. “ The Civil War was then going on in America and the household at Leicester ardently supported the North and joined in the efforts to assist the Lancashire operatives suffering from the cotton famine consequent on the war. Lucy was as earnest in the cause as the rest; a number of humorous sketches illustrating the attitude of *The Times* recorded her feeling on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These sketches cannot now be found.



Woman's state of mind

The Commencement Casting!! Your application is  
of things that are not things!



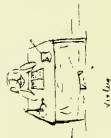
Before  
before the commencement of things



After  
made out in detail, it was to show an "out"  
of the spirit of the first commencement.



Woman's state of mind  
at the end of the  
first commencement.



The Commencement



The Commencement



After  
After the first commencement  
The Commencement



The Commencement



The Commencement



The Commencement



The Commencement



The Commencement

# EXAMINATION EXPERIENCES



The safest way of coming down a mountain.



Seen from the road near Basle.



*Amos April 1899*



SKETCHES DURING A VISIT TO FRANCE

“The years at Leicester were happy. There was congenial and affectionate intercourse with the many branches of the Ellis family, long established in that part of Leicestershire and connected by marriage with my mother’s family. There were constant happy meetings in the various homes—centres of intellectual life, and of interest in all that concerned the well-being of the nation in politics and in philanthropic movements.”<sup>1</sup>

At Leicester Lucy began to learn wood-carving, an art at which she worked for many years, and in which she became very proficient, for she was naturally clever at any handicraft. She carved many gifts for her friends, chiefly from her own designs, and her last large piece of work was an oak corner-cupboard, dated 1886, still to be seen in her sitting-room at Cupples Field. Later on she gave lessons in wood-carving, first to girls at the Working Women’s College in London, then to a class of poor boys in St. Christopher’s Place, and ultimately to classes of girls at school. She had considerable skill in drawing, as well as designing, and whenever she had a pencil in her hand she would sketch charming little figures, full of life and humour, in her note-books.

In 1864 the Harrisons removed to Beckenham. Here the two youngest daughters, Annie and Lucy, who were still at home with their parents and eldest sister, seem to have lived a very free, happy life, full of social and intellectual interests, as well as of physical activity. They had many friends, among whom were Mrs. Craik, author of *John Halifax*, Dora Greenwell, William de Morgan, Professor S. R. Gardiner, and the artists Holman Hunt, Albert Goodwin, and Arthur Hughes. Lucy was very shy with strangers and did not care for ordinary socialities, and many a time she preferred to stay at home and read to her mother while the others went out for the evening. She never took kindly to domestic duties and disliked sewing, yet she was always willing to take her

<sup>1</sup> Lady Macdonell.

share in household affairs, and as the youngest of a large family she had ample opportunities of practising unselfishness.

Notwithstanding their Quaker descent, the Harrison family were all good actors, and as children had been allowed to give original entertainments and to act impromptu charades. Lucy developed unusual powers in this direction and she was



There was an old man who said "How, - shall I flee from this terrible Cow?  
I will sit on this stile & continue to smile  
Wh: may enjoy the heart of this Cow."

FROM LEAR'S "BOOK OF NONSENSE"

in frequent demand to help her friends when they were getting up acting. One of the George Macdonald family says:

"We remember her taking the part of a Curate in *The Tetterbys*—a play my mother adapted from Charles Dickens's *Haunted Man*, in which we all took part. All I remember is that Miss Harrison made so perfect a Curate that the fact of petticoats hardly seemed inconsistent."

The Harrison brothers had left home and were married by the time the younger sisters were grown up, but their place in the home interests was taken to some extent by their cousins, Joe, Alfred, and Fred Simpson, who were constant visitors at Egerton House. The bond of comradeship was very close between the cousins, and no enterprise or entertain-

ment was complete—were it acting or riding or dancing—unless one at least of the Simpsons had a share in it.

During these years at home Lucy was extremely vigorous in mind and body. She used to go for long rides, often with her father, and would get up at half-past six on a winter's morning to go to skate and would stay on the ice nearly all day. She often went up to town early, read Latin with Miss Octavia Hill, then attended perhaps two lectures at Bedford College and would not get home till evening. The whole family delighted in reading, and many a book was read aloud in the evenings. One of Lucy's most vivid recollections of her young days was of her brother Alfred, who was a clergyman, bringing home from time to time a new number of one of Dickens's novels—published in parts—and reading it aloud to the group of eager listeners. On Sunday afternoons it was a custom to gather round the fire and one after the other to recite poems or hymns—anything they had learnt by heart.

On February 19, 1866, there is the entry in her diary, whilst staying with Mrs. Peter Taylor at Aubrey House, Kensington: "We called to see Miss Frances Power Cobbe and Mazzini." She used often to speak of this visit to Mazzini, who was then a refugee in England, living in a small bare-looking London lodging, and very poorly clad. But the personality of the man seemed to glorify his surroundings, and though she admitted with regret that she did not at the time realise the thrilling interest of such an opportunity, yet she never forgot the impression she received of his eagerness, his glowing countenance—"A face to make the darkness dawn"—and the wonderful light in his penetrating eyes. As she was leaving, he graciously offered her a cigar—a gift she long treasured and kept hanging over her mantelpiece.

Another interesting experience belonging to her life in London was dining at a friend's house where Robert Browning was one of the guests. "One of the dishes on the menu," she used to relate, "was 'lark-pie,' and to my dismay Browning



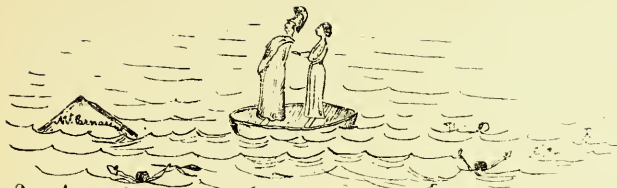
—I hope unconsciously—took some, whereat my neighbour whispered to me, ‘Cannibal!’ During dinner the conversation turned on the question whether it was ever right in any circumstances to tell a lie. Browning took no part in the discussion, but when at the end it seemed to be accepted that there were possible occasions when this would be justifiable, he turned to his neighbour and quietly said, ‘Has Jeanie Deans lived in vain, then?’”



Lycornetes envious of the fame of Theseus led him to an elevated place, on pretence of showing him the extent of his dominions, & precipitated him down a precipice where he was killed.

*vide the names Classical Dictionary.*

LYCOMEDES THROWING THESEUS OVER A PRECIPICE  
(Sketched in 1865)



Democles + his wife after a nine days' Cruise during a storm taken up by Alcibiades.



Amphion giving a select morning Concert.



Sanymedes a beautiful youth of Ethiopia, being carried off by the Eagle of Jupiter.

## II. WORK

“ It is the generous spirit, who when brought  
Amongst the tasks of real life hath wrought  
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought.”

WORDSWORTH.

IT was in 1866, when she was twenty-two, that Lucy Harrison had her first experience of teaching—a profession which she always laughingly said she “entered by a fluke!” One morning she had a letter from Miss Frances Martin, Head of the Bedford College School (a preparatory day school for girls, attached to the College which was then in Bedford Square), asking her to give a little temporary help in place of a teacher who was ill. She went up to the school for three days, and Miss Martin asked her to continue the work till the end of the term, after which a permanent place on the staff was offered to her. She taught Latin, English subjects, and Natural History. She very much enjoyed this work which came to her so unexpectedly; at first she said she felt very inexperienced, and that she “needed knack” with the children, who to begin with were difficult to manage. But as might be expected with her intelligence, personal attraction, and devotion to duty, she soon mastered the difficulties of class-teaching.

In the spring of 1868, this school was given up by Bedford College, and Miss Martin retired. It was taken over by Miss Bolton, one of the staff, and removed to a house in Gower Street. Lucy Harrison went on teaching there, and she continued to go to and fro from Beckenham to Gower Street for several years, leaving home soon after 8 A.M., spending the morning in teaching, and not returning home till 2 P.M. Many a day she had lunch in town in order to attend a lecture or to see her friends in the afternoon, or she would return to town for the evening, after spending the afternoon at home

preparing lessons for the next day. Her reading went on as usual—Gladstone's Autobiography, Max Müller, Froude and other history, Spenser, Macaulay, Shakespeare, Carlyle, Dickens, George Eliot, are among the many books named in her diary of this period.

One summer she spent a delightful month at Allonby with the Harrises of Cockermouth, old and dear friends of the family. From here she went many excursions in the Lake District—walking, driving, boating—and from henceforth the attractions of Cumberland and Westmoreland were always great for her. It was during this visit that she had a memorable experience of the danger of boating on Crummock Water. She went with two of the Harris girls and one boatman for a sail up the lake to Scale Force, when a sudden storm came on and the water became very rough indeed. They were in great peril and feared every moment that the boat would capsize. Lucy often described afterwards how white all their faces were, and how her limbs trembled, until the boatman asked her to take an oar and help with the rowing; at once all fear vanished, her muscles became firm again, and being strong, and a good rower, she was able to do her part for the safety of the little boat.

During the Christmas holidays of 1869–70, she was one of a party of six friends who went on foot from London on a "Pilgrimage" to Canterbury, following as near as possible Chaucer's road, breaking their journey one night at the old Mitre Inn at Rochester, and the next at Maidstone, where they arrived drenched with rain. The third day they reached Canterbury and spent New Year's Day there, revelling in the glories of the beautiful old city. One of that happy party wrote afterwards to a friend:—

"Yes! our pilgrimage was delightful in spite of the wet; nay, when I think of our memorable walk into Maidstone, through darkness and torrents of rain, and when I think of the bright fire, the tea, the talk, the laughter, the discussion,

and the singing, that gave a glow to the evening, I am not quite sure that the rain did not heighten the enjoyment by the force of contrast. We read, we chatted, we declaimed, we told stories, we sang songs, we sang hymns, we quarrelled, we debated the profoundest questions in ethics and theology, we rambled in twos, we went to Church, and in a word, we enjoyed ourselves—like what shall I say?—well, like a pack of young, cultivated, pious Christian savages let loose! The experience was so delightful that we are already speaking of another pilgrimage.”<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1870, she was allowed an extension of holiday and went to America with her brother-in-law, Mr. Ellis Yarnall, who had been on a visit to England. She joined her sister Annie, who had been staying for some time in Philadelphia with their married sister, Mrs. Yarnall, and they now spent a delightful two months together. They went westward, visited Chicago, sailed on a gigantic steamer on the Mississippi, saw Niagara and other American wonders, and greatly enjoyed the novel experiences.

Soon after her return from America, Miss Harrison went to live at Gower Street, for she had joined Miss Bolton as a partner, and in 1875 she became sole Head of the School. She had now more scope for her originality of mind and was able to carry out successfully many plans she had evolved for the welfare of her pupils and the comfort of her staff. The School grew very popular, and the numbers increased. The standard of work was high and there was an excellent staff, including Professor S. R. Gardiner and Miss Chessar, the remarkably successful lecturer on geography and other subjects. Miss Chessar's estimate of the work is recorded in a letter written to Miss Harrison about a school examination:

“ The fact is, that your standard is so good, and the children so bright and clever that—well, I won't say what you might consider to be too complimentary. I only know that in your

<sup>1</sup> *Life of James Macdonell, Journalist.*

school I find the greatest pleasure in teaching the children, who respond so well."

During these busy years of teaching, she did much outside work of various kinds, the most strenuous perhaps being that at the Working Women's College, and her work in connection with her friend Miss Octavia Hill's scheme for the housing of the poor. She collected weekly rents, and in various ways came into personal touch with some of the London poor. Miss Hill was always ready to listen to recommendations for the further development of her scheme and to put them into practice, and when Miss Harrison once suggested the desirability of baths for the slum children, she was at once asked whether, if a bath were provided in the Court in Marylebone which was her special charge, she would be willing to superintend the weekly bathing. This she readily undertook, and she used to tell of the delight this bath gave to the little grimy children. At first, she explained, it required some firmness and tact to get them into the water, but as they grew to appreciate cleanliness, the chief difficulty was to get them out again!

She was always to the fore in matters relating to education; she belonged in its early days to the School-mistresses' Association, and was one of the first members of the Teachers' Guild. Besides doing a great deal of reading, she continued her study of Anglo-Saxon, and attended courses of Lectures, in particular those given by Professor Hales on English Literature. Professor Hales, in writing to her after an Examination held in December 1880, when she was, as usual, placed in the First Class with distinction, said, "I must first say with what pleasure I have read your Literature paper—several really *excellent* papers have been sent in; of them all yours is the best. Thank you for it." She was also engaged in bringing out her little book, *Spenser for Home and School*, which was published by Bentley in 1883. She wrote several short plays for her pupils to act, and some years later she

made a delightful translation of Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*—called *Borrowed Plumes*—for the Gower Street School.

It is not possible to estimate the influence Miss Harrison exerted not only on the hundreds of girls who passed through her London school, but also on the members of her staff and the parents of her pupils. Every one who came in contact with her felt the inexpressible charm of her presence and she was, in an exceptionally vivid way, the centre of the life and happiness of the school. One of her pupils wrote after leaving school:

“I can give no idea how greatly she was looked up to by every one of us. She said very little about rules, but somehow being under her made talk about rules unnecessary—they were kept.”

After nearly twenty years' connection with the Gower Street School, Miss Harrison's health broke down and at length she determined to give up her work and carry out the plan she had for years had in her mind, to build a little house and live in the country. Her ambition from girlhood had been to own a piece of land and build herself a house and have a garden and a library! Marriage never had any attraction for her; from a child she had loved freedom and independence and she had never found it a trial to be alone. Her thoughts now turned to Wensleydale, the remote Yorkshire valley where her father was born. Hence in the summer of 1883 she went with her widowed sister, Mrs. Macdonell, to Bainbridge for several weeks. They visited the old family house at Countersett, dated 1650, with Reuben Harrison's name scratched on one of the window-panes. She made many inquiries about a suitable plot of freehold land available for building purposes, and at length she found for sale on the Hawes Road a field of four acres. This was “Cupples Field,” which she ultimately bought, and during the next two years her great interest was the planning of her house and garden; some trees were planted at once, but the building was not actually begun till 1885.



There was much disappointment and sorrow when the time came for Miss Harrison to leave her school. Pupils, staff and parents felt they were parting from a true friend who had never spared herself in promoting their interests.

The school was passed over in 1885 to Miss Amy Greener, a total stranger, and nothing could be better proof of the lasting effect of Miss Harrison's influence than the loyal way in which, in spite of their regrets, pupils and staff welcomed the new Head and accepted the new conditions. Happily Miss Harrison remained in London till her house was built, and not only continued her history and literature lessons with the older girls, but gave her successor the invaluable help of her experience and advice in many a difficulty and dilemma. In this way the two came much in contact, and their acquaintance ripened into a close and lasting friendship. Life at Bainbridge was varied by frequent visits to Gower Street and the friends were much together during the holidays.

Whenever she was in London, Miss Harrison passed many hours reading at the British Museum, where she had for years been a well-known student. She had already begun to compile a History of England consisting almost exclusively of records contemporary with the events narrated, beginning with translations from Cæsar, but she did not finish the work, and the plan has since been carried out by others.

Bainbridge was a very primitive place thirty years ago. Though Askrigg station was only a mile away, there was little contact with the outer world. Cupples Field is a few minutes' walk from the village green and stands higher than the village, which is sheltered on all sides by hills. John Bentley, the well-known architect who built the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, made the plans; the proportions of the house are very beautiful and the low mullioned windows and quaint porch give it the appearance of age which is misleading to strangers.

Miss Harrison settled here in 1886 and found great interest

in the quiet country life; the reaction from over-work and strain took the health-renewing form of open-air occupations, such as gardening, keeping fowls and walking with her dogs. Needless to say, she found time too for writing and reading as well as for entertaining her friends; her invalid sister from Bournemouth spent the summer here for many years.

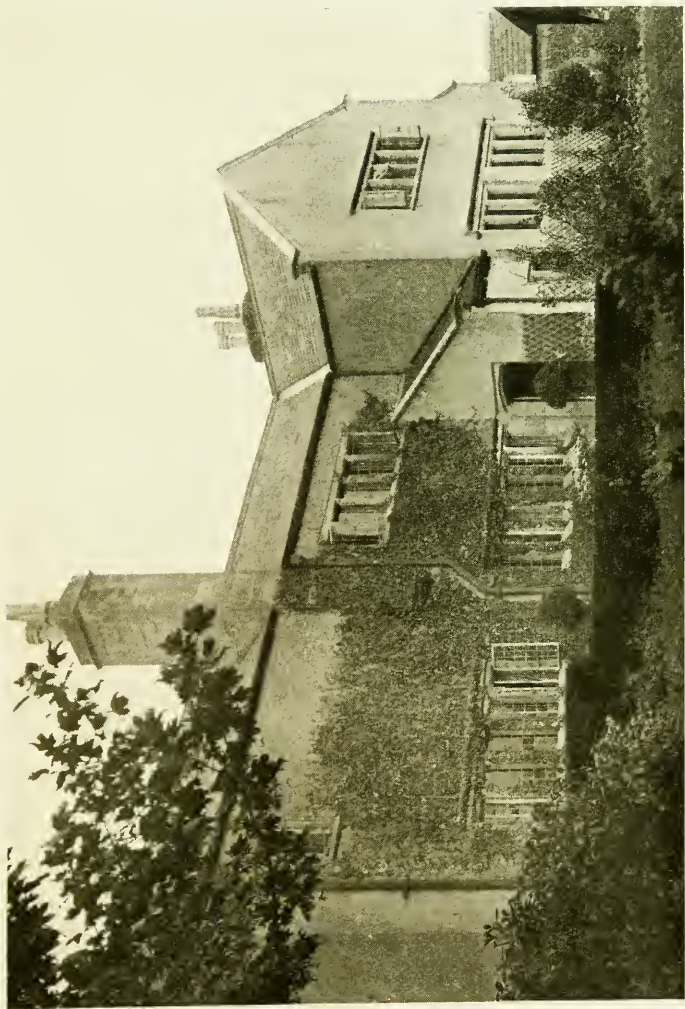
An impression of her life and interests at this time can best be given through extracts from letters to her friend at Gower Street. Some of the early letters are written from Yorescott, a farm-house where she and a friend stayed for several weeks until the house was quite ready and the furniture had arrived from London.

To A. G.

“YORESCOTT, BAINBRIDGE, *May 23, 1886.*

“. . . You ask about the house. Yes, it is really here and is on the whole very nice. It has faults which I might have avoided if I had been here while it was building—for instance, to get a view of the top of the hills from the rooms it is necessary to sit on the floor. This would not perhaps matter so much for me, but I question whether guests will like it. . . .

“Yesterday I had a rather curious experience. I seemed to be living in Gower Street with you and yet the immediate circumstance of fact around me was as different as I should think it was possible to imagine. Our host and hostess here proposed to take us in a dog-cart to what they called an ‘outlandish’ place over the hills, and we consented to go, thinking it would be a drive of a few hours. Instead of that we were out all day long. We drove and walked for miles along a road almost unused, through snowdrifts a foot deep, and away to a farm-house six miles from a town or church or school, and four from the railway, and one mile away from the road. We had to unyoke the horse and leave the trap on the roadside and then make our way over bog and marsh



CUPPLES FIELD



down the fell side to the farm, where we were hospitably received by the cleanest and brightest of women who gave us afternoon tea. I sat at the long table in the old kitchen and heard the men talking of all their bucolic interests—and the women too, for that matter—and I thought of you and Gower Street and your afternoon tea last Saturday, and then as we drove home in the late evening through the mist and along the desolate lonely road, and heard the peewits screaming overhead, I thought of your and my walk in Tottenham Court Road, and which was the most vivid I don't know—'We are such stuff as dreams are made of.' "

To A. G.

"YORESCOTT, July 6, 1886.

". . . The little white wiry-haired dog has come and Dandie takes most kindly to him and he to Dandie—as yet no 'little rift' has come to spoil the harmony. He is a bright, sharp black-eyed little fellow. I wish you would suggest a name for him. Coming at this time the only name that has suggested itself to me is 'Home Rule'!

"To-morrow I shall be at the house early . . . and I fancy I shall be there all day and shall have little time or quiet to write; but I shall send you a few lines from the midst of things, the first written words I shall send from my little home."

To A. G.

"From CUPPLES FIELD, July 9, 1886.

". . . I have come up *here*, have just been looking round, have fed the fowls and now established myself in the West bedroom, the room I hope you will soon occupy! Dandie and Willie—I have called him after the Grand Old Man—are my companions. It is very quiet and peaceful and as I look out of the West window down the valley and see the hills and the great clouds rolling over them and their shadows fleeting over

the fells, I long for you to be here and see it all with me and make it doubly beautiful through your companionship. Strange how much the human has to do with the pleasure one has in Nature! The beauty of this place would be almost pointless to me if it were not for the life and work one sees going on here, and if one had not associations with its very names. It adds a wonderful interest to me to know that my father as a lad must have walked and ridden down this very road that runs past my gate, and must have been out a hundred times on these fells. . . .”

To A. G.

“CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
July 27, 1886.

“ . . . To think that you will be here in a week or little more is too much to believe. But I do hope, dear, you will be prepared for great discomfort; no carpets, no proper meals to speak of, no amenities, no ornaments, no anything of an æsthetic nature. One thing I can promise you, that is a complete change as to hours. N. is a most excellent person, it seems, of the highest moral character and unblemished reputation, but her slowness is what Dominie Sampson would call Pro-di-gi-ous! Her sense of punctuality is nowhere and she would bring Mrs. Newcombe [the Gower Street house-keeper] to an early grave. She is striking in appearance and usually goes about in a bonnet (in which I *fancy* she sleeps) and clogs which resound through the neighbourhood. She has her good points. She informed me when we had dined off *one* chop that she was not a ‘great meat body’ and she thought I could not be either. The house, dear, is really chaotic and likely to be, but if the house is not ready, my heart is more than ready for you, and that you know, don’t you?

“N. has just gone out, or as she says, ‘slipped down’ to the village to get food for to-morrow and I am quite alone, responsible for all the doors, back and front, which really is

a greater responsibility than you might think, for imagine it, I had *callers* this afternoon. An American lady and her small daughter, who are staying in Bainbridge, seeing a new house walked in at the gate to survey things, and behold, saw me through the window and knew me! I had met them in all the glories of a London dinner party some time ago, and I suppose the last person they expected to see here was me—so small is this terrestrial globe!”

Early in August her friend made a short visit to Cupples Field, and then left for a few days while Miss Harrison entertained her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Yarnall, from Philadelphia. This visit is referred to in the following letter from her aunt, Mary Howitt:

“DIETENHEIM, *near* BRUNECK,  
August 25, 1886.

“MY DEAREST LUCY,—I don’t think I ever wrote to you before, and I don’t think I ever had a letter from you, and yet you have always had an especially warm place in my heart. There is so much in your character which, if not kindred to myself, is exactly what I greatly love and admire. Therefore I have determined to send you a line which shall expressly offer to you the warm congratulations of your cousin Margaret and myself on your charming country abode, and our warmest and most affectionate good wishes for your health and happiness in every sense of the words.

“We like the earnest simplicity of the *back* of the house, as shown in the photograph which dear Mary has sent, but now we want to see the other side. Cannot some of you clever sisters—to whom nothing is impossible—cannot you, I say, give us a little sketch of the *front* if there be no photograph? Now do try. We greatly admire the interior as Mary has described it—the general style of all—the quaint old-fashioned fire-places, the beams left in the ceilings, the beautiful wrought-iron locks and hinges—all so perfect and in such good taste—the uniform colour of the walls, the simple but exquisite style

of all the furniture! Yes, it must be a very charming place, and we rejoice, dear Louie, in knowing that it is yours, and that in one sense you have earned it for yourself. May our dear Lord bless it to you in every way!

“And how charming it has been—really like a Divine Blessing—that your beloved kindred, Margaret and Ellis and their dear girl, have broken bread with you in the house which you have built for yourself. It is like a chapter in a beautiful story.

“I am just about to send Mary your beloved mother’s letters, the reading of which has been a very great pleasure to me. I always knew how lovely was the character of your blessed mother; but taken in a long perspective of sixty years at least, it is to me a miracle of never-varying purity, tenderness, truth, and love—an angelic character.

“Farewell, dear Lucy. . . .

“I remain your affectionate old aunt,

“MARY HOWITT.”

To A. G.

“CUPPLES FIELD, *August 19, 1886.*

“. . . I have had some new experience to-day in supplementing the efforts of Mother Nature, who, I am beginning to think, is much over-rated, at all events as exemplified in the instincts of hens. I was under the impression at any rate that animals knew what to do with their young, but when you find an idiotic hen refusing without great pressure to sit on her eggs, and having no idea in the least as to how to treat the chickens when they *are* hatched, and when you have to have the miserable little damp creatures wrapped in flannel and deposited in baskets on your hearth, and when you have to try and feed them every hour, you begin to have your doubts as to the omnipotence of Mother-wit, and your correspondence naturally suffers. I wish to tell you of these details that you may know the pleasures in store for you, and I also feel it



my duty before it is too late to tell you that the kitchen grate is still causing anguish to the mind of N., and that cooking of anything but mutton chops (in spite of Jacks) is declared impossible. Let me know whether in the circumstances you will still brave the perils of Bainbridge. . . . I must go to bed, if indeed the chickens will let me—I am going to arrange a hot bottle for them which I hope they will be intelligent enough to take for a mother.”

“August 21 . . . You will be glad to hear that we have secured the co-operation of an experienced mother-hen, and we have made, I think, satisfactory arrangements with her for the bringing up of our orphans. After all, Nature seems to have advantages over hot bottles. I hope to be comparatively free when you come, and I shall not have to spend, I trust, *much* more than three or four hours a day over the animals! I am aghast to find that there are now no less than sixteen creatures on the estate to be seen to.”

“September 22 . . . Willie’s conduct has become reckless and insubordinate to a surprising degree. He chases the sheep and worries the geese, he teases Dandie and Eppie (the black kitten) with a persistency only to be equalled by a school-boy, he eats the fowls’ food and denies it openly, and he lies on the hearth and never so much as winks when I speak to him in my most awful voice. N. told me she thought him ‘very peculiar in his joints,’ and that he was so funny that he was ‘a’most fit for a circus’!”

“September 27 . . . All the animals (not the fowls) are on the hearth.

“I must tell you about Willie. It was a happy instinct that led me to call him after the Grand Old Man, for his spirit and mistakes could only be equalled by that great statesman. On Saturday I went to feed the fowls, and I shut Willie and Dandie in the workroom (upstairs). I was rather longer than I expected to be, and forgot the dogs and was muddling about in the garden, when suddenly like a comet from the

skies out flew Willie from the open window, crash upon the stone pavement. I thought naturally that all his legs at least must be broken, but no—he jumped up, and, though he had hurt one leg badly, nothing was broken. He had to be nursed, and if he had not been in such pain he would have been very amusing, for he was exactly like a spoiled child. He groaned and whined and tossed about and snapped at Margaret and Dandie, and did not show one scrap of the quiet patience animals usually exhibit when they are ill. He is a queer little beastie!”

“October 10 . . . Willie has been comparatively good and sensible since his flight from the window; it has tended to calm him down a little and teach him that even he is mortal.”

“ . . . I am reading Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* and like them much. He was a queer creature truly; the 'elements' of good and bad were indeed 'mixed' in *him*. I suppose if one could read the life of any one, great or small, this would be found to be the case, bad and good mixed in the best and worst of us all. It seems a strange thing that no one can be good altogether, that every creature must perforce have weaknesses and littlenesses! It's pretty plain generally what is right to do; why on earth can't we do it? That we know what is right and yet can't do it shows pretty clearly that it is not intellect that is to keep one right, and indeed in reading the lives of great people one is struck with the fact that bigness of mind is absolutely useless for moral purposes.”

To A. G.

“CUPPLES FIELD, November 28, 1886,  
7.30 P.M.

“ . . . Oh! for one hour with you again. I feel as if it would give me peace and faith once more. When I am with you I feel what Milton calls 'a homefelt delight, a sober certainty of waking bliss.' Dearest, I do not feel at home anywhere without you now. I was thinking this morning in Meeting,

what a wonderful thing it was that with all our bodily wants and seeming dependence upon outer circumstances, and in spite of all our striving for the good things of the world, when love comes, how absolutely independent we were of all these—I mean that with the person you love comes a halo and glow over everything however miserable and poor, and without that presence the light seems to leave the sun itself. This is a trite remark, I am afraid, but I thought of what it must be to those who really can truly feel that they have some of this love for God and what it would be to think that one could have His presence not only in one's life but in one's heart.

“ Why is it so hard to believe? I mean, to realise even dimly the existence of that love that we are told God has for us? I suppose indeed it is not difficult to those who do the will of God and who are active in well-doing.”

A letter such as this serves to show that the record of Lucy Harrison's life would not be complete without some reference to the “ side unseen ” she never turned to the world. Yet just because this was not the “ world's side ” it is difficult to touch on; perhaps the words of a friend written after reading this record in manuscript may be sufficiently illuminating:

“ When you let me hear the MS. and we came to the single sentence about marriage—its having no attractions for her—I wondered if other people would wonder, who did not know her, whether her life lacked the perfect rounding love could bring.

“ It strikes me in thinking of her how apt we are to take the ‘ soul-side ’ that people ‘ face the world with ’ for *them*. Our reading of life is so shallow and we are so ready to leave imagination to the lunatic, the lover and the poet. I have in Miss Harrison's handwriting the Coventry Patmore lines she sent me when she knew I was going to be married:

“ ‘ Love wakes men once a life-time each;  
They lift their heavy lids and look;  
And lo, what one sweet page can teach  
They read with joy, then shut the book.’

That other soul-side, the hidden one, must and does influence us, but we cannot all know it or read it, and how much we miss because it never dawns on us that it is there.

“She faced the world with such sanity and humour and capability, it was easy to forget that there was something in her beauty that could only spring from a spirit tender and sensitive to a degree that in this life must mean suffering as well as vision. If one is a maker—and she undoubtedly was, and her life a work of art—above all things one must be free for one’s work. Love that would serve her had to be love that would leave her free as air, and wait to serve. She needed love not only as a shield but as a channel through which she might give and receive from others. The wear and tear of the social relations which bring to most of us the human sympathy we need, would sometimes tell on her almost unbearably. Well, the love she needed came!

“How many of us, I think to myself, who ‘knew’ Miss Harrison and her power of drawing as it seemed endlessly on the treasures of beauty in art and nature, would have dreamt that she in Wensleydale, with her Library, and in the country she had chosen, ever felt like the rich young man in the parable, because the absence of the one loved friend left her poor and ill at ease?”

A few extracts from the many letters written by Lucy Harrison to her friend during the nine years they lived apart (1886 to 1895) must serve to give some indication of the close and happy relation that existed between them. The following lines are needed to complete the words above:

“To A. G.

“I wander in the pleasant fields  
 In the glad summer weather,  
 And all the sweets that Nature yields  
 Seem gathered up together.

The hills are bathed in tender lights,  
 The fields are bright with flowers,

And rushing headlong from the heights,  
The brooks are glad with showers.

There's nothing that I see around,  
That is not fraught with pleasure;  
My ears are filled with restful sound,  
There's beauty without measure.

But like the young man in the tale,  
Whose earthly store exceeded,  
Yet felt his riches somehow fail,  
For me there's one thing needed.

What lack I yet? Ah! Need I tell?  
The best to earth belonging,  
Of fairest hill and sweetest dell,  
Without *you*, leaves me longing.—L. H.

"Sunday, June 5, 1887."

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, November 25, 1886,  
8.30 P.M.

"Here I am—surrounded by absolute silence once more and also with signs of your love and thought for me. . . .

"All looked so nice and bright and welcoming when I came in. . . . Every one, too, was so kind and welcoming as I neared home, even to the guard of the Hawes train, who hoped I had enjoyed my stay in London. Here it seems very home-like—Dandie and Willie rushed out in a wild manner, barking and whining, and then Margaret appeared looking very neat and nice and escorted me in and was very pleasant. Dandie looks thin and rather grey; Willie has grown, and Eppie is lively and fat. They tell me that Dandie and Willie went down regularly into the village in the morning, looked round and then trotted home; then, as regularly, went for two or three fields distance westward and then returned as if they had done their duty in seeking me and had entered their protest and declared I was not to be found."

"December 3, 1886. . . . Yesterday afternoon I walked

to Semer Water. It was so beautifully bright and sunny and just as I got to the bridge close to the water the sun was setting red and brilliant behind the hills, white with snow, and the little lake looked exquisite in the light, and there was a stillness over everything that one seemed to be able to *feel*. How I thought of our walk there in the summer, of our talks, and how I longed for you to be with me. I am sure you would love to see the country now. There is something unspeakably solemn and grand in the quiet, patient rest of winter.

“ . . . I wish I could give you any idea of the beauty of some of these winter days and nights! Such sunsets and such vivid moonlight on the snowy hills! ”

To A. G.

“ CUPPLES FIELD, *December 26, 1886.*

“ . . . Oh, how I wished you could be with me yesterday. It was such a perfectly lovely Christmas Day! The place looked exquisite. On the hills the snow was lit up with the sunshine; the valley where all the snow had melted was green, and overhead there was the most beautiful blue sky with great white clouds floating about. The air was as clear and crisp as Swiss air, and as I walked over the fields to Askrigg I heard across the valley from Bainbridge the band, and the men singing the Christmas carols. It was really very lovely and the service in the Church was very sweet. . . . I was not allowed to sit where we sat together, as I should have liked to do, but was, like the good man in the parable, asked to ‘go up higher,’ and sat with Mrs. W. who was very gracious. I should have liked best to be in a more retired place, but after all it was very nice to shake hands and have a word with one’s kind on Christmas Day. I enjoyed the service in spite of the ‘Good tidings of great joy’ that the *Church* has kindly interpreted the faith of Christ into, as embodied in that foolish creed they must needs read on Christmas Day. I don’t know which strikes you most, its imbecility or its cold atrocity. . . .

“Will you read on Sunday Wordsworth’s *Pass of Kirkstone*. It is so beautiful and always seems to me as good as a thousand sermons.

“I find de Quincey charming. He has a wonderful mind; there is something very pure and delicate about him, and his appreciation of women’s character is very unusual in a man. I should like to show you something he says about women’s friendship—shall try to remember when you come.”

To A. G.

“CUPPLES FIELD, *February 2, 1887.*

“. . . I know all you mean about Death. It is indeed an awful veil and the inevitableness of it comes upon one with a terrible throb when one thinks of those one loves. I have told you, have I not, how I cannot bear to think of it sometimes; one’s faith seems to melt away in contemplation of the blank separation. Dear, dear Love, there is nothing in the world that could satisfy me or fill your place for me, but if separation by Death had to come, I think one could fly to the hope and thought of meeting hereafter; it would, I think, be impossible to live without that *Hope* at any rate. But if we *could* know all, and above everything, could clear up the mystery of Death and were absolutely certain of an after life, our whole existence here would be altered, the bar between the material and the spiritual would be done away with and we should be spirits, and no longer human beings whose mission in this life seems to be to work on with very little shown them, and to battle with the horrible troubles that flesh and matter put in our way. As you say, it is so easy to be faithless; but amongst all uncertainties this is certain, that the spiritual is the only thing that can give us hope: without it life does become a thing of matter and flesh only. Yes, indeed, there are far, far worse separations than death brings.”

“February 9, 1887. . . . Do not all these war rumours make you sick at heart? It is too vile, and is simply to give

employment to armies that need never have been raised. What incalculable harm the Germans with their hideous war craze are doing!"

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, *May 11, 1887.*

" . . . It is nine o'clock. I have finished my other letters and am sitting by the fire—Dandie on one side and Willie on the other, and in the hearth a basket containing the most noisy of chickens; he or she is the only representative of the celebrated 14, and from the noise it makes I think the disembodied 13 must have passed into its skin. It is really quite absurd! I can do nothing but look after those wretched creatures. I do a little gardening from time to time, I try to read and write in the evenings, but during the day I am a mere slave to the genus hen. I have some eggs which is a certain satisfaction. By the way, the hen is still sitting and I suppose will remain so for her natural life. Her mental powers must be of a very low order indeed, for the eggs have been removed long ago. I am afraid she does not know her *Lear* well and has not grasped the fact that 'nothing will come of nothing.' "

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, *September 29, 1887.*

" . . . The more I read of the New Testament and really try to understand it, the more I am impressed with the transcendent wisdom and profundity of Christ's teaching. This is trite enough, but one begins vaguely to appreciate the immensity of His teaching and the originality of it when one studies it ever so little, and to see how it is the beginning and the end of all morality; and yet how carelessly one has taken it all for granted, without a thought of what it really meant."

"October 16, 1888. . . . Yes, of course, *if* you could accept Authority all would indeed be easy, but it would be easy then



to be a Roman Catholic or anything else orthodox. To say that the Bible is the infallible authority seems to me absurd; there are other guides than the Bible—Abraham had no Bible, and I think that God's spirit is as much leading the 19th century in its mental perplexity as it did Abraham of old. The more I 'search the Scriptures' the more it seems to me that the doctrine of Bible infallibility has been fatally destructive to true and free belief. If 'search the Scriptures' is to mean anything, it is that in reading them we should use our reason and mental powers to the utmost—and it seems to me curious how completely sometimes you are left to draw your own conclusions, how little of *preaching* there is in the Old Testament at any rate. What do you think?

"I am sending you the analysis. I am of opinion that words are a good deal too much for us and that to attempt to box them up and label them as this, that, and the other is at any rate very painful. You will find mine a horrible muddle, and I don't suppose it will help you a bit. Scott's construction is a little loose sometimes. Don't you think so?"

"Alas! for rural brains, my dear—  
They are but sorry stuff!  
Analysis so very queer  
For Wensleydale's too tough.  
In olden times we thought of Scott  
As one who aimed to please,  
But now another use he's got—  
Viz. Infant brains to squeeze!"

"October 18, 1888 . . . I have been reading the 'Song of Solomon.' Will you please tell me *who* is responsible for the fantastic headings and interpretations of the chapters? It is a beautiful poem—some parts of *Maud* would never have been written, I think, if Solomon had not sung this song of his.

"I am also reading 'Isaiah' and find him very grand, but the Prophets need much, much study. I find them rather brain-cracking. But I am *beginning* to have a glimmer of

what the whole history of the Jews means at last. Isn't it delicious when you get one little intellectual window knocked out and made clear which has been blocked up all your life? "

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, *September 25, 1889.*

" . . . Thank you so much for seeing about Williams's Library for me. I have filled in the paper and send it. Pray what is my occupation? I thought of putting 'Nothing particular' or 'Unemployed.' By the way, as I was coming from the village the other day, I was accosted by a man whom I did not know but who seemed to know me; in the course of conversation he remarked that I was having some building done, and added, 'Well, it's a very good thing—it'll occupy your mind, and I am sure you must need that!'"

After four years of rest from strain and teaching, Miss Harrison's health was restored, and she was beginning to feel less contented with her "Hermit life," as she called it, when she heard that the post of Headmistress at The Mount School, York, was soon to be vacant. In November 1889, urged by some of her friends, she applied for this position and was appointed by the Committee. She had many misgivings as to her suitability for the work, and with her usual diffidence, did not expect her application would be considered. "Can you truthfully say," she wrote to her friend, "you think me fitted to cope with 60 young Quaker boarders? Now honestly? . . . I can imagine it *very* nice if I had you with me, but alone and cut off considerably more from you than at present!! Holidays in June! Still every one seems to think I ought to go in for it, and I am going to make a try, you see. I feel however one thing, and that is that I have very little chance of getting the post."

She sent with her application letters from her old friends, George Macdonald, Frances Martin, Octavia Hill, Arthur Hughes, Professor Goodwin, and Professor Hales. Twenty-

five years later Joseph Rowntree of York, a member of the School Committee, thus wrote:

“CLIFTON LODGE, YORK, *May 4, 1915.*

“I remember very well the occasion when Miss Harrison’s application for the post at The Mount School came before the Committee. . . . We listened to a series of remarkable testimonies from her friends and those who had come under her influence in former years. My impression at the time was that I had never known, upon any important appointment, such a consensus of opinion based on personal knowledge. As one has had the privilege of knowing Miss Harrison through the long years that have passed since that meeting, one has got to understand why her friends should have spoken as they did. There was with her the combination so rarely seen of gentleness and strength, of refinement and practical wisdom. All things which were beautiful and good seemed her natural habitude, and so a moral and intellectual atmosphere was created which must have influenced many lives.”

Miss Harrison began her work at The Mount School in January 1890. Boarding-school life was a new experience to her and for the first few months she still felt very anxious as to her suitability for the work she had undertaken. She was naturally shy and diffident, and it was a severe ordeal to find herself suddenly set down amongst a crowd of strangers with a perplexing number of new duties and a heavy weight of responsibility. At first the sense of loneliness and dread of failure were intense, but she gradually adapted herself to the unfamiliar surroundings; slowly she made friends with the staff, and in time began to feel that she was gaining some hold on the girls. On January 28 she wrote to her friend in London:

“4.45 P.M. I have just come in from my class which I have in the Lecture Room. It is delightful teaching in that room. It was the young Trainees. I can’t imagine whether I am giving them the right sort of thing, but I can but do my best

for them. They are bright little things and know a great deal for their age. I am struck with the excellent work which is done here. I have been into most of the teachers' classes now and I can see that they all know what they are about. They are splendidly thorough and conscientious *and* able. . . ."

After describing the rush and activity of a Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting she adds:

"Is it not a new world? It is really most curious to be in this new atmosphere, and I am greatly impressed with the excellent tone morally that there is here. There is absolutely no sham but the most thorough integrity of purpose. They may not be polished, but the whole tone is far above the average. I daresay it is very good for *me* to be here, but I am by no means certain that it is good for the institution to have me."

The institution, on the other hand, represented by the staff and the pupils, were forming a very different estimate, and were not long in discovering that the advent of Miss Harrison as Headmistress was an unquestionable *good* for them. Over 400 girls passed through the school during the twelve years she was Head, and they testify with no uncertain voice to the inspiration of her presence and her teaching. They say that they became gradually aware that a rare personality, unlike anything they had come in contact with before, had come amongst them—in beautiful outward form, with a soft musical voice and gentle manners—endowed with an inward and spiritual grace, in whose atmosphere it seemed that nothing trivial or unworthy or even commonplace could long exist. Nor was this all: they discovered also to their great satisfaction that their new Head was gifted with a keen sense of humour, that she could tell amusing stories, could do excellent wood-carving, and that she could enhance the attractions of the School Magazine by her witty contributions and clever illustrations. Her sound judgment and love of freedom and justice won the confidence of all with whom she

had to deal, and her experience and sense of proportion saved her from worrying either herself or others over non-essentials: often when those around her seemed to magnify trifles, she would quietly say, "What *does* it matter?" The true humility—that "highest virtue, mother of them all"—and the courtesy that seemed to dominate her character, made her ever ready to depreciate herself and her own achievements, and to listen even to school-girls as if they could say something that she cared to hear. She had the rare power of drawing out all that was best in those about her and making them realise that they were personally interesting to her. "I think what impressed me most," says one of her staff, "was her gentle refinement and consideration for others. She had a fascinating influence over us all and no one could help feeling the nobility of her character. If she had a fault it was that she thought far too little of herself—don't you remember how she would read a beautiful paper on Sunday evening as if she felt it was not worth giving and that nobody wanted to hear it."

During the twelve years that Miss Harrison was Headmistress many important changes were made in The Mount School, and the way in which these were carried out, with the ultimate concurrence of all concerned, gave ample proof of her tact, discretion and open-mindedness. The hours of meals were changed to times more in accordance with the modern interpretation of the laws of health, and many wise alterations were gradually made in the curriculum; the three-term system—instead of half-years—was introduced; a fine gymnasium was built and a gymnastic mistress appointed; the garden was enlarged and the space for out-of-door games thus extended; a house was taken opposite the School-building where a Kindergarten class and a Junior School for day-pupils was established. Structural alterations and additions were also made from time to time to meet the requirements of extra accommodation or increasing numbers. Miss Harrison

1900.

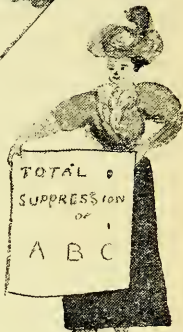


March 28

W. 43725



March 30

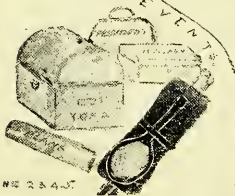


March 31



April 3.

COPIING EVENTS



JUNE 28 1900



April 11.



April 15 and 16



SCHOOL EVENTS FROM THE MOUNT SCHOOL MAGAZINE

1900

Key to Events.

- March 28. Bazaar in aid of the Indian Famine Fund.  
Proceeds £ 23.
- March 30. Lecture by Prof. Wees on The Adaptation of  
Plants to their Surroundings
- March 31. Lecture by Miss Dale on the Immorality of  
Teaching the Alphabet.
- April 3. O. B. Baynes's Lecture on his Continental  
Tour. Illustrated by slides of his own making
- April 4 + 5. The Sports. Cup won by Helen Andrews
- April 11. School Closed.
- May 1. School reopened.
- May 16. Debate Should the Government have published the  
Spion Kop Despatches? Were Peace Meetings advisable  
while the war excitement was on?
- May 18. Mapping Released -
- May 21. Sylvia Smees rapidly recovering
- May 21. Primrose Excursion in the rain.

took keen interest in the plans for an extensive new wing which was finished the year after she left the School. This consisted chiefly of new classrooms, studies for the mistresses and older scholars, and a beautiful library, in the planning and equipping of which she took special pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

The Mount School has long been famed for its many out-of-school interests and pursuits. Before Miss Harrison's day there were already a Natural History Society with various branches, a Poetry Learning Association (known as P.L.A.), and a Debating Society. During her time there arose and flourished Societies for Archæology, Astronomy, Meteorology, Photography, and others. To the Archæology Society, which was chiefly occupied with the architectural glories of ancient York, she was a great inspiration; she often went with the members to visit the Minster, St. Mary's Abbey, or an old Church, and added much to their pleasure and profit by her illuminating talks and explanations. The two volumes of her Archæology Diary are remarkable not only for the interest of the entries and their exquisite neatness and method, but also for their wealth of original and beautifully executed illustrations. She was very enthusiastic, years after she had left the School, on hearing of the discovery in the foundation of a new wing of a stone coffin and a Roman slab with an inscription to a soldier of the Sixth legion, which the authorities of the York Museum would fain have possessed; she wrote to Miss Sturge, the Headmistress: "We are greatly interested in the Roman find. The slab is wonderfully interesting. Don't think of giving it up to any number of Museums—it is far more appropriate in the spot where it was found, and it will be an inspiration to generations of Mount School archæologists."

Miss Harrison's serious talks to the girls were always impressive. Saturday evenings—on which the mistresses were absent from "Reading"—was the usual opportunity for speaking on some point of school discipline or of any breach of good

<sup>1</sup> See Speech at the opening of Library, p. 296.



manners which had been noticed during the week. " Her talks on courtesy, gentleness, sensible friendship, good manners," says one old scholar, " remain with us to this day, and Saturday nights have still a halo round them when one thinks of old Mount days." Those who heard these talks and the longer ones at beginning and end of Term, can testify to the high standard she put before the girls; her insistence on the need for developing the *practical* side of life as well as the intellectual; her readiness to give praise whenever possible and to express appreciation of effort; and her frequent exhortation to humbleness of mind as an essential condition of true education. She always tried to impress on her pupils that the outward changes that took place from time to time were not only material improvements but should also represent growth and development in the School organism. " We owe these improvements," she once said, " to the kindly help of outsiders and the School Committee. They have provided us with the possibility of making work easier and happier; they have done their part, it is ours now to show that added efficiency and increased power in work and play involve greater responsibility, and that Love and Faith and Enthusiasm in the search after Truth are needed to give life and meaning and vital power to the dead buildings."

Of Miss Harrison's teaching—especially in Scripture and English Literature—it is difficult in this brief memoir to give any adequate account. Suffice it for one old scholar from amongst many to record her testimony:

" Some of our most grateful memories centre in her Literature lessons. I remember the zest of anticipation with which we waited for those lessons, which were to many of us the best hours of the week. I remember just how it felt when Miss Harrison came into the room, bringing with her, as she always did, a serene sense of freshness and space and of august things. And how swiftly we fell to work, fired by that noble earnestness, and under the unfailing impression that the poets she

read with us were her own personal friends—as indeed they were. She had the power not only of imparting knowledge but of communicating atmosphere and beauty, with the result that she made many good lovers of Poetry, eager to read, and glad to learn by heart. I think that was one of the greatest things she did for us. One learnt how profoundly poetry counts, or should count, in life. Wordsworth and Milton lessons I remember best. To this day I never read the *Prelude* and certain passages of the *Areopagitica* without being aware of her in the tranquillity of the one and the lofty passion of the other. I think perhaps the quality of these two poets appealed particularly to her, for her own beautiful austerity, like theirs, had its origin in a kindred devotion to things pure, true, lovely, and of good report.”

It need scarcely be noted that such lessons as these could not be given without considerable scholarship and a great deal of careful preparation. She had a wonderful capacity for taking pains; everything she undertook was done with extreme care, and no trouble was too great to accomplish a task successfully. She never even read the Bible aloud without having looked over the passage beforehand; her accounts were kept with the strictest accuracy; her notebooks were exquisitely neat. She answered letters promptly and did not allow work of any kind to accumulate through lack of method or through deferring a task because it was distasteful to her. She was always on the alert in the holidays for suggestions or experiences that might be turned to account in her teaching, and in her reading she generally had in view the Literature course for the coming Term.

“I think of taking the Drama next Half,” she wrote to one of the staff in 1893, “but have little or no material to go upon. It is a mighty subject, and needs at least 5 years and 3 desolate islands to satisfy its demands, not to speak of brains.”

She enjoyed specially giving lessons on the earlier literature

from Beowulf to Shakespeare, and the fourteenth century had always a peculiar charm for her. But she could make every period living and interesting to her classes, because they lived vividly in her own mind. Her delight in teaching Literature was often expressed in her letters, as for instance:

“ . . . We are doing in Literature the Miracle and Mystery Plays. I read aloud to the class yesterday the whole of the *Secunda Pastorum* of the Towneley Cycle. I don't know whether they understood it all but they seemed interested. It is very lovely, I think, and comes with a freshness that one does not always get in hearing the gospel story. Does it not strike you as very teaching and very beautiful that the shepherds do not ask anything from the Divine Child tho' they have so many sorrows and troubles, but that their one idea is to make the little child happy, to give *him* joy, and that they offer out of their poor little stores their little gifts? ” (1893.)

“ I am saturated with 18th Century literature; it is fine but thin food, and I prefer, I must say, 14th or 16th Century diet. ” (1895.)

Occasionally she would give the School a delightful evening Lecture on Chaucer and his Canterbury Pilgrims, Stratford-on-Avon and Shakespeare, Ely Cathedral, Old York, Freiburg and the Black Forest, and so forth. Many of these were illustrated by lantern slides specially made for her purpose.

The holidays were generally spent with her friend partly in London and partly at her little home at Bainbridge, but occasionally they went further afield—sometimes to the Lake District, once to Cambridge, once to Oxford, and one summer they had a delightful visit with a sister and two nieces to Titisee in the Black Forest. Wherever she was, the holidays were a source of refreshment and delight, as the following extracts from letters will prove:

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
June 22, 1893.

". . . At last I am here. . . . The air is delicious, so fresh and bracing and yet there is warmth in it too. The sky is dull but it is heavenly to see nothing but green fields, and only to hear the wind and the birds and to know that the sixty-two have other guardians now! T. C. met me, and Mary Ann, Willie, the Cat, *and* Kitten (black) welcomed me. I must tell you what Mary Ann told me about Willie. The cat had three kittens and Mary Ann took two of them and attempted to drown them in a bucket, and had nearly succeeded, when Willie, whom she always treats, as you know, with deference, interfered; he flew upon the bucket, rescued the two drowning creatures (nearly dead) and carried them into his kennel. He licked them and licked them and sat by them and flew at Mary Ann when she came near to try to get them away, and would not leave them until they were quite hopelessly dead. Then he marched out of the kennel, shook himself, and indicated that they were past intelligent treatment. Fancy that, and Willie, who will run at any strange cat like a mad creature!"

To A. G.

"CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
July 3, 1893.

". . . I went to Meeting yesterday . . . and in the afternoon I sat in the garden and read two of Dekker's Plays and then had my tea and walked with Willie to the little stream that you and I went to last time you were here. I sat on a stone by the brookside and listened to the water and to a lark far away in the blue and watched the sun and shadow on the hills and thought of you and wished you could be with me. It was a lovely scene, too beautiful to be enjoyed alone. Then I came in and wrote a quantity of letters which I have had on

my mind for some time, and so to bed, where, however, I could not sleep for the heat and the corn-crake who lives in my field, and who keeps up an incessant scraping all night long. I cannot imagine what is his or her root idea in the ceaseless effort.

“ You would perhaps see Willie figuring in the columns of *The Spectator*. I wish I could have told the story as Mary Ann told it to me. You have to understand her and Willie’s unique relationship to see the full force of the situation.”

To A. J. T.

*(The School half-year began early in August.)*

“ CUPPLES FIELD, July 30, 1895.

“ . . . It has been delightful here. The hills and hay fields are beautiful and the garden only too alluring. It is bitter work tearing oneself away from the place when the things are looking so lovely and fresh and promising after all the rain—such rain! night and day without intermission for three days. The river was splendid, and, as Gray says somewhere, ‘ Every little rill set up for a river.’ ”

POST CARD TO A. J. T.

“ HOTEL TITISEE, BADEN, GERMANY,  
August 16, 1898.

“ We are sitting under the trees by the lakeside. It is five o’clock and so hot that walking is out of the question. We arrived in the dark last night after a journey from Mannheim which we shall all remember, I fancy. We were nearly melted in the process. We had a few hours at Freiburg, the most enchanting little city I have seen since I was in Nuremberg. The houses painted and frescoed and covered with carving, the streets with runnels of fresh water, the people pleasant, and the Cathedral absolutely delicious—you will know it—such carving, such glass and glories! We are going again that

we may see it more in detail. One might stay for weeks and yet have something to see.

“ Now we are perfectly happy in this lovely place.”

To A. J. T.

“ CAMBRIDGE, August 23, 1896.

“ Do you know Ely? It is an interesting Cathedral, built as if expressly meant to teach later generations the various styles of Architecture—nothing could be more instructive in the way of styles. I want to give a lecture on it at once. We went twice to see it and had a lovely time in the sweet old place. Ely is the tiniest place, crammed with interest of all kinds and descriptions. I wish to have a cottage there immediately.”

After trying a new bicycle at Micheldever, she wrote: “ Life is no longer a vale of tears, locomotion a burden, and the body a drag—in other words, I have a free wheel! ”

*From SKELWITH BRIDGE during Easter holidays.*

“ On Tuesday we had a glorious day at Dungeon Ghyll. The weather was superb, and we had a fine run through Elterwater and Chapel Stile on into the Langdales. We sat on the slope of the mountains by the Ghyll and it was like summer. The Pikes are as charming as ever, and the valley a perfect picture of peace and loveliness. I don't think I ever enjoyed a cycle ride so much as our journey home, in the evening sunlight and with the wind behind us and with the birds singing in almost every tree, primroses like stars on the banks and hardly a creature but ourselves to be seen.”

In January 1895 Amy Greener, who had given up the school in London, joined The Mount School staff as an English mistress, and from that time the friends were seldom separated.

The strain and responsibility of boarding-school life were





*Lucy Harrison  
in The Mount School Garden 1901.*



great, and gradually Miss Harrison's health gave way—she had had an attack of rheumatic fever in 1891-92 which had affected her heart—and after twelve years of strenuous, faithful work, she retired in 1902 from the post of Headmistress.

FROM AN OLD PUPIL

*“ May 1902.*

“ I must tell you how cast down your resignation makes me feel. For the school it seems more of a blow than many of us care to think of. . . . I cannot help feeling the loss for the Old Scholars' Association too. Your welcome has been always the best part, the heart as it were, of the Whitsuntide gatherings. . . .

“ I am so grateful myself for the year and a half under you. One felt your influence then, but it has also been an abiding help—I wish I could tell you in how many ways. It is a great gift to influence people while in contact with them, but it is a very rare gift to make that influence a growing factor in their lives, and it is that gift some of us must always be grateful to you for.”

TO AN OLD PUPIL

(who had written after being present at the Whitsuntide gathering of Old Scholars in 1902)

*“ THE MOUNT SCHOOL, YORK,  
May 25, 1902.*

“ MY DEAR M.,—It was a very great pleasure to get your kind letter. Though I feel only too keenly how little I deserve all you say, yet to have your loving words was very sweet to me and very cheering and I thank you very sincerely.

“ It was good to see so many old friends, friends that the School has given me and who can never pass out of my life. You were one of the very first whom I felt to be a friend in my early days, days when sometimes things seemed difficult. Tho' really not so very long ago, still, looking back, the

distance travelled seems great and the changes many in oneself and others, but I hope the feeling of the fellowship with my old pupils here will never pass away.

“I wish I had had rather more chance of seeing you and of having a real *talk*. Perhaps when one has *retired*, leisure moments will come!—I am yours very affectionately

LUCY HARRISON.”

It was a great satisfaction to Miss Harrison to leave the school under the direction of so excellent and capable a Head as Miss H. Winifred Sturge, who as Second Mistress had for nine years been a valued member of the staff. Her friendship with Miss Sturge formed a lasting bond with The Mount, and the enthusiastic welcome she always received on her subsequent visits was a source of unflinching pleasure. She became later on a member of the School Committee, and was glad of this means of keeping up her connection with York, where she had many kind friends, especially her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Thompson, in whose hospitable home she was a frequent visitor.

For about four years the two friends lived in York near The Mount School and Miss Harrison continued her English Literature lessons in all the classes, while Miss Greener did secretarial work for the new Headmistress. There was continual intercourse between the School and Telford Terrace, and both staff and pupils took advantage of the opportunity of an occasional quiet talk with Miss Harrison, whose hospitality was unflinching. One of the staff, who once suggested that perhaps she appeared too often, had a little note with the reassuring reply, “Please come whenever the whirl of The Mount allows. Windows and doors of welcome will always be open.—L. H.”

She kept up her interest in all that concerned education and women’s welfare, as the following letter shows:

To A. G.

(who had gone to see her nephew act in a Greek play at  
Bradfield College)

" 3 TELFORD TERRACE, YORK,  
June 25, 1904.

" Thank you very much for your letter and *Times Supplement*, which came up with breakfast and Lizzie this morning. . . .

" The *Supplement* is very interesting, is it not? Curiously enough I was speaking to the First Class yesterday upon the importance of sticking to the Classics, and this little article you mark is very good. I am ordering the pamphlet mentioned and shall present it to The Mount Library. I do hope you will enjoy the Greek Play. What a sinful, unjust thing it is that for so many generations girls should have been (and still are to some extent) cut off from all the culture and learned associations that such occasions as this at Bradfield foster. In reading Gladstone I am so much struck with the immense weight and power all his university and school training and associations were to him and to such as him (or he?). What would one not give for something of all that in one's life. . . .

" P.S.—Lizzie is very good and does everything needed, but is more quiet than ever—she goes about like concentrated mouse."

Several times Miss Harrison stayed at The Mount in charge for a while during Miss Sturge's absence. After one of these occasions she wrote:

" Every one was most good and kind at The Mount; the children angelic and the staff seraphic—so you see I feel like Langland when he said:

' For if Heaven be upon this earth and ese to my soul,  
It is in cloistre or in *Scole!*' "

## III. LEISURE

"There are as many unveilings of God as there are saintly souls."

JOHN THE SCOT (*Erigena*, 9th century A.D.).

DURING these freer years in York she was longing for the peace and beauty of Wensleydale. In August 1906, while spending the holidays at Bainbridge, she wrote to a friend: "If I really come to live here next year, I do hope to have the garden pretty with flowers as it has not been for years. . . . Our plan is to come here in March, so that next Term will be our last at The Mount. It seems strange to think of severing the strings at last, but I feel it is quite time to 'Move on.' I must say I look forward with pleasure to being here and vegetating, gardening, and idling—such is the depravity of human nature." Yet even then she was loath to give up her literature teaching. "We are going next term," she had said, "to finish up my literature connection with The Mount by a course on Coleridge, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning. It will be good to close with so excellent a company. I don't know quite how I shall do without my lessons, but I am sure the time has come to give up."

In the spring of 1907 she returned to her little home at Bainbridge, where the two friends lived quietly and very contentedly for the remaining eight years of her life.

A few weeks later she wrote from Cupples Field (April 1907): "I should like you to see the house now—it looks much more homelike than it has ever done. I have made the little middle bedroom into the Library, and it is very nice to have the dear books as I have longed to have them any time these 20 years. They are all together and capital company. We have a good Irish Terrier called Pat, who is a good house dog. So we are beginning to feel quite established."

In this little upstairs library, surrounded by her treasured books ranged on open bookshelves in such order that she could lay her hand at once on any one she wanted, she spent many happy hours reading or writing. This room had, like all the living-rooms of the house, a south aspect, and the view from the long mullioned window over the garden and field to the hills beyond was a constant delight.

Lady Macdonell says:

“ Her library remains a mirror of her mind and work. On the orderly shelves are no *editions de luxe* and few first editions. But in the carefully chosen volumes are seen the tools she used, the food she fed on—the shelf of Shakespeare and his commentators; Chaucer in various forms; later English poets; books of what may be termed liberal theology; the beloved mystics—her latest companions, from Traherne and the Cambridge Platonists to Tagore. To discover that among about 1500 volumes there are few that were not intimate companions, one has only to open one here and there to find the pencilled marginal note or a page of careful references at the end, parallels or comparisons, illustrating unity of thought in writers of various schools, coincident thought in men of different countries; so that the visitor moving from shelf to shelf seems as if accompanied by a spirit ever seeking the clue to an order and harmony in the multitudinous voices of the past. And again and again he is silently bidden to think upon whatsoever is true, whatsoever is lovely.”

Her reading was wide and comprehensive in its range, but as a rule she preferred the ancient writers to the modern, and seldom had the patience to read an up-to-date novel. There was generally a sequence in her reading—one book leading to another—and during the years of her literature teaching she would browse for weeks on the writings of one special period before preparing the Term's lessons. She greatly enjoyed discussing with a sympathetic friend any book or subject she had on hand, and her reading was always a favour-

ite topic in her letters. She always welcomed a new book. It was one of her refinements of courtesy not only to acknowledge the gift of a book, but also to show her interest in it by writing to the donor after she had read it. The following is an example:

To E. V. L.

"CUPPLES FIELD, January 14, 1912.

"I must just send a word to tell you what a delight your gift of the Mark Rutherford<sup>1</sup> has been to me in the reading. It is full of charms—but perhaps the *notes* and the illuminating touches as to Shakespeare, S. T. C., and Wordsworth are the most to me. He has a sort of crystal mind which sees into the truth of life and things, and that enviable power of saying clearly what he means. It was good of you to send me such a treasury of good things."

It may not be amiss here to quote a few words from her friend, Mr. Hale White (Mark Rutherford), showing how much her power of literary criticism was appreciated. When she told him of her pleasure in reading *More Pages from a Journal*, he wrote: "What you say about the book is very pleasant to me. I would sooner have an approving word from you than a chorus of admiration from Fleet Street reviewers. . . .—Affectionately yours,

W. HALE WHITE."

On writing to her after reading her paper on "Some Aspects of Wordsworth's Teaching" he said:

"I have read your lecture twice with great pleasure, and am glad that it is altogether affirmative. I think it is Addison who maintains that the discovery of beauty is true criticism. . . . I thank you again and again . . . Now-a-days when smart—'brilliant' is the right word—journalist and magazine contributors are striving to out-vie one another in paradox, such appreciation as yours is most refreshing."

<sup>1</sup> *More Pages from a Journal*.

Perhaps the truest impression of her delight in and appreciation of books can be gathered from letters ranging over a number of years:

"I am reading Browning and that is a great delight and refreshment. He is very strengthening, if one may use the word. *La Saisiaz* seems to me most grand. It answers, as far as they can be answered, some of the perplexities of this queer, queer world." (1886.)

"I never read Mrs. Browning without wishing that she would have taken a little more pains with her *form*; her *thought* is so true and deep that it is a thousand pities it is not clothed more artistically. She is dreadfully neglected and it is an infinite shame, but I believe it is in great measure because she is not always clear and is often unmusical; but with all her faults I am sure she ought to take a much higher place than is usually given to her."

"I am reading the Men of Letters *William Morris*. It has set me reading some of the poems, the *Guinevere* and others. He was a remarkable man, the greatest of the set. I have also much reading of Blake on hand. The Prophetic books take about as much study as poems in a foreign language which one has to learn as one goes on. Whether they are altogether worth the time and study is, I fancy, something of a question. I have finished *Jerusalem*, or it would be better to say it has finished me. In my present state of knowledge (or ignorance) of Blake it seems to me strangely chaotic and unbalanced, but with glorious gleams here and there of Titanic power." (1903.)

"I am reading *Iphigenia* (Gilbert Murray's translation) with immense delight. How it lifts you away from the small and the modern and sets your feet on the everlasting rock of real things and real feeling. It is marvellous in its grandeur and its pathos." (1910.)

"I have been reading such a charming book—the musings and meditations of the anchoress, Julian of Norwich, a 14th

Century Mystic. She must have been a beautiful spirit—some of her thoughts and words, though of so long ago, are marvellously appropriate for our 20th Century needs.” (1908.) After re-reading this book in December 1914, she said, “If we were all true mystics what a world it would be!”

“Yes, I quite agree with Burne-Jones; we are a prosaic generation. The little *Vineyard* is trying to make us less so, but it is as a drop in the ocean. There is an excellent article in the (January) *Vineyard* by Greville Macdonald on that wonderful man Oberlin. I have been longing for ages to go and visit the scene of Oberlin’s really miraculous work. I want to see if any traces of his life and influence are still to be seen in the Steinthal Valley, the little wilderness (as he found it) amongst the Vosges mountains.” (1911.)

“Othello was a fool and an unjust fool; if he had had less mannish egoism he would have saved his soul alive, but, I suppose, spoilt the Drama.” (1903.)

“I have just finished reading *Macbeth*. I think it is the supremest effort of the human mind.” (1903.)

“If Bacon wrote Shakespeare’s Plays, his power of restraint in the matter of humour in his Essays is the most amazing effort of self-suppression I know in Literature.”

“How I should like to see *The Land of Heart’s Desire*, and I should greatly like to see Miss Ramsay’s Article on W. B. Yeats. Do tell me what you felt about the Play—and the rôle of Mary Bruin. One has to take W. B. Y. as one finds him and not be for ever asking for explanations, but is faery and romance incompatible with human needs and duties? Is Mary a victim or a misunderstood saint?” (1912.)

“C. M. told me much that interested me about Mrs. Alice Meynell, who is her Aunt, and whose things I have been reading with immense delight. Do you know her Essays? They seem to me perfect; and I love her poems too.” (1914.)

“I am reading *Les Misérables*. What a book it is. Very fine, I think, but oh, the length of it. Three score years and



ten are nothing for the reading of it. It is more of a literature than a novel. In the evenings for reading aloud we have *The Antiquary*. It is one of my favourites, and though I have read it again and again, I always find it charming. I go back to the nice *old* chaps with great gusto, especially after reading (which I seldom do) a modern novel." (1912.)

"I am re-reading Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. What a tragedy and triumph her life was! I don't think anything could be sadder than the tale of Emily and then Anne, and Charlotte's loneliness, and all the time of that misery her stories were filling people with joy and delight." (1911.)

In novels her preference was generally for the older writers. She delighted in Dickens, Scott, Jane Austen; though she greatly admired Thackeray's style, she disliked his cynicism, and except perhaps for Ethel Newcome, she had no patience with his women. In another way, though she fully recognised his literary power, Meredith's women sorely tried her. She contended that they were not true to nature—and were opposed to Shakespeare's conception of women—and she always strongly protested against Meredith's presentation of the relation between men and women. She had more sympathy with him as a poet.

"What are you reading? I have gone in for a course of Meredith. He certainly gives you something to think about, and were it not for his women, I should greatly enjoy his books—but to eliminate the women from a novelist's dramatis personæ is to remove half at least of his interest." (1907.)

"I find the more I think of Diana the less I like her. I do not think Meredith is big enough to draw a really grand woman. It takes a mighty creature to do that." (1905.)

"I have just finished *Richard Feverel*, which, as it seems to me, has not a smile in it from beginning to end, and yet it has comic characters. Meredith has wit, but to my mind no humour—rank heresy of course. There are some extraordinarily fine things in *Richard Feverel*, and of course *The*

*Egoist* (which I am now reading) is powerful and has a great purpose." (1907.)

To E. V. L.

"Jan. 1908. As I go on with my Meredith study I shall constantly want your illumination. We are just finishing *Vittoria* and I am going to begin *Evan Harrington* and then read *The Amazing Marriage*. . . . There are some parts in *Vittoria* which make me feel like Mrs. Chump when she offered Sandra a sovereign to know what was going on."

To E. V. L.

"Feb. 1908. Well, Erica, I have read *The Amazing Marriage*. Surely, surely Carinthia Jane is unsatisfactory! In the early part of the story she is charming and deserves her mountain name and her halo of dawn—but at the end can she be admired? To me she seems wanting in great qualities and to have learnt nothing but hardness from her life. She shows herself incapable of rising to great heights—she cannot forgive, and this puts her, to my mind, with the small and not the great, such for instance as Hermione. Her infatuation for that astonishingly offensive young man, Chillon John, distracts me. To me she has no grand consistent outline—she is two persons—the Carinthia of the mountain home and the sunrise, and the Jane who comes very near the commonplace. The second marriage is an unnecessary drop. I cannot love her. She makes me almost ready to defend Fleetwood, and I cannot forgive her for sheltering herself behind the presence of Chillon, making him a shield against Fleetwood when he would fain have spoken out."

To E. V. L.

"CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
February 8, 1909.

"It was good of you to send me the 'Verses.' I have greatly enjoyed reading them. I wish I had the initials of the

writers! Yes, I like 'The Rabbit' very much and its 'flame litten towers.' I remember seeing the sight at Windermere once when I walked alone at sunset along a fell-side where the little creatures swarmed in happy security. Do you remember Blake says, 'the rabbit watches the roots, the lion watches the fruits'? Throughout the poem there is a delightful sympathy with Nature and a freshness very pleasant as of the smell of new-turned earth. I like the lines about the tree roots. The whole book speaks a sweet spirit, very cheering and satisfying, true and wholesome. (By the way, I wish more of the poems had names; in spite of Juliet there is much in a name, at any rate for a poem—it is a little door into the writer's mind—Don't you think so?). . . . I particularly like both in form and spirit 'Oh, Poet, Poet'; it has a delicious upward springing movement, the soul in it has made the body, which is as it ought to be—'For soul is Form and doth the Body make.' M. M.'s 'Sleep' seems to me excellent—there is quite the classic touch in it.

"What a happy world it would be if more people really took Poetry to help them to live. I am more and more struck as I grow older in noticing how very few people regard poetry seriously or ever think of applying it to their lives, and all the while it is the supreme essence of life—more to me than pictures, though for certain parts of one, not more than music. I have been reading parts of *The Ring and the Book*—what a storehouse of power and burning imagination it is!"

To E. V. L.

"CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
October 4, 1908.

"I had such a bit of good luck the other day in coming across a shabby little MS. book which proved to have in it some 17 coloured facsimile plates of Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. It is a perfect treasure of exquisite, delicate colouring and a revelation as to what illustration

may mean. How I should like to show the little plates to you and hear what you think of them. I am going to take the book up to the British Museum *when* I go to London and compare them with the plates there. I have been reading Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*—and greatly enjoying it. I never cease to regret that I did not go up to London to see that Exhibition of Blake's things a while ago. One will never have such a chance again."

To another friend she wrote: "The illustrations to Blake's *Songs* have been a great revelation. I believe if one understood the *Songs* one might say one understood Blake, for they really contain the gist of his philosophy."

TO MISS STURGE, YORK

"CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
June 19, 1911.

"I must send you a word to thank you for lending me this most interesting book.<sup>1</sup> It is a beautiful picture of a very unusual life, full of inspiring help to less gifted mortals. I thought constantly as I read—'What a different world would this be if there were more women such as Lady Russell.' . . . Her influence seems to have been quite immeasurable, and there is no doubt her counsels, always for Justice, Truth, and Honour, made themselves felt in the direction of affairs. I hope every girl at The Mount (at least in the First Class) will read it. When one reads of what *one* good woman can do, one cannot but think of the awful loss of power to the world the feeble, idle, pleasure-seeking woman is responsible for—what thousands of us

' Spoil the bread and spill the wine,  
Which spent with due regardful care  
Had made beasts men, and men divine! ' "

Over her own writing—were it a school lecture, a review, or a paper for a literary society—Miss Harrison took endless

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lady Russell.*

pains, and as a rule re-wrote it several times before she was at all satisfied. The paper on Charles Dickens was very popular, and between 1906 and 1914 she read it to fifteen different audiences, but it was revised and altered so often that its last form—as it appears in this volume—differs very considerably from the original composition. Her literary standard was so high that she was seldom fully satisfied with her own achievements. There is a characteristic answer to her friend, Dr. Bedford Pierce, of York, who once urged her to publish some of her papers:

“ I have all my life felt that literary work must stand or fall according to its own intrinsic merit, and that publication can only be justified if the demand for it is warranted by the *bona fide* acceptance of a publisher who, if he is worth anything, should be able to gauge the merit of things submitted to him. I know, of course, that the publisher is not infallible and that his judgment of great work has often proved to be mistaken, but for the rank and file I for one feel that the ‘ business ’ judgment of the publisher’s reader is a good and wholesome test and may help to reduce the inordinate supply of mediocre work. The matter of most of my Essays is literary criticism and of this there is, at the present day, such an amazing quantity of quite exceptionally good work (such, for instance, as that of Walter Raleigh and Professor Bradley) that I could not with a quiet conscience launch my very feeble little bark on the ocean of publication on any other grounds than acceptance by a publisher who would think well enough of it to run all risks.”

She was ever jealous for the purity of the English language and was extremely careful in the use of words: she often warned young people as to the harmful effect on their mother tongue of slang and slipshod expressions. The wrong use of a word offended her sense of literary propriety; hence such a protest as this: “ I wish this title of ‘ Literature ’ was not so constantly cheapened as it is in present usage. I hardly think

it should be applied, as is common, to ephemeral notices on party politics, fashionable fads, or even philanthropic pamphlets distributed gratis after a public meeting." She used to say that reading is not only a pleasure but a responsibility; that "lovers of good literature have a possession which not only lifts them above the commonplace and gives them the power to distinguish the false from the true, the trivial from the essential, but also provides them with something valuable that can be shared by others." When a friend once suggested that reading is a luxury, she answered: "My notion is that you need not call anything a luxury that you can share—and reading, music, art in general, if they make you ready to share them and pass them on are not luxuries but absolute and legitimate necessities."

At the end of a paper on "Some Old Essayists" there occurs this melodious passage, showing that even in the less frequented paths of English literature there is ample material to arouse appreciation and enthusiasm in a true lover of books:

"English literature is full of pleasant places; we can hardly go astray in the wide country of mountain, stream, and valley; but perhaps in no spot shall we get nearer to the writers and their times than in the sunny meadow in which the Essayists ramble and chat. They are not the giants of letters, but they are a debonair company; easy to get on with; unexacting, cheery, shrewd companions on life's way. They offer all sorts for all conditions; the Autolycuses of literature, happy to meet all tastes and not too proud to deal in 'unconsidered trifles.' And yet there are precious things in their packs; beautiful images of life and character; kind records of human strength and human weakness. Truth is with them; Poetry is of them, though in prose garb; and Morality too in dignified but unprofessional attire; above all, with them comes the airy, tricky, many-hued spirit of Humour. He it is that gives eyes to the writer, and who irresistibly button-holes the reader, and makes him take with good grace and

wholesome laughter home-thrusts which without his enchanter's wand would only have caused ill-temper or a sneer."

Next to her books she delighted in her garden, which had been laid out according to her own desires. The situation is exposed and the house stands about 750 feet above the sea, so that much discretion was needed in selecting the plants that would thrive in the Wensleydale climate. Labour, too, was always a difficulty—for no experienced gardener could be found nearer than Bedale or York. Hence most of the plants were perennial and of the herbaceous orders: there were many sheltering shrubs and the general effect was charmingly natural and unconventional. Miss Harrison was able for some time to do a considerable amount of gardening herself, and the little Alpine rockery was her special care, but she had gradually to give up this "seductive" occupation. In May 1910, she wrote: "Yesterday the weather was quite arctic, and I was thankful to sit by the fire and get as much as Cat and Dogs could spare me; to-day it is summer—everything is rejoicing in the sunshine; the buds are coming out visibly and the cuckoo shouting deliciously. I long to go and do some gardening, but rheumatism forbids. I don't like getting old!" Every now and then she enjoyed making a bonfire in the garden and burning all the rubbish, thus solving one of the embarrassing problems of country life. She often spent active hours in her little workroom where she did many useful bits of carpentering for the household and domestic repairs. A favourite occupation here was to break up old boxes and convert the pieces into beautifully chopped firewood.

From a child she had been peculiarly susceptible to the influences of Nature, and her outward happiness depended in an unusual measure on the beauty of her surroundings. She loved space and air and light and a *view* from her windows. She once wrote to her friend Miss Tangye: "You speak to-day of curtains. Well, I suppose they have to be, but I always long to be able to do without them—which is, of

course, impossible. Light and sun are too good to be curtailed off, at any rate in theory. When one goes into lodgings in the country, one sometimes wonders why people think it worth while to put in windows or build above ground. To the lodging-house keeper the end and aim of windows is to drape and cover them up. Yours will, I know, be just right—plenty of view possible.” Even in her young days she thought it worth while to record pleasing impressions of Nature. In her Diary of 1866 are these entries while on a visit to Cumberland: “Sunday, August 19th. Went to Church in the evening with Cousin Mary. Walked home along the beach, the sun setting gloriously behind the Scottish mountains,” and “August 25th. Read by myself in the drawing-room Ruskin’s *Crown of Wild Olive*. Enjoyed it and occasional peeps out of the window at the lovely mountains.” To her, as to the Mystic, “All beauty is the face of God; therefore to make acquaintance with beauty in any form is to cultivate the religious spirit.”

Her love of flowers and nature in all its aspects can only be expressed in her own words. The following are extracts from a Diary written at Skelwith Bridge in the spring of 1896:

“April 27. I left Bainbridge, met A. G. at Ulverston and in the train passed across Cartmel Sands, where Wordsworth tells us:

‘Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,  
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sands.’

“We took the little steamer up the lake from Lakeside. At first low quiet meadows and then, as we proceeded, on either side West and East the ground rose and at last there broke upon us the grand tiers of mountains, one beyond the other. A peep at Helvellyn and then with the sun just setting behind them, Fairfield, Nab Scar, and grandest of all, the Langdale Pikes; a curious hazy light hung over the hills, as Wordsworth says, ‘veiling and glorifying’ them at the same time. . . . From Ambleside we drove along the wooded road which lay



by the side of the river Brathay, which accompanies you all the way to Skelwith Bridge."

"April 29. Walked on the high road towards Coniston. Had magnificent view of the Langdale Pikes; an exquisite morning with scudding clouds and wonderful breaks of sunshine. Saw Elterwater below us and the river Brathay.

"In the afternoon took the new road following the course of the river up to Elter village by the little lake. The birches were especially beautiful along this road and the ground in the woods covered with bluebells and primroses and anemones. In the wood by the lake-side we walked over a pathway carpeted with sedge which the lake had cast up when much fuller than at present."

"May 1st. Left Skelwith on foot at 11.30 taking lunch with us. Walked up the Coniston Road, turning out of it about a mile up, to Colwith Force, which we saw—a beautiful little fall; and then on through the beautiful valley of Little Langdale with the Langdales before us; climbing for some time we passed Langdale Tarn, a tiny piece of water—then on until at last we came upon Blea Tarn, and the exquisite valley in which it lies, where is still the one solitary dwelling, only one, in which Wordsworth's Solitary dwelt. It is a lonely place indeed. As we wandered on we heard, just as Wordsworth describes it, the shout of the cuckoo:

'The cuckoo straggling up to the hill tops,  
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.'

"A not very steep climb carries you over a ridge into the valley beyond, and here indeed is a surprising and glorious view. . . . On the one side the Langdale Pikes; Rossett Crag, Crinkle Crag, and Bow Fell all before you, and the opening at the foot of the Langdales which would carry you by a bridle path into Borrowdale. Turning to the right we passed down the valley to Dungeon Ghyll, which is formed by a deep and dark recess in the side of Langdale. It is a marvellous

waterfall . . . unlike any I ever saw before and its name is well given, for it is like a dark and terrible dungeon."

"Sunday, May 3. Walked up the river side over the meadows and through the woods to Elterwater. The sun shone and the little lake lying bathed in the sunshine with the grand Langdale Pikes in the distance, the woods, carpeted with hyacinths and primroses, violets and anemones, were perfect. Sat for some time by the lake side and watched the reflections of the mountains, trees, and cattle feeding by its edge, and listened to the birds and saw the fish jumping, and thought 'Earth hath not anything to show more fair.'

"In the afternoon walked up the Grasmere road. . . . As we returned we made a slight detour so that we might get our last look at the Langdales, Crinkle Crag, and Bow Fell. As we sat on the brow of the hill we heard the bells of Langdale Church ringing and echoing from hill to hill. The cuckoo from time to time shouted from far away amongst the hills; we saw two wild ducks flying swiftly over to Grasmere or Rydal. In the fields the lambs were having their evening gambols, and valley, lake, and mountain seemed to call upon us to remain. Alas! we must leave early to-morrow morning."

To A. J. T.

"CUPPLES FIELD, *September 9, 1907.*

"We hope you are coming soon. The weather just now is simply perfect; the sun is brilliant and there is a peculiar haze in the air which is quite enchanting and indescribable unless indeed one were a Wordsworth or a Keats."

"CUPPLES FIELD, *April 23, 1914.*

"I wish you could see the garden—the daffodils are a sight to see, and we have sunshine and until to-day great heat. It has been too hot to sit in the Hut. Don't you think primroses are the most beautiful of flowers? not gathered but growing

—they have the glow and light of stars when you see them in a hedge-bank—a colour all their own.”

No one could be long in Miss Harrison’s company without discovering her love of animals. From the age of ten she was scarcely ever without one dog, and more often had two : a list of the names of sixteen of these devoted friends is extant. Her interest extended to animals of all kinds, and her sympathy with them was expressed in many practical directions and did not evaporate in mere sentiment. Once when some hawkers living in her neighbourhood were ill-treating and half-starving an old worn-out horse, she first remonstrated with them, and finally, finding her efforts fruitless, she bought the miserable creature and had it mercifully shot. It caused her much distress to see wild birds in cages, and she often used to wish that Nature had made it impossible for them to sing in captivity.

From Skelwith Bridge she wrote in April 1902:

“ We have had wonderful things happening here—yesterday a flood—the whole valley one vast lake—such rain, it came in sheets, not drops. To-day is glorious sunshine and the meadows are exquisite in their fresh greenness. It is a lovely land! The birds are an endless joy. They seem to be left alone pretty much and are very tame and they sing all day long. We are on bowing terms with two delicious rabbits who have a home in our lane in a bank under a hazel-tree. They have just had a spring clean and have decorated their hall-door with moss, ferns, and wood-sorrel. They have not asked us in yet, but they *look* hospitable, though perhaps a trifle shy.”

To A. J. T.

“CUPPLES FIELD, 1912.

“ How good of you to get the humane snare for the poor rabbits. . . . We have hares in the garden—they don’t seem to do much harm, but I have no doubt in the next month we

shall have the wretched people out hunting them. It makes me sick to see half a dozen men on horseback and some 20 dogs, all after a poor little mite one can hardly see with the naked eye."

To A. J. T.

"April 1914.

". . . Did you know that our poor old Pat is gathered to his fathers? He took very ill when we were away at Grange, and when we came back we found him suffering so much that we had him shot. He lies buried in the garden under primroses and with a handsome headstone, with name, date, and age [cut by L. H.]. We miss him much and have not as yet felt that we care to have another."

She was very strongly opposed to the practice of Vivisection, not only because she considered it scientifically unsound but because she felt that the laws of justice and mercy were thereby violated, and she believed that, if unchecked, it would ultimately have a disastrous effect on the future of humanity. She maintained that "the quality of tenderness, with its attendant handmaid self-sacrifice, urges and compels the protection of the weak and dependent, and is the first step in the building up of altruism, brotherhood, and national life." As usual she fell back on literature in support of her arguments. In an eloquent address given to the York Antivivisection Society in 1909—which a medical member of the Research Defence Society declared to be the "noblest exposition of the views of those desiring the abolition of vivisection that he had met with"—she said:

"We must notice that the prevailing marks of the poetry of later times are, first, the call for liberty, and, second, the plea for mercy for *beast* as well as man. I need but mention the names of Cowper, Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, to remind you of the truth of this. This poetry has been called the *new* poetry because it embodies the modern

theory of life, and has in it the very seed of modern thought, which to-day is leavening the lump, and has set agoing the work of fellowship and brotherhood which is the hope of our time. There is in this poetry a *locus classicus* which may stand as illustrating a whole body of literature, I mean Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. . . ."

In writing to her friend Miss Tangye in 1903 she says: "Have you seen an address by a Veterinary Surgeon (Wm. Brown) on the practice of Vivisection? If you have not, I will send it you. For persons who say animals do not feel, it would be excellent. When people tell me animals do not feel, I always think of Rose Dartle who said, you remember, in speaking of the poor—'Now, really, you know it is such a comfort to think that when they suffer they don't feel.' " And again, "Have you read *A Kentucky Cardinal*, by Lane Allen? It is charming; do get it and read it. It is worth a thousand Antivivisection Lectures."

It is almost needless to state that Miss Harrison from very early days took keen interest in the struggle for the enfranchisement of women. In her girlhood the question was just coming to the fore, and she remembered the time when in ordinary society it was treated with scorn and ridicule. She had watched, she said, able and devoted women, in spite of being baffled and discouraged, working for their cause through the long years, and had noted the gradual change in the attitude of the public towards it. It was not so much the actual desire for the vote as the demand for justice that made her an enthusiastic supporter of this movement; she believed that injustice of any kind is harmful for the whole nation, alike for the inflictors and the victims. She deplored the outbreak of militancy, but she regarded this phase as an excrescence—the part in a great movement which is ephemeral and will pass—and she felt strongly that the excesses of fanatics were no excuse for others to slacken their efforts, for these excesses did not in the least affect the great principle

for which they were fighting. At times she would get sadly depressed about the women's cause, and feel bitter disappointment when she noticed in so many an inordinate love of dress and trivialities and a lack of interest in the larger issues of life. An outburst such as this was not unusual: "Astonishment and dismay lay hold of me when I come across what is called a 'Lady's Paper.' The staple interest in this is dress and the fashions; society scandals; elaborate records of ostentatious marriage ceremonies; court news; personalities, and sport in all its branches. Can women hope to take a respected place in the national life or look for political enfranchisement so long as the majority demands and supports such publications?"

In her own attire she certainly set an example of simplicity as well as of dainty neatness, and when she found a style to suit her she cared nothing about change of fashion. From the annual analysis of her accounts it is apparent that for the last ten years of her life her average expenditure on dress and books is almost identical, and that either of these items alone is only half what she gave away.

Of her religious beliefs it is difficult to give any adequate impression. She was a true Quaker in her love of simplicity, her independence of form and outward observance, her enthusiasm for freedom and justice, and her claim for equality between men and women. But she was entirely unconventional in her beliefs; her mind was ever that of a seeker; she accepted no faith or formula at second-hand, and would never use current terms or expressions that meant nothing to her personally. She was peculiarly reticent on these matters. Once when asked by comparative strangers as to her views, she wrote to her friend: "How can one be talking about or writing about what one believes or does not believe? . . . I am so much of an old Quaker that I cannot bear talking about religious views, one's own at least, except to one's nearest and dearest. I can talk to you but not to any one else." Her teaching on religious subjects was always simple and practical,

and might be described as ethical rather than theological. She felt strongly that personal experience—and that only—should be the spring and source of all spiritual teaching.

“It is difficult,” writes Lady Macdonell, “to speak with sufficient diffidence and reverence of the religious aspect of my sister’s life. There are many shades to the meaning of the word. But when one speaks of the religious side of the character of man or woman, one usually means the real person. We touch the springs of conduct, the source of inclination and desire and the fundamental things on which a man builds his life. What he really believes he puts into practice—we may even say, what he believes he is. This was pre-eminently true of Lucy. Her deep humility must be taken into account in speaking of her religious position and experience. She rarely spoke of her own opinions as to matters of doctrine, but it may be said in truth that she lived and had her being in godliness. It was this that made her companionship so desirable, and her talk, walking at her side over field and fell, or sitting by the hearth with the book she had just been reading laid open beside her, memorable—a sure refreshment and often a solemn sifting and awakening of soul. It was impossible to be with her without being conscious of some spiritual companionship instructing and informing her mind.”

The eight years spent at Bainbridge at the close of her life were full of quiet happiness. Some impressions may be gained from her letters:

To A. G.

(who was spending a few days at York)

“CUPPLES FIELD, *April 1907.*

“This morning I have done a little gardening, as it is fine, and now I sit in the Library in great state and comfort. The view is so lovely—and the books such good company. . . . It seems strange to think of all the whirl and turmoil [at

York] as I sit here quietly and see the Turkey and family, the lambs and the sheep and the silent fell-sides. I wonder whether it is very selfish to enjoy peace and quiet. . . . It will be joyful to see you back again—it is very sombre without you.”

“May 1909. I sit in the Sun Hut with Bobbie and Pat. It is wild and windy with gleams of sunshine, but one is delightfully sheltered from the wind in this. . . . It is really very charming to be able to sit here in the open, as it were, and yet to be sheltered from the blustering wind. The hills look lovely from the windows—it is a great acquisition and I am very grateful for it. . . .

“When I think of you and The Mount I feel like Lucretius’s person on the cliff watching the struggling mariners in the stormy sea below.”

To E. V. L.

“February 1908. We are going away next week for a few days. We almost regret having to leave home, for the weather here is lovely and the country charming—‘on every bough the briddes’ are beginning to sing and there is a delicious sense of many things ‘going on’ by day and night.”

To A. J. T.

“December 25, 1908. We have been having a very quiet Christmas Day. One very lonely person, a lady who lives entirely by herself, spent part of the day with us. It is evening now and she has just gone, with lantern to guide her on her way *à la Cranford*. We had a delightful walk this morning over the fields westward with the dogs, who were quite aware that it was a general holiday. We have now a fluffy little yellow kitten who ‘goes’ very well with our blue and yellow trimmings in the sitting-room; she also looks well with Pat, with whom she is on very good terms.”

“April 1911. I have taken to knitting lately—my in-



tellect is giving way and I find the humble arts suit me. . . . Amy is very busy superintending spring cleaning. It is a tremendous business, but I presume needed in this world of dust and ashes."

"December 1912. We are busy getting ready for children's parties. We are going to have a Christmas Tree for them, and my niece Amice has made a most delicious little Bethlehem—the shed and cattle and Babe and father and mother and the Wise Men and Shepherds all appear. It will be lighted up with little candles and will, I think, delight the small children. They are unromantic here and Christmas is nothing to them; they are never taught to give gifts or to make any festival of it."

This special party recurred on three afternoons in order to entertain all the available children and it will long be remembered in the village. The Nativity scene—the story of which their hostess told them in unconventional words while the candles were being lighted behind a screen—seemed to inspire in the children something of the same simple reverence that was felt by the Shepherds as they gazed on the original scene, and they stood for some moments in absolute silence before they began to express their wonder and delight.

In the summer there were delightful parties for the children in the garden, with tea on the grass, and games and singing. The children loved Miss Harrison and responded to her sympathy with them; she would take the little ones round the garden and talk to them and give them flowers. The little girls who came to a weekly sewing class at Cupples Field were always glad when she came in to tell them a story, and they were generally allowed to play in the garden before they went home.

She took great interest in the life and welfare of the little village, and was always ready to give a helping hand to every needy cause. She felt special responsibility about the young people, and often regretted that her strength was not equal

to her desire to take still more active part than she did in work for the community. She was a staunch supporter of the temperance cause, was elected president of the Band of Hope, and gave many delightful talks to the children. From time to time she gave addresses on various subjects or presided at a village meeting. It was always an attraction when Miss Harrison was expected to speak; on one occasion after she had taken the chair for a lady who had come from a distance to give an address, and had made a rousing little speech to prepare the way for the lecturer, a young man was overheard saying as the villagers left the meeting, "Oh, yes, Mrs. — speaks well enough, but Miss Harrison could lick her 'ead off!" Soon after she settled at Bainbridge she determined that the damp, tumble-down room where village meetings were held should be re-built. She collected the necessary funds, arranged with her friend Mr. Fred Rowntree to submit plans to the trustees of the old place, and after much effort on her part and the exercise of infinite tact and patience, a beautiful new Temperance Hall stood on the old site, light, airy, simple and artistic in form, and best of all, the building was opened absolutely clear of debt. When this work was completed Miss Harrison and her friend spent Christmas at Knaresbro'. From here she wrote to a friend:

"THE TOWERS, KNARESBRO',  
*January 3, 1911.*

"DEAR E.—Thank you very much for your kind note and for your distinguished card. . . . We have been in this pretty old place for a couple of weeks and have much enjoyed the change and rest. I expect you smile at the notion of our needing rest, but really this summer and autumn we have been very busy. We have re-built and opened our Village Hall, and as all arrangements, small and great, fell to our share and as workmen in our part of the world do not know what it is to be prompt, we have had some rather exercising moments. . . .

"Are you doing any writing now? Do tell me if you are and what you are reading. . . . Since we came here we have been very frivolous as to reading—*Pickwick*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*—perennial wells of refreshment. I think *Persuasion* is Jane's masterpiece. Do you? Every paragraph of the early chapters seems to me of gold, and the letter scene in the last chapter incomparable. I have also been reading *Peer Gynt*. It is strangely fascinating, uncanny in a way, but deep down one feels there is the Truth. Have you seen the new edition of Emily Brontë's Poems? These too I have been greatly enjoying—some of them have hitherto not been published. What genius she had.

"We return to-morrow, when we expect a very warm welcome from Pat and Bobbie. Poor little Bobbie is always very desolate when we leave him—Pat is quite satisfied to see us go, but pleased and patronising when we return.

"Amy sends her love. Our good wishes for the New Year.—  
I am yours affectionately  
LUCY HARRISON."

*Note.*—They found the Yorkshire Terrier ill on their return, and on January 14th the Diary entry is: "A. took poor little Bobbie to York. He was put in the Lethe chamber and died peacefully. He was cremated."

During the last few years Miss Harrison had little physical strength and rarely walked beyond the garden, except to go occasionally to the little Friends' Meeting House on a Sunday morning. She generally spent the bleakest part of the Spring at Grange-over-Sands, Torquay, or Penzance, where she could go out more than was possible in Wensleydale. Whenever she was away she took every opportunity she could of hearing good music, of which she was extremely fond, and the lack of which she considered one of the few drawbacks to living in the country. To her musical friend, Miss Tangye, she wrote in October 1912:

"I feel as if I must write and tell you how much I enjoyed the Concert, the programme of which I send you. Kreisler is

certainly quite divine—his playing is miraculous, and surely his violin must be made of wood grown in the Garden of Eden. . . . It does seem a pity to spend so much of one's life without hearing music." Another time she wrote: "I *did* enjoy 'The Messiah.' I don't think I ever heard anything so angelic as Albani's singing. I feel as if I had had a peep into Heaven."

In the spring of 1909 she joined two of her sisters at Penzance for a few weeks; from there she wrote to her friend:

"6 REGENT TERRACE, PENZANCE,  
March 27, 1909.

"You would, I hope, get my telegram telling of safe arrival at Penzance. The journey was very comfortable, no hitches at all. . . . I wished so much you were with me and could have enjoyed the view as we went along. When we got to the coast it was lovely, and in the evening light we saw that wonderful Mount St. Michael. It is wonderfully beautiful. Annie met me and brought me up to this very comfortable house, and now after breakfast I am sitting in the bow window of the sitting-room which is upstairs and looks right over on to Mount's Bay, and one sees the fishing boats coming and going. It is a very delightful old-fashioned place—but not what you may call warm—there is as cool a wind as at Bainbridge. . . . Cornwall is very different from what I expected; it is very bleak and far from wooded, but the sea and coast are beautiful. Write and let me know all your news. I do wish you could come here. It seems horrid to be here without you."

"April 2, 1909. Yesterday we drove to the Land's End. It is a strange, weird, romantic place—you drive on and on over the bare, wild moorland, here and there a lonely cross, and once we stopped to range over the moor to see a Druid Circle—away on the moor almost covered up with gorse—such a lonely, solemn place; and another time we got out to see a tiny walled grave-yard right on the moor with no dwelling near. It is a Friends' Burial-ground—you have to climb over the wall to

get into the little enclosure; one nameless stone is all that is to be seen—all the rest is mere grass. On a slate slab you are told that 36 Friends were buried here between the years 1659 and 1789. Then we drove on, on to the narrow neck of land due west, with the sea on either hand, and seemed to be driving into the sea itself. A small hotel stands almost on the edge. We left the carriage and scrambled down on to the rocks. It is quite beyond my powers to describe—marvellous in its sombre greyness—the sea beating up against the black and grey lichen-covered rocks; birds flying about and then settling on the huge blocks; the Lighthouse two miles out to sea on savage, cruel-looking rocks. I don't think you would have enjoyed the terrors of standing on the edge and creeping into caverns. There is a wonderful vaulted rock in the opening in which the English Channel and St. George's Channel meet. On the stone over this cavern Charles Wesley stood and composed his celebrated hymn."

In the summer she loved to stay at home, and she lived as much as possible in the garden. It was chiefly in the summer that visitors came to Cupples Field, and the yearly visits of her sisters were hailed with much rejoicing. She would sit for hours in the Sun Hut discussing with a friend some book or social problem or a subtle question in morals. A discussion with her was real conversation, for she was a good listener and was always wishful to consider what others had to say. Not only those who knew her intimately, but strangers or passing acquaintances were attracted by the vivid impression she left on them. After slight intercourse during ten days in a boarding-house in 1914, a stranger wrote of her: "Her presence breathed of purity and goodness. Short as my acquaintance with her was, I shall never forget her." Another acquaintance writes: "Though I have never had the privilege of seeing very much of her, I counted her, and always shall count her, as one of those I care most to know, whose opinion I cherish and with whom I always love to have intercourse." A young

friend who had gone out to teach in Vancouver sent home the following tribute to the influence Miss Harrison had on her life:

“ I never knew any one whose life was so austere and beautiful and who was at the same time so human and big-minded. I think I learned to love her more by coming out here than if I had stayed peacefully at home among books and the things one cares for. Life here is loud and hurried and ugly; everybody scrambling for dollars and pushing other people aside. Especially at first when I was bitterly homesick I used to think of her very often and of the two visits I paid you, and of one particular evening walk along the hill when she talked of the difficulties of life and the over-coming of them. She seemed to stand for everything I had lost—for books and poetry and scholarship, for dignity and beauty of life—and I felt that she was real and these people with their talk of dollars were only shadows.”

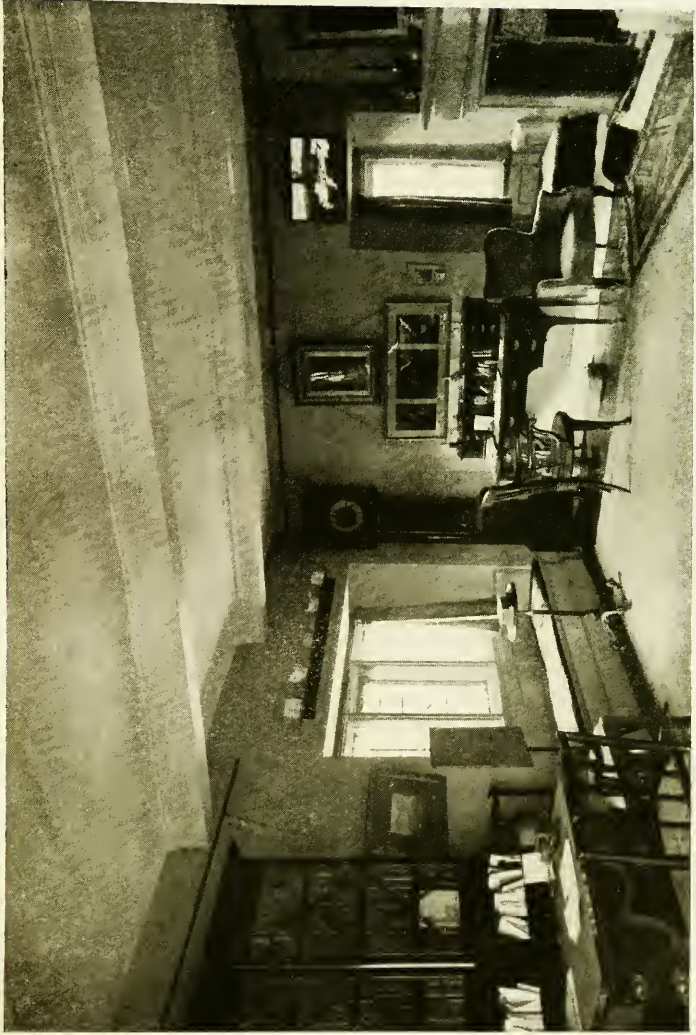
The following letter from her sister Mrs. Macdonell gives some notion of her charm as a hostess and of her surroundings:

“ 187 OAKWOOD COURT, KENSINGTON, W.,  
July 14, 1914.

“ DEAREST LUCY,—It is sad to be so far away from you and to know that my visit to dear Cupples Field is past and over!

“ It was very good to be with you—to see you and to hear you, and to wander about your unique garden, with its wonderful view of hill slopes and winding valleys and ever-changing colours of sky and clouds. The vision of it all is still before me, and it seems clearer than *Olympia* and the vast miles and miles of houses that surround me now. . . .

“ I wonder what you are doing, dearest Lucy! My thoughts go back to you and I wish I were with you, sitting in the Hut or listening to your voice revealing the wonders of *Chitra* or *The King of the Dark Chamber*. I can't tell you how delightful it all was—the house so pretty and charming and unlike the



SITTING-ROOM, CUPPLES FIELD





house of any other mortal, the soft beauty of the hills, the hay-making in the sunshine, the readings in the Hut, the happy meals, kind Amy's ministrations, 'Pecksniff' in the evenings—it was all so very good! I feel renewed in body and spirit—and so grateful for all your love and goodness, dear Lucy, and Amy's abounding care and kindness.—Ever your loving

A. H. M.”

Whenever it was practicable Miss Harrison attended the Whitsuntide gathering of Old Scholars at The Mount School. For many years she was on some of the Executive Committees, and it was always a trial to her when she was obliged to miss any meetings. In 1905 and 1912 she gave the Saturday evening address to the Old Scholars. On her return from York in May 1912 she wrote to her old friend, Miss Frances Thompson of Birkenhead:

“The pleasant days are now a memory and a very delightful one in many ways, though I do not like to think that we shall not again have your presence at the table at our Meeting and that in the capacity of President we shall not have your beautiful and helpful Addresses. But I think we shall not forget them or their spirit and shall rejoice to think you will be with us *in* the Meeting and that perhaps sometimes you will be induced to give us an Address Non-Presidential.

“I hope you would feel how much we appreciated your words on Saturday evening. They were full of help and inspiration, and I have thought much since of what you said.”

To A. G.

(who was attending the Whitsuntide gathering at York)

“CUPPLES FIELD, *Whit Sunday*, 1913.

“It was delightful to get your letter this morning brought up by Mary with my breakfast. I *am* so glad the weather is fine. The storm yesterday passed off. . . . It was good to have the Old Scholars' telegram and very nice of you all to

send it. It made me feel almost as if I were with you. I shall much like to know how the Meeting went. . . .

"I am quite well—and occupied, for I have finished *The Life of Octavia Hill* and shall try to make a beginning of my Article. It is a record of a marvellous personality and of a consistently noble life. I wish the book itself had been a little differently done.

"Though I am busy I wish you were here—I miss you, of course, very much . . . but I rejoice that you have this little visit to York and I hope you will enjoy it and that it will do you good. Don't hurry home. I can manage till Tuesday quite well, and I am sure everybody, and especially Ethel, will like you to be at the Garden Party."

#### LETTER TO MR. ROBERT H. MARSH

"CUPPLES FIELD, August 2, 1913.

"DEAR MR. MARSH,—It is a great pleasure to know that my Article seemed to you in any way adequate, and it is delightful to know that you love Francis Thompson. He was a rare spirit—I only wish more people would read him.

"When your letter came my sister Lady Macdonell, the writer of *In Martin's Vineyard*, was with us, and I was charmed to be able to read to her what you say about the little book. I have always thought it the best of her stories. It was also very interesting to hear what you say of James Macdonell's Life. He was a gifted creature and his early death was one of those inscrutable things one finds it hard to reconcile oneself to. I wonder whether you ever came across the book he had in hand when he died and which my sister edited. It is called *France Since the First Empire*. It is incomplete but it is brilliantly written. . . .

"The Yoakley's Charity is most interesting. How beautiful the Alms Houses must be! Why can't we build like that nowadays; they are almost as charming as the earlier human

endeavour in Kit's Coty House. How splendid that you have got possession of Kit's Coty!

"Yes, I was one of the Pilgrims in that far away time. Joe Simpson, Katie Malleson—afterwards Mrs. (Harry) Goodwin—Albert Goodwin, James Macdonell, my sister and myself made up the party and a glorious time it was. We were all young then and much in the condition of Chaucer's Squire."

When the War broke out in August 1914 Miss Harrison was at Stratford-on-Avon, where she and her friend had gone to join her sister and two nieces for the Shakespeare Festival, and also to attend a Conference of Teachers at which Miss Amice Macdonell read a paper on "Historical Plays for Village Children."

No one who was at Stratford-on-Avon at that eventful time can ever forget the suppressed excitement in the atmosphere of the little town, the self-control required to close the morning newspaper and even to pretend to concentrate one's mind on Lectures on Education; the relief of breaking up into little groups afterwards to discuss the situation, and above all the strange consciousness of unreality in the little Theatre itself. So great was the tension on the eve of England's Declaration of War that Mr. Benson and his Company felt it impossible to act—as announced—*The Merry Wives of Windsor* and substituted *Henry V*. All this and much more that happened during those unusual days greatly impressed Miss Harrison, and from that time for the next eight months the war was paramount in her mind and heart. Everything else in life seemed to dwindle into insignificance before this terrible ordeal for England. "It seems strange," she wrote on August 19th, "but indeed nothing astonishes us now; all one's anchors are loosed and there seems nothing to lay hold of." She entered mentally into the struggle with all the earnestness of her nature. Her knowledge of history, her life-long championship of the weak and helpless, her respect for national honour, her revulsion from tyranny and treachery,

led her to believe in the justice of England's cause. On September 26th she wrote to an old pupil :

"As it seems to me that our cause is just and there was practically nothing for it but for us to declare war, we are bound to do all we can for combatants and non-combatants. As long as we sit comfortably at home in safety and comparative ease, secured to us by the sailor and soldier, we can't do other than support their efforts."

She had long been distrustful of Germany's attitude, and as far back as 1903 she had written to her friend:

"Don't you think the Macedonian matters are appalling? and here we, so called *Powers*, sit still and watch those Turks slaughtering thousands of Christians because we are in deadly fright of one another. It seems as if something awful must come if we do nothing. And Norman Lockyer singing up the praises of Science and Germany's policy and American rush as if there were nothing in the world or out of it but material money-making and push. With all our blunders and muddles and messes I prefer our English ideals to Germany's policy and servile worship of force and tyranny."

When the two friends returned to Bainbridge towards the end of August they found it very trying to be in a back-water, so to speak, where life went on in its normal placidity, and neither anxiety nor enthusiasm was noticeable in many of those around them. To Miss Harrison normal conditions were impossible in those unnatural times; she showed a restlessness not habitual to her; she longed for congenial intercourse, and was glad when any friend, or even a stranger, came in for a talk, and a visitor was a real boon.

"It is very pleasant to hear from one's friends just now," she wrote, "when one's world seems in a rather shaky condition, and when one hankers after human sympathy, and when it is good to be in touch with one's kind."

Though she disliked travelling she now hailed every opportunity of visiting her friends; in September, after a week at

York, she and her friend went to London to stay with her sister, Mrs. Macdonell. She took intense interest in all she saw and heard there, and it was a great relief to her to be in the midst of all that was going on. This was her last visit to London, and the last time she and this sister were together. The day after she left, Mrs. Macdonell wrote her this letter:

" 187 OAKWOOD COURT, KENSINGTON, W.,  
September 23, 1914.

" DEAREST LUCY,—It was a great delight to find a letter from you when I went to breakfast. . . . I pounced upon the neat little envelope with joy. My eyes filled with tears as I read your loving kindly words. Oh! I do miss you so much. The Flat has shrunk into something smaller and poorer since you have disappeared. I can't say how your presence here, dear Lucy, has comforted and strengthened me. You are so gentle and strong and wise, and your mind sees so clearly. I thank God perpetually for my sisters; they are the best of all gifts. . . .

" Good-bye, dear Lucy, your sweet presence seems to linger here, and I feel as if I must see you poring over the *Times*.  
Ever your loving sister  
A. H. M."

In November 1914 she went to York to fulfil a promise she made several months before to read a paper on Tagore to the Friends' Literary Society. It was listened to with intense interest, and she felt conscious in an unusual degree of the sympathetic response of her audience and regarded the evening as a very happy one. This was the last time she was to address a York audience, and some who were present remembered afterwards the strange thrill of emotion they felt as she stood with the lamplight shining on her beautiful white hair, reading towards the close, "I open the doors of this dark room to-day—the game is finished here! Come! Come with me now, come outside—*into the light!*"

The following extracts from letters tell their own story and show how keenly she was affected by everything connected with the war. They are all written from Cupples Field.

To H. C. E.

"December 23, 1914. What a strange Christmas it will be for many, for all, in fact, for no one (not even Bainbridge folk) can quite escape the sense of overshadowing sorrow and trouble. We are, as you know, going to have a very quiet time. We are not sending cards to any one, and in my family we have agreed to give no gifts. . . . I cannot wish you a *Happy* Christmas as usual, but I do wish you may have peace of mind and heart's-ease."

To H. C. E.

"January 1, 1915. Thank you very much indeed for your most kind letter with all its good wishes and loving words. It is very delightful to get these from you. Just now kindness, friendship, and love seem more than ever valuable—indeed is it not true that all this tragedy, suffering, and wrong have made the real things more real, the passing things still more trivial? Old as I am, things have taken on a perfectly new aspect for me. Perhaps, perhaps one's vision is a tiny bit clearer."

To A. J. T.

"January 20, 1915. . . . This afternoon we are to have a tea in our little Village Hall for all the Belgian settlements in this neighbourhood. There will be about thirty Belgians, that is, if they can weather the storm. We have a most delightful Belgian couple in our little Bainbridge house—a sea-captain and his wife. He left his ship to join the Belgian army and he and his wife were at Antwerp during the siege. Such stories of endurance they have to tell—but they make no-

complaint and never say a word against the Germans. They are wonderfully cheerful and most appreciative of any little thing one can do for them. I think they are remarkable people."

A house in Bainbridge had been offered to Miss Harrison for the winter months for Belgians and she had at once set about collecting a fund to enable her to offer hospitality to these refugees from Antwerp who needed a home and country air.

TO H. C. E.

"February 9, 1915. I feel constrained to write and tell you that I am repenting in sackcloth and ashes for what I said to you about Wordsworth. It is quite true that when I was feeling rather down, I did take up my Wordsworth and I did try some of the old favourites and lyrics and so on, and as I told you, I felt that they did not 'speak to my condition.' But since I talked to you I have tried again, and I want to tell you that I have found, as I ought to have known, a perfect mine of golden glory in the Sonnets dedicated to Liberty. They are sublime, and as appropriate to this time of stress and strain as the Psalms themselves which seem really to have been written, most of them, for 1914-15. Do read the Sonnets—they lift up one's spirit and one feels one is on the mountain height of Truth. There is nothing *insular* in Wordsworth's patriotism—nothing Jingo. He loves England not because she is *his*, but because she is what she is, and he believes that at her best she does stand for Freedom and the *real* things that make a nation. (And I do too!)"

TO MR. ROBERT H. MARSH

"March 20, 1915. Thank you very much for your kind letter, and though you tell me not to answer it, you must let me send just a word or two. First let me thank you for the *American Nation*. I have again and again thought I would

write to you about it, but I have refrained, first because I remembered your prohibitions as to expressions of gratitude, and secondly because, to tell you the truth, I was half afraid. I have been so often disappointed when I have written to some of my Quaker friends to find how little sympathy they had with my War views, and how shocked they were at my opinions as to enlistment that I have shirked writing to those whose views I was not sure of. Now it is a real pleasure to find I may feel myself strengthened by you in my stand."

TO MR. ROBERT H. MARSH

"April 7, 1915. I am sending back with many thanks this charming book.<sup>1</sup> I have read it with the greatest interest, and at the same time with much sorrow of heart—for the contrast of the spirit of the French and that of the mass of our people is lamentable—the French ready to sacrifice anything and everything, and we wrangling about wages and insisting, to our everlasting shame, on carrying out our Race Programme, and endangering our chances of victory through Drink. It makes one blush to think what France must be feeling about this and our silly motto, 'Business as usual,' when *nothing* should be as usual at this time.

"Who is M. E. Clarke? She writes extremely well and I wish she would publish another volume telling of the later months. I have ordered the book, as I should like to be able to lend it and perhaps read some of it to our village folk, who have little realisation of the meaning of the War."

Miss Harrison was very wishful to start a League of Honour for the Bainbridge women, and as a preliminary she and Miss Greener arranged a meeting in the Temperance Hall on March 17, at which there was to be a short address followed by coffee and talk. About sixty women and girls responded to the invitation and were greatly interested. Miss Harrison gave an

<sup>1</sup> *Paris Waits*, by M. E. Clarke.



earnest and impressive address—full of telling illustration—on “What can *I* do for England?” She showed that as “members of one body” all were under obligation to the human organisations of family, town or village, and nation; that women had to keep the fortress of the Home while their men were away; to be thrifty, self-denying, simple in dress, self-controlled, sympathetic, hopeful, courageous. She pointed out how much women could do to influence public opinion and to encourage public spirit; how they ought to read the papers and take an intelligent interest in what was going on, so that they might be able to form an opinion on such questions as Strikes, Races, Temperance Legislation, Entertainments, etc. And above all, she expressed her belief that women had to set the social tone and ought to be the guides and leaders in morals and manners; hence women should bind themselves together to help one another to keep up the tone of the village.

At the request of the League of Honour at Middleham Miss Harrison gave this address again there on March 24th, and she and her friend were entertained for the night by the Vicar and his wife. She thus describes the visit:

To A. J. T.

“CUPPLES FIELD, *March 27, 1915.*”

“Some friends of ours drove us over the other day to Middleham in their car, and the country was looking very beautiful; we had a fine day and the sky was lovely with light clouds and snatches of blue here and there. . . . We spent the night on Wednesday at the Deanery, the home of Mr. Topham who had brought us over—a lovely old house, crammed with beautiful china and silver and old furniture, not picked up but inherited. It was refreshing to be with the Tophams, for they are very nice people, and full of enthusiasm for the war.”

This appreciation was reciprocated, for during her illness a few weeks later, the Rev. H. G. Topham wrote: “We count it a very high privilege to have known her, and hope through

God's grace, we may still know more of her, for she is one of those rare souls that help one to think better of the world, and stimulate to higher things."

It was in connection with the giving of this last Address that her nephew wrote later: "Aunt Lucy seems to me as certainly to have fallen in active service as any man who has died in the trenches. She gave her life and energy, her whole self, to the cause of right and justice, and her last public act was in the service of her country."

In the letter to Miss Tangye quoted above (March 27th) she wrote: "Our daffodils are just beginning to show, not in flower but in leaf. The snowdrops have been wonderful and are still rejoicing our eyes, and primroses and aconites are bright and pretty, peeping very often out of sheets of snow of which we have much in showers."

She never saw her garden with the daffodils in flower. In her frail state of health the strain of the War was more than she could bear. Her nights were disturbed by visions of soldiers and sailors in peril on land and sea, and of the sufferings of prisoners of war; gradually her hold on this life—to which she had hitherto clung with a wistful tenacity—seemed to be loosening and the spiritual vision becoming clearer. Some weeks before her last illness she said to her friend, "I feel as if I could leave everything now—even my books!" Her friend did all in her power to keep her cheerful, and a talk with an occasional caller was a great relief and pleasure to her. An old pupil came to Cupples Field over Easter, and on Easter Sunday, April 4th, the three friends went together to Meeting, and Miss Harrison spoke on Matthew vi. 33, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." She quoted one of her favourite passages from Blake:

"He who bends to himself a joy  
Doth the wingèd life destroy;  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies,  
Lives in Eternity's sunrise."

"It is through seeking first the things of the Kingdom," she

said, " that true joy will come. The supreme joy comes through self-sacrifice; the great offering of Good Friday brings the joy to us of Easter, ' Eternity's sunrise.' " One who was present wrote afterwards : " I can almost hear my cousin Lucy's voice and see her face as she read with special feeling on that last Easter Sunday, ' Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' "

On the Wednesday of Easter-week she took her last walk into Bainbridge, and in the evening entertained at Cupples Field the Belgian lady who was still her guest in the village. On the Friday she had the great pleasure of welcoming for a night a nephew and his wife who were home from South Africa; her last letter was written the next day to his mother, Mrs. Macdonell :

" CUPPLES FIELD, BAINBRIDGE,  
April 10, 1915.

" MY DEAREST ANNIE,—The short little visit has come and gone and it has been very refreshing and delightful to us. They came yesterday, Friday, in time for afternoon tea, over which we sat and talked. . . . Philip is just his old self—so kind and thoughtful and full of mental energy and good talk. . . . In the evening we sat round the fire and discussed many things, chiefly the War and conditions. Philip was on the whole very reassuring. I quite agree with him that a little more courage is needed in the Government's movements. They should trust the country more and not be afraid of throwing more responsibility on the people. What do you think of Joffre's orders as to the Drink? I think it is right and of course one hopes the English will fall in loyally. I wish we could take a little more the initiative and not have only to follow suit, even if we will do that.

" Sunday morning. No letter from you. I do hope you are not poorly and so unable to write. I am in bed this morning after rather a bad night. But I hope rest will set me up again.

Your loving

L. H."

She never came downstairs again, for that "bad night" was the beginning of her illness. Two days later, on April 13th, she underwent an operation for appendicitis from which she rallied only for a while. Her mind was perfectly clear during her illness and she continued to take interest in letters and could often talk with her sister and her friend, who, with two nurses, devotedly tended her. Happily she seemed after the first two days to forget the war, and only once afterwards asked for the prayers for war-time which she had lately used. She liked to hear passages from the Bible, especially Psalms li. and xxiii., or a hymn, quietly repeated to her—"No, don't read it," she would say—and she frequently asked for a few words of prayer. She would listen with much pleasure to her sister reciting in a gentle voice simple little poems that their mother used to repeat to them in childhood; sometimes she wished to have poetry read to her: the last poem she asked for was Mrs. Browning's *Caterina to Camoens*. Her mind seemed to be free from earthly worries; all her affairs had been set in order in time of health; (when the solicitor had occasion later to deal with her documents he was impressed by their readiness and good arrangement, as well as by her clear and accurate accounts).

After three weeks of weariness and weakness—during which she was as gentle and patient and considerate for others as she had been all her life—on Sunday, May 2nd, she died.

One who was at her funeral on May 6th, thus describes it: "After the quiet solemn time of worship in the Friends' Meeting House at Bainbridge, we came out into the sunshine and laid the urn in the grave—bordered with ivy and primroses which the village children had helped to gather; then we sang a hymn and covered the urn with flowers. The day was exquisitely beautiful; the mist had lifted from the fells and the air seemed full of radiant light—a light as difficult to describe as the influence of Lucy Harrison's spirit."

## PART II



## PART II

### LITERARY PAPERS

JANE AUSTEN

(1775-1817)

“ Long have I loved what I behold,  
The night that calms, the day that cheers,  
The common growth of Mother-Earth  
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,  
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon's wing, the magic ring,  
I shall not covet for my dower,  
If I along that lowly way  
With sympathetic heart may stray,  
And with a soul of power.”

THE readers of Fiction, and these, I take it, may be considered nowadays as the reading world, are divided into two great and distinct classes—the one that admires Jane Austen and worships at her shrine; the other who finds it impossible to read her, sees nothing in her and regards her devotees with pity if not contempt. There is no middle class—with Jane Austen it is ‘love her all in all or not at all,’ she cannot be regarded moderately. Now I may as well at the outset confess myself as belonging strictly and entirely, unreservedly to the first class of readers. I know no moderation in my love for Jane Austen and her immortal family of six. And that this is the case perhaps is not wonderful, for I believe Jane Austen was my first literary love, and I was introduced to her very early indeed and in circumstances the most favourable. One of my earliest recollections is of sitting on the stairs, the place of romance in many a child's life, with a satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1896.

consciousness of combed hair, recent washing, and spotless pinafore; with the pleasant sense of tea to come, stimulated by fumes of hot cakes and new-baked bread issuing from the kitchen, the fire from which sent its flickering rays through the open door, giving the group on the stairs just light enough to be cheerful without dispelling the pleasing feeling of mystery. And for an enchanted half-hour I sat many a time at the side of an elder sister, who with unusual vividness and power of narration told me the story of *Mansfield Park*. I knew the history of Fanny Price and her early troubles; I had my picture of Sir Thomas Bertram, of Edmund, of Mrs. Norris, and of all the characters of that marvellous story long before I had seen the book or heard of Jane Austen. The very title *Mansfield Park* has a talismanic charm for my ear to this day, and though the tale is not now my chief favourite amongst Miss Austen's books, from these associations it holds a unique place in my affections.

Miss Austen has written only six completed novels. The scene of these novels never shifts from England, hardly ever passes out of English country life; Miss Austen deals strictly with one single class of people, the upper middle class; the special interest in each story centres in the heroine; the aid of the mysterious is never invoked, unless indeed for purposes of quiet and kindly ridicule. Not one figure in all the group of characters is in any way out of the common or approaches the grotesque; not one is heroic; none are exaggerated; there is no attempt at tragedy—"Let other pens," says Jane Austen, "dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest."

With these limited materials, in these contracted circumstances, Jane Austen worked, and dying at forty-two, left behind her masterpieces of art which are as fine and durable as intaglios cut in diamond.



It is interesting to compare Jane Austen with another novelist of her own sex and her own time—I mean Maria Edgeworth, the apostle of Prudence, as she has been called. Her limits are not so narrow as those of Miss Austen. In Miss Edgeworth's novels we have pictures of high life and low life; the poor and the rich are introduced; the Irish Paddy and the English Nobleman; men and women of the world; foreigners; various countries; distinct moral teaching; political interests and social questions, but though there is the variety of circumstances there is, to some extent, a sameness of character. A still more striking comparison may be made between Jane Austen and a sister novelist, her immediate successor, some of whose characters bear a striking resemblance to Miss Austen's. I allude to Susan Ferrier. In the very clever novel *The Inheritance* the character of Miss Pratt is surprisingly like that of Miss Bates in *Emma*. The first is a grotesque however; it is somewhat coarse in execution and design; it is moreover ill-natured and cynical. Miss Bates is quite as silly as Miss Pratt, as tiresome, as ridiculous, but who has not learnt a lesson, as did Emma herself, in kindness and good humour from Miss Bates? From Miss Pratt we learn nothing but to sneer.

It would, I think, be difficult to point to a more original production than Jane Austen's novels. They are all her own; she has plagiarised Nature only, and she has added that subtle something that we call Art to her creations, so that living, breathing as her characters do, we see them not as mere imitations and caricatures of people in real life but as fine works of art. To draw direct from the life of an actual individual Jane Austen says herself she would call "an invasion of the social proprieties." Disdaining the claptrap of horrors, or violence of circumstance, or complicated plot, resolutely confining herself to a most limited area, Jane Austen performed a feat in literary work which has seldom been equalled; I think, in its way, never excelled. She is a shining example

of what reserve and moderation may do in literature. When we study her innate truthfulness, her fidelity to detail, her never faltering loyalty to Nature, we are not surprised to hear that she said she *thought* she could have married Crabbe.

Her originality is shown, too, in the fact that she refused to follow the established rule as to novels in her day, viz., that a novel to be justified at all in existing must carry with it a most determined and unquestionable moral purpose. No one could offer us such revelations of character, could give us such pictures of life as Miss Austen has done *without* conveying lessons of a true and wholesome kind; but her moral is not insisted upon, nor obtruded as in the stories of so many of her contemporaries and for that very reason is the more telling and incisive. "A moral," says Charles Lamb, "should slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter." And so it is with Jane Austen's *morals*. "In all her stories there is never one slip in the *moral sequence* of things, and if there is no stated moral purpose there is a moral effect; this moral effect is interwoven into the very fabric of her tales, and no sentiment, no sense of pity or sympathy, blinds her to the rights of Truth."

It was also held in her day that interspersed with the lighter parts of the novel must be passages something of the nature of Essays on subjects more or less irrelevant. To this notion Jane Austen refers in one of her letters in a playful and ironical manner. In writing to her sister about *Pride and Prejudice* (her first work finished before she was twenty-one), she says—"The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling; it wants shade; it needs to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparte!"

Miss Austen wrote for her heroines. They are her chief, her engrossing interest; they are indeed her *raison d'être*; it is

in her heroines that all her works centre and upon whom all turns. She never leaves her heroine; where the heroine is, there is the story and the action; if the heroine goes to some special spot, we go there too; if for any reason she is unable to go, we are unavoidably prevented from going also. We hear of Maple Grove, of Brunswick Square, but Emma in the course of the story never visits there, nor do we. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane, the secondary heroine, leaves the central spot, but we do not visit her until in the company of Elizabeth, the true heroine, who has to nurse her sister in illness. In *Sense and Sensibility* the doubt might possibly arise as to whether Eleanor or Marianne is the heroine *par excellence*. Eleanor, I suppose, must be looked upon as such, but I have always a fancy that Miss Austen, like her readers, found Marianne so charming that she had difficulty in assigning to her the second place, and so never throughout the tale allowed the sisters to be separated. In Miss Austen's novels we are never teased and worried with long episodes and digressions, torn from the company of those we are most interested in, and who may be in a critical condition, compelled to start afresh amongst new people and new scenes. No, like Miss Isabella Thorp at Bath we are constantly on the arm of Catherine Morland.

Miss Austen's women are not *modern* women, much less "new women" (whatever they may be); they are of an old-fashioned type who consider "Matrimony" as the proper aim of female living. But her *nice* women never "stoop to conquer," even to acquire the best of husbands or the greatest worldly position. Not one of them condescends to fibs or to the sneaking deceptions practised so constantly, for instance, by Thackeray's women. Miss Austen is no advocate for imprudent love matches, but nothing could be more stern than her denunciation of a worldly marriage without love, as the story of Maria Bertram only too clearly shows.

Miss Austen is not fond of sudden and wonderful, unexpected changes in her characters. On the contrary, she is as faithful

as Shakespeare himself in carrying out the promise given in the first lines of description of the character or in the first sentence pronounced by the person in whom she wishes to interest you. Fanny Price is said to be timid, retiring, humble-minded, and high-principled. Throughout and to the last moment she remains true to this description. Indeed the whole story of *Mansfield Park* goes to show the gradual development of character in the person of Fanny Price, and the whole book is a magnificent tribute to *character*—a timid, quiet, unobtrusive girl becoming the centre of influence. There are moments certainly when we are tempted to rebel against Fanny's persistence, when our sympathies are with Henry Crawford, and we wish she could be a little more pliant, but in the end we see that Jane Austen and Fanny are right and that we are wrong.

Fanny comes from an unpromising home; she is forced into circumstances which might have been quite crushing; she becomes neither an upstart, nor a sycophant, nor a nonentity, but by the most subtle yet natural process she ends in being the central stay and prop of the family which in the first instance seems to have all to give and nothing to receive. The magisterial Sir Thomas himself comes under her influence; Edmund, though apparently leading and guiding, is himself reliant upon Fanny, and falls into error when he detaches himself from her; Lady Bertram at a crisis in the fate of the family can do no more than welcome Fanny back after absence with the heart-felt and characteristic words—"Now I shall be comfortable." There is hardly anything finer in fiction in its way, I think, than this extraordinary, quiet, persistent power of Fanny Price. The man and woman of the world, Henry and Mary Crawford, feel and acknowledge her power. It is only the hide-bound selfishness and narrow-minded meanness of Mrs. Norris, the arrogant vulgarity of Maria Bertram that are untouched by the finer spirit, just as the empty-headed silly girls in *Pippa Passes* and the hopelessly

coarse students are those alone uninfluenced by the little maiden in Mr. Browning's exquisite drama. We see Fanny go into the unspeakable confusion called a home at Portsmouth, and even from this she contrives to snatch a brand from the burning, and by her patient sympathy and the maintenance of what she feels to be right she rescues her sister for better things. We may sigh for a touch of humour in Fanny, and no one could have supplied this qualification more easily than Jane Austen—but was she not right in denying Fanny this one gift?

Jane Austen is sometimes called "commonplace," but no one who could draw Fanny Price can fairly be so styled. In drawing this character alone she must for ever rank with the great interpreters of human character, with the great moralists who teach us by their figments to recognise the true in human life and in the characters of those about us. Fanny, of course, goes to happiness in the end, but I for one do not think Edmund worthy of her. He will to the last probably think, and his wife assuredly will, that he has moulded and perfected her character, formed her mind, and established her principles; I do not know that Jane Austen does not agree with them! So do not I! But how strange it is that so true to life and nature are Jane Austen's creations that we feel they have an individuality beyond the power even of their creator's hand, and that we can disagree with Miss Austen's own estimate of her own creatures. This is the true dramatic genius; this is why, I suppose, it has not been felt to be exaggerated to say that Jane Austen came near in some degree to the greatest of our dramatists and why Macaulay couples her name with that of Shakespeare. The true dramatist—he may be dramatist in the accepted sense or only novelist—has this power of so placing his characters, so setting them going, as it were, so surrounding them with fit conditions that they work out their own destiny.

The same quality may be observed in the working out of

the events of the story, in her plots. There is no forcing of circumstances; event follows event with unerring inevitability; no detail is overlooked or considered unimportant; it may seem perhaps extravagant to make such a comparison, but the development and evolution of Jane Austen's stories is to my mind like the quiet progress of the dawn, working on to complete light; there is no hurry, no retracing of steps, no digression, no teasing and unnecessary interruptions, all moves on with steady unobtrusive power. To *scamp* or to fight shy of the position she has taken up; to leave unexplained or unaccounted for any detail of her story was impossible to her. Her work is the work of a truthful, self-respecting woman, a woman of high principle in action and in thought. This high principle she brings to bear on her work as inevitably as one knows she did upon the little daily duties of her short and beautiful life. There is an integrity and an uprightness in her art which act like a moral tonic; all she did was well done. We hear of her exquisite sewing, specimens of which are still piously kept by members of her family; we can see her refined and legible handwriting, each letter as perfect as she could make it; the whole pleasing to look at. Above all else we have an infallible test of clear and straightforward thought in her inimitable style. "One of the greatest artists, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end, that ever lived." It is a style the characteristic of which is, I think, lucidity. What she has to say she can say with absolute clearness; it is simple and direct; it has no pretension to be fine or grand—it is the medium of clear and truthful thought—there is no confusion, no obscurity, not the shadow of ambiguity, and for the very good reason that the fountain of thought from which it comes is clear and limpid, and the heart from whence it springs is unaffected and sincere.

You may perhaps say that Jane Austen touched only upon the easily describable things of life, and therefore her style must naturally be clear. In answer to that, I would ask any

candid reader, any one who has honestly tried to put down plain facts in writing so that they may be interesting as well as clear, to read, for instance, the opening paragraphs of any one of the novels, where the statements made are of the simplest and most direct nature, and see whether it would be possible to *approach*, much less *improve*, the manner. (See especially the opening of *Northanger Abbey*.) There is not in all her books a slipshod or carelessly written sentence; her composition is a perfect model of simple direct narrative-prose, yet it has a brilliancy and sparkle which illuminate every statement and give distinction to every sentence. As to *padding*, it never entered into her calculations. Her style, though so excellent, conveys the impression of spontaneity; and the appropriateness of the diction to the matter is very noticeable. There is little description of scenery, but every now and then we are out of doors and find ourselves in a pleasant English garden. Miss Brontë complained that with Miss Austen there was "no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck." This is true, but who has failed to feel the delicious smell of earth after rain, as given in the shrubbery scene when Emma's spirits dance within her and she knows that all is right between her and Mr. Knightley? And have we not a very clear idea indeed of Mr. Collins's "humble abode." What descriptions there are are all given with very few strokes, but the effect is produced, and there are one or two appreciative descriptions of the sea.

To speak of Jane Austen's stories in detail would indeed be too long and certainly is uncalled for, so well known are they. But I cannot leave *Persuasion* without a word of comment. To my mind, it is the most perfect, the most satisfying of all her works, not less in execution than in feeling, and in exquisite and delicate character drawing. It has not the wit and sparkle of *Pride and Prejudice*; nor the incisive vigour of *Sense and Sensibility*, nor the joyous buoyancy of *Emma*, nor the fun and frolic of *Northanger Abbey*, nor the constructive

completeness of *Mansfield Park*, but it has a charm all its own. There is a sweetness and gentleness, a quiet, subdued pathos pervading the whole book given by the character of Anne Elliot, "who spreads purification and perfume all the way," which place *Persuasion* quite by itself amongst Jane Austen's works. It is the only story of hers which in places brings tears into our eyes; there is no cynicism, no jarring line in it; the eye is as keen as ever to detect folly and heartlessness, but we see it all through the tender forbearance of Anne; it is worthy of being written by a refined and high-minded woman when she knew her days were numbered. As we lay it down we sigh with Sir Walter Scott, "What a pity so gifted a creature died so early." The shadowy, ghostly figures that *might* have been, phantom offspring of that fertile brain, hover near us as we read the closing pages and we think of the baseless fabric of some dream buried for ever with the Enchantress's wand. What other bright creatures might not have been illuminating our imaginary world had Jane Austen lived another ten years! But it is foolish to repine for what is not, when we have so much. And let us be thankful that Jane Austen's excellent good sense and her inextinguishable genius did not allow her to be trammelled, as she might have been, by the silly cant in vogue in her time (and not, I grieve to say, quite extinct even in these enlightened times)—the foolish jargon of woman's sphere interfering with her right to exercise for the good of mankind Heaven-given gifts.

As an author Jane Austen recognises very clearly what she could do, and it is well for us in reading her not to ask or expect more than she pretends to give. As we have already seen, upon the most magnificent sides of art—the terrible and the tragic; upon the philosophic and scientific; even upon the historical, she had no intention of trying her hand. What Sir Walter Scott said is true: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involutions of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met



with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of her descriptions and the sentiments is denied to me."

Jane Austen's literary sanity prevented her from undertaking things beyond her power. It is told in her *Life* that the Regent, afterwards George IV., greatly admired her books (surely one of the best things we know of that gentleman), and that his secretary in writing to Miss Austen to tell her of the pleasure the Prince Regent took in her stories suggested to her that "A Historical romance illustrative of the august House of Coburg [save the mark!] would just now [upon the marriage of Prince Leopold with Princess Charlotte] be very interesting," and he also intimated that she might even dedicate such a book to the royal bridegroom! The letter reminds one a little of Mr. Collins. In her reply, in which she must have found gravity rather difficult to maintain, but in which we may recognise absolute truthfulness with perfect courtesy, she says: "You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that a historical romance founded on the House of Coburg might be much more to the purpose of profit and popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in, but I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep my own style and my own ways, and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should fail in any other." Miss Brontë recognised the fine power of reserve in Jane Austen when she said—"I think I will endeavour to follow the counsel which shines out of Miss Austen's mild eyes, to finish more and to be more subdued." In one of her letters Jane Austen says:

“Such a spot is the delight of my life! Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on.” And again: “A little bit, two inches wide, of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour!” How little the casual, careless reader recognises this “much labour”! All seems so easy, so delightfully without effort, and so indeed it is to—the *reader*!

To ask one working in this way for high effects and striking incidents and large canvas, is to be unreasonable, insensible to the gifts the gods do give us; and we can only fully enjoy Jane Austen when we thoroughly recognise her limits as she herself so frankly did. We must not go to her for what in present-day parlance we are pleased to call “Modern thought”; we shall not find theology and psychology, the latest scientific discovery, or the last revelations in physiology, politics, and sociology bandied about as topics of conversation at her tea-tables. There is a sad lack of scientific phraseology in her books—Evolution is not, I believe, mentioned by her, nor are the laws of health discussed scientifically by any of her characters, unless we take Mr. Woodhouse’s recommendation of baked apples for supper as such! But let me say that I believe no author has a more real and intimate knowledge of the true working of the great natural laws. Where will you find a more delicate working out of the laws of heredity or recognition of the strength of family traits, for instance, than in Jane Austen’s novels? It is so delicate that the careless reader may not notice it; it is not obtruded, discussed, and pointed out, nor are you called upon to acknowledge how clever the author is in the matter. No. It comes like everything else in her work, as a piece of Nature. Look for a moment at Mrs. Price and Lady Bertram; like in character, in person and in voice, merely differentiated by means of circumstances. Give him time and Edmund will be another Sir Thomas. In *Pride and Prejudice* does not the peculiarly shy disposition of Georgiana suggest that some of the hauteur, if not rudeness,

of her brother Darcy has the same origin? And is there not a most subtle likeness between Elizabeth Bennet and her father? If one might hint a blemish in *Pride and Prejudice*, it might, I think, be found in the fact that for once Miss Austen seems to have neglected this point, in that it is almost impossible for us to believe that Mrs. Bennet could be own mother to the two elder Bennet girls and that they could have such a sister as Lydia.

All creators of characters must have, to be thoroughly successful in the truest sense, humour, and Jane Austen surely has her full share of this great quality. Men have a delightful way of generalising as to women, and one of their generalisations is that women have no sense of humour. This is untrue, and like many generalisations will be found to be based on narrow and personal experience. A man marries a woman with no sense of humour (and I am quite prepared to acknowledge that that may happen), and henceforth he declares all women to be deficient in that particular. No one, however, can read Jane Austen and maintain that she, at any rate, had no sense of humour. The touches of humour in her books are innumerable; and they are often most delicate and of the keenest kind. Perhaps no character, with the exception of Mr. Collins, shows Miss Austen's style of humour more markedly than Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park*. She is an unpleasant person and Jane Austen does not spare her. The account of her relations with Dr. Grant is one of the best things in the story. On the death of the Rev. Norris, Dr. and Mrs. Grant come to live in the vicarage, the former home of Mrs. Norris, and the relations, as the diplomatists say, are somewhat "strained," for Mrs. Norris's leading characteristic is meanness; her whole intellect, which is narrow but sharp, goes out in bargaining; the Reverend Doctor loves the good things of this world, values comfort very highly but likes to get his indulgences at a reasonable rate, and in the inevitable transactions which take place between him and Mrs. Norris,

he does not by any means come off conqueror, as, in dealing with a woman, becomes a man and a cleric—the standing grievance of the dining-table and the episode of the Moor Park apricots are known to all readers of *Mansfield Park*, and nothing could be better than the few words in which Jane Austen manages to convey to her readers the irreconcilable nature of Mrs. Norris and Dr. Grant's relationship. "Dr. Grant and Mrs. Norris," she tells us, "were seldom good friends; their acquaintance had begun in dilapidations, and their habits were dissimilar." Of course to know Mrs. Norris we must read the book; she is one of the most telling of the secondary characters, and the minute, almost cruelly keen strokes which reveal her, show Miss Austen at her cleverest. Meanness was evidently a thing Miss Austen could not away with, and if to read of that vice, portrayed in the most consummate manner in the person of Mrs. Norris, and still more in Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood, would diminish that ugly quality, *Mansfield Park* and *Sense and Sensibility* should commend themselves to all moralists. To live with Mrs. Norris would indeed be a pain; but in the hands of Jane Austen we find her wonderfully interesting; her convolutions of meanness are so subtle and yet so true to the nature of the woman that one's admiration of the creator's skill overbalances one's detestation of her puppet. This is art, pure and simple, inimitable, incommunicable. Look again at Mary Musgrove, a woman absolutely wearisome, selfish, narrow, strictly speaking a fool. To be shut up with her for a day, as was often enough the fate of poor Anne Elliot, would be like a nightmare, and yet the transactions at the cottage where Mary lounges away what she calls her life, the relationship between her and the great house are fascinating to read of. It is so with the vulgar, flashy, affected, insincere Isabella Thorp; so with her intolerable brother; so with the shallow, snobbish Mrs. Elton; so also with the exquisite goose Mr. Collins. How is it that we care to hear of such people?

There are creatures ugly, uninteresting, annoying in their ordinary sphere; when, however, these are put upon the stage of the microscope or thrown on the lantern screen, the revelation of the secrets of their being, of their processes and manners invests them with a strange interest and fascination. So it is with the characters laid ready for us to examine at our leisure through the keen eye of Jane Austen, all their movements registered with scientific accuracy by her unerring pen! It would, however, be a great mistake to suppose that all the fun-provoking characters in these works are objects of ridicule. This is far from being the case; though it is clear enough that Miss Austen had a sharp eye for the foolish and absurd in character, her humour can be kind as well as sharp. Take one who, though far from wise, is made attractive through his gentle kindness, and rescued from anything like ridicule by the watchful tact and loving respect of his clever daughter. Mr. Woodhouse is a valetudinarian; he is weak and nervous; he values a servant on her being able to turn the handle of a door properly and to shut it quietly; he is haunted with fears not only for his own but his friends' digestions, and is in continual terror of damp shoes; he so strongly advises against the delicacies at his own table that his lady friends have to let the good things provided by Emma pass by with a sigh, and content themselves with the more wholesome and less tempting fare recommended by their anxious host. He has a rooted aversion to any change, and the greatest tragedy of Mr. Woodhouse's life is the marriage of his daughter to the man of her choice, and he continues to the end to deplore the fate of Emma's governess, "poor Miss Taylor," who has made a most happy marriage and has settled near him in comfort and affluence. But in spite of all this we love the old gentleman; there is nothing really ill-natured in him, and we are made to sympathise with him and his innocent little foibles. He likes his gruel thin, but not too thin, and we are as anxious as Emma herself that he should have it to his mind. Again,

though very slight, the picture of the happy married life of Admiral and Mrs. Croft in *Persuasion* is nowhere, I think, excelled in English fiction. Miss Austen's whole heart went out in sympathy and admiration for the members of the naval profession, and Admiral and Mrs. Croft are drawn with a loving hand indeed. They are inseparable. Mrs. Croft has accompanied the Admiral in almost all his voyages, and she even goes so far as to commit her bodily safety to his keeping when driving about the country in their pony carriage. " ' My dear Admiral, that post! we shall certainly take that post! ' But by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself, they happily passed the danger, and by once afterwards judiciously putting out her hand, they neither fell into a rut, or ran foul of a dung cart, and Anne with some amusement at their style of driving, which she imagined no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs, found herself safely deposited by them at the ' Cottage. ' "

Miss Austen had herself two brothers in the navy, and in her picture of William Price she must have drawn on her own experience of the midshipman character. Young Price is a noble fellow, a thorough sailor, who will make his way through pure love of his profession and uprightness of purpose. He is often called upon by Sir Thomas Bertram to tell of his adventures, and the effect that the bright unaffected story of his life has upon the jaded, blasé heart of the man of the world, Henry Crawford, is a curiously delicate bit of moral teaching. After hearing the stories of his adventures, Lady Bertram remarks, " Dear me! how disagreeable! I wonder anybody can ever go to sea! " " To Henry Crawford they gave a different feeling. He longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much. His heart was warmed, his fancy fired, and he felt the highest respect for a lad who, before he was twenty, had gone through such bodily hardships, and given such proofs of mind. The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance, made his own habits of selfish

indulgence appear in shameful contrast; and he wished he had been a William Price, distinguishing himself and working his way to fortune and consequence with so much self-respect and happy ardour, instead of what he was!"

Of Miss Austen's heroes I have not said much. Edmund Bertram, Henry Tilney, Captain Wentworth, Edward Ferrars, Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Knightley, they are a goodly company. Darcy I imagine is the favourite, and certainly, though sometimes almost overstepping the bounds of what one might consider good breeding, he is a fine fellow. The man, however, who seems to me to have the greatest individuality and who is most original is Mr. Knightley; he is a man of sterling worth, one, as it would seem, exactly after Jane Austen's own heart—sensible, kind, truthful, able; a man whom his friends would seek in time of trouble, and who would never disappoint them. He runs Captain Wentworth very close. A friend of Miss Brontë's never could make up her mind which she would have married had they both proposed to her—Mr. Knightley or Paul Emanuel. I must confess that the creature who, in the majority of women's novels, goes by the name of hero is hard to put up with. Miss Brontë's heroes—always excepting Paul Emanuel, who is charming—leave very much indeed to be desired. Rochester is almost intolerable, and Louis Moore is quite so. As a rule the woman-novelist's hero is either a monster of rudeness and masculine arrogance or a prig. With Miss Austen we have neither of these types, and if we have nothing superbly romantic and heroic, we have at least sane gentlemen.

Mr. Knightley is manly without being brutal; he is honourable and high-minded without being a prig. His admirable manner with Emma without a shadow of patronising, his kindly protection and consideration of Mr. Woodhouse, his gentlemanly overthrow of the intolerable Mrs. Elton, who outrages Emma's feelings by calling him "Mr. K." and "Knightley"—liberties *we* should never think of taking—

his inimitable love-making, his complete suitability to the somewhat difficult but charming Emma, make him of all Miss Austen's heroes, the one of perhaps greatest interest.

What a pleasure it is to find that we may pass from the study of the matchless work of Miss Austen as an author to the contemplation of her life as a woman, without any sense of disappointment, nay rather to feel our admiration heightened! We find ourselves confronted with a life of spotless purity and goodness; we find her in private life as gentle, as sweet as her own Anne Elliot, as sprightly and charming as Elizabeth Bennet herself. We have but one testimony of love from those who were closest to her. In every relation of life it was given her to fill she was exemplary; beautiful stories are told of her; none more beautiful than those connected with the nursing of her invalid mother, when she herself was sick unto death. "She had been obliged to give up all walking, and almost all driving;—while within the house she could seldom find comfort or rest except by lying down. The little drawing-room at Chawton Cottage contained only one sofa, which was appropriated by Mrs. Austen, then more than seventy years old, but if she had seen that her daughter needed it she would probably have refused to use it. Jane, who carried on all her work, literary or otherwise, in the midst of her family, made herself a sort of couch with chairs and declared that she preferred this to a real sofa, a 'pious fraud' which the grown-up members of the family respected in silence." (*Life* by Mrs. Malden, p. 198.) Of her own illness she made light. When she was dying in lodgings in Winchester she wrote, "Mr. Lyford (the doctor) says he will cure me, and if he fails I shall draw up a memorial and lay it before the Dean and Chapter, and I have no doubt of redress from that pious and disinterested body." (*Life* by Goldwin Smith, p. 39.)

Nothing even in her own books which describes the love of sisters is more beautiful than the stories told of the devotion of Jane and her elder sister Cassandra. When the time came



for Cassandra to go to school, Jane had to go too, long before it was suitable for her to do so, because her family felt that to separate the sisters would be impossible. Their mother said that if Cassandra should be condemned to be beheaded, Jane would most certainly insist upon sharing her fate. Perhaps Jane's devotion was shown not less in actual fact when she took to wearing caps because Cassandra had to don them. The love of the nephews and nieces for their gifted Aunt was strong and deep; some of Jane's brightest letters are to them. These letters show us amongst other things how real her story characters were to her, how she felt them to be actual companions and friends. In May 1813, while on a visit in London, she writes:

“ Henry and I went to the Exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her. I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition which we shall go to if we have time. I have some chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings which is now showing in Pall Mall, which we are also to visit. Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself, size, shape, face, features and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite colour with her. I dare say Mrs. Darcy will be in yellow.” Again—“ We have been both to the Exhibition (the Royal Academy) and to Sir J. Reynolds's and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. Darcy at either. I can only imagine that Mr. Darcy prizes any picture of her too much to like that it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine that sort of feeling—that mixture of love and pride and delicacy.”

In one of her letters she refers pleasantly to her growing fame. Though far from being appreciated to the full during

her life-time by the general public, towards the end of her life her stories were becoming known. She heard she was read and admired in Ireland, and she writes: "I do not despair of having my portrait in the Exhibition at last—all white and red, with my head on one side, or perhaps I may marry young Mr. D'Arblay." One of her nieces tells us of the joy it was in her childhood to be with her Aunt Jane, to follow her about from room to room, to sit by her side; what an enchanting thing it was when she was persuaded to tell one of her wonderful stories to the group of eager young listeners.

Some time ago my sister wrote to me:

"I met the other day Miss Austen Leigh, great-niece of Jane. She is a tall, elegant, gracious-mannered woman of thirty-five or forty. She brought with her the beautiful neat little desk on which Jane Austen wrote her books. In it lay her last MS. written on sheets of notepaper, the writing small and neat, with scarcely a correction. In the drawer was a tiny housewife made by Miss Austen and in it a tiny silk bag; in the bag a tinier piece of paper with a verse upon it sent with her housewife as a birthday gift to her niece. In the drawer were also some letters, a lock of her hair and a little ring she had worn. The hair was curling and light brown. Miss Austen Leigh spoke of a member of the family who remembered Jane Austen, how she would sit busily sewing and smiling to herself, and then how she would suddenly jump up with a laugh and run to her desk and begin to write."

Her heart was as warm as her head was clever, and every one young and old who came into contact with her felt the charm of her character and the fascination of her goodness. What she was to her sister Cassandra may be seen from the letter Cassandra wrote immediately after Jane's death, an extract from which I may give: "I have lost a treasure; such a sister, such a friend as never can be surpassed. She was the sun of my life, the glider of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and I

feel as if I had lost a part of myself. I loved her only too well."

Her mortal remains lie in Winchester Cathedral near her old home. Her memory is green in many a heart; great men have vied with one another in offering their tribute of praise to her genius and her character. She has enlarged the area of innocent and refined pleasure and "take her for all in all, we shall not look upon her like again."

AN HOUR WITH DICKENS <sup>1</sup>

WHEN Dickens was hurrying from town to town during one of his series of public Readings, to which the whole world flocked, it is told that one day in the city of York a lady, whose face he had never seen before, stopped him in the street and said to him: "Mr. Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my home with so many friends?" "Such greetings," says Dickens, "brought me very near to what I sometimes dreamed might be my fame."

I fancy we must all agree with that unknown York lady, for to every one of us, rich and poor, young and old, Charles Dickens has introduced almost countless friends; not mere bowing acquaintance, but warm, hearty, cherished, intimate friends, without whom our minds' world would indeed seem strangely empty.

As we look at the row of well-worn stout volumes of Dickens's novels, standing side by side, silent on our library shelves, does it not seem as if a host, a crowd of busy figures hovered round them? Can we not hear, as it were, peals of laughter; steps coming and going; do we not seem to jostle crowds of men, women, and children laughing, weeping, working, playing—*living*?

To attempt to give account of these were but wild presumption—to draw up a mere list of the characters would be to fill a volume; to enumerate and classify his almost countless types of character would be a serious piece of work. If we would write about Dickens's novels we should choose some special characters and confine ourselves to these: to write on all his works is to attempt to give account of a population. To begin with—his babies, for instance—"Oh, do read to

<sup>1</sup> Written 1906-1914.

us about the baby!" a lady was heard to say, "Dickens is capital at a baby!" (e.g. "The honest baby" in *Great Expectations*, Chap. xxiii.). His children, boys and girls, especially boys, good and bad of endless variety; his women—heroines, charwomen, nurses, laundresses, chamber-maids, actresses, show-women, schoolmistresses, trainers of youth! And if we go farther afield, where can we stop?—lawyers, hangers-on, waiters, bootsees, undertakers, lodgers, lodging-house-keepers, preachers, outcasts, tramps, turnkeys, debtors, poor-relations, misers, hypocrites, philanthropists, shabby-genteels, criminals, actors, Punch-and-Judy men, performing dogs—ravens! And one could write a paper on Dickens's weather, let alone his characters. It is bewildering! When you mention the talismanic name *Dickens*, instantly figures crowd upon you; one scene succeeds another; you are instantly in storm and stress; in the hurly-burly of real life, amongst the actors on the world's stage. And not only so; in the person of Dickens himself you are face to face with a spirit of overwhelming, irresistible energy and vitality. Take up any biography of Dickens; from the first page to the last you are following with almost breathless hurry of spirits, the ceaseless activity of a marvellously strenuous worker. This intensity, this irrepressible glow and ardour breathe in every page of his stories. His, too, was an unparalleled quickness of observation; he had the eye of a hawk, and details which would escape the ordinary man, he not only seized at a glance, but packed away in his memory to be called upon when needed.

The charge of exaggeration often brought against him, Dickens would never admit:

"What is exaggeration," he says, "to one class of minds and perceptions, is plain truth to another. That which is commonly called a long-sight perceives in a prospect innumerable features and bearings non-existent to a short-sighted person. I sometimes ask myself whether there may occasionally be a difference of this kind between some writers and some

readers; whether it is *always* the writer who colours highly, or whether it is now and then the reader whose colour-eye is a little dull. On this head of exaggeration I have a positive experience, more curious than the speculation I have just put down. It is this: I have never touched a character precisely from the life but some counterpart of that character has incredulously asked me: 'Now really, did you ever see any one like it?' ( *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Preface.)

There is undoubtedly truth in this clever apology, but I think we shall be wise when reading Dickens frankly to accept what we cannot help feeling to be exaggeration. And not only so, but to recognise that it has its indispensable place in his work. He wrote with a moral purpose and he relied much upon contrast to drive home his lesson—he wishes, for instance, to set forth in unmistakable terms the beauty of the unselfish character, and he gives us Tom Pinch, who one may say is a *monster* of goodness; he wishes to emphasise the charm of the cheerful spirit, and he creates a prodigy of jollity and calls it Mark Tapley; and as a set-off against such angelic beings as these, that there may be no moral shilly-shally, we have such a human "gargoyle" as Quilp. But as a matter of fact his truly great characters, his immortals have little or nothing of this exaggeration and grotesqueness—Pecksniff stands as one of Dickens's greatest; he is not a monster in any way; there is nothing of the stuffed Guy Fawkes about him; he is very real flesh and blood; he is a hypocrite, of course, but he is a cheerful and amusing hypocrite; he is not a labelled type. Rogue though he is, we cannot help enjoying his proverbial philosophy, for his moral sentiments take the form of excellent *bons mots*. *He*, not young Martin, is the hero of the story. And what we say of Pecksniff, we may say of the undoubted heroine of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Sarah Gamp. There is no exaggeration in her portrait—but she must be considered later.

Dickens paints with a very large brush and with striking

colours, but even in his exaggeration there is no *untruth*. We do not call the gigantic proportions of a statue, or figures of a fresco, which have to be seen from afar, untrue, though actually larger than life. So with some of Dickens's creations; they stand for his conception of the evil and the good and he delights to make them unmistakable.

Dickens's early years as a writer—and he began to write very early indeed (he was born in 1812, and his earliest *Sketches by Boz* came out in 1833)—were years of immense bodily and mental activity. At nineteen, after relinquishing the notion of becoming an actor, he was reporter in the Gallery of the House of Commons, and was on the reporting staff of the *Morning Chronicle*. In pursuit of his calling he had not only to learn shorthand, the horrible difficulty of which he gives account in *David Copperfield* (Chaps. xxxvi. and xxxviii.), but to post over the country, often transcribing his notes, as he has himself recorded, upon sheets of paper placed on the palm of his hand. It is with full realisation of this superabundant energy, this springtime of high spirits, that we must read *Pickwick* (begun April 1836, finished Oct. 1837). It is the astounding record of the vitality and exuberance of Dickens's genius and character. Among novels, if it can be called a novel, it belongs to the farcical order. To some, rather less milk-punch and intoxication might be agreeable, but we must remember that it is the apotheosis of good fellowship. The rough-and-tumble hullabaloo of some of the scenes reminds us of Smollett, whom Dickens, as a boy, read with great gusto, as he tells us in *David Copperfield* (Chap. v.). As the work of a man of four-and-twenty, *Pickwick* partakes of the miraculous. The first numbers were very quietly received, and the publishers were fearful that it would be a failure. But when in No. 5 Sam Weller stepped upon the stage, his appearance was greeted with rapturous applause which echoes still. Each succeeding number was more enthusiastically welcomed than the last. And every time we read the

book *we* too feel this growing enthusiasm, and the perusal of each chapter adds to our admiration and astonishment, and we exclaim, "This surely is his masterpiece!" One of the noticeable things in the story, is, of course, the deepening and developing of the two main characters and the extraordinary growing power manifested by Dickens in his work. Who would have foreseen, when reading the first chapters, that Mr. Pickwick is to endear himself to us and to gain that deep admiration and respect that we feel for him when he enters the Fleet Prison and during his stay there? Or who would see in the jaunty, Cockney Boots of the "White Hart," the Sam Weller who, in his devotion to his master, his fidelity and cheerful self-forgetfulness, is to win our hearts and make us long to shake him by the hand? Who, when he first meets Alfred Jingle, with his flashy talk and shabby morals, could believe that by and by he will feel inclined to sit down by the wretched trifler on the stairs of the Fleet Prison and share his tears? I do not think there is anything finer in its way in Dickens than the scene where Mr. Pickwick encounters Jingle and Job Trotter in the Fleet. He finds these two rascals who had cheated and insulted him, inmates on "the poor side," in rags and more than half-starved. Jingle braves it out at first, but "wholly unable to keep up appearances any longer, and perhaps rendered worse by the effort he had made, the dejected stroller sat down on the stairs and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed like a child. 'Come, come,' said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable emotion, 'we'll see what can be done. Here, Job, come here, sir,' continued Mr. Pickwick, trying to look stern, with four large tears running down his waistcoat, 'Take that, sir.'

"Take what? In the ordinary acceptation of such language, it should have been a blow. As the world runs, it ought to have been a sound, hearty cuff; for Mr. Pickwick had been duped, deceived, and wronged by the destitute outcast who was now wholly in his power. Must we tell the truth? It was



something from Mr. Pickwick's pocket which chinked as it was given into Job's hand, and the giving of which, somehow or other, imparted a sparkle to the eye, and a swelling of the heart, of our excellent old friend as he hurried away."

Well might Dickens feel satisfied with this number which dealt with the Fleet Prison. "I think," he said, "it will bang all the others."

Here are a few words describing the inmates of the Prison, graphic to an almost painful degree:

"There were many classes of people here, from the labouring man in his fustian jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl-dressing-gown, most appropriately out-at-elbow, but there was the same air about them all,—a listless, gaol-bird, careless swagger, a vagabondish who's-afraid sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words, but which any man can understand in one moment if he wish, by setting foot in the nearest debtors' prison, and looking at the first group of people he sees there, with the same interest as Mr. Pickwick did." (Chap. xli.) Every one knows the story of the poor cobbler "ruined by having money left him," as he tells Sam.

"Will you allow me to in-quire wy you make up your bed under that 'ere deal table?' said Sam.

"Because I was always used to a four-poster afore I came here, and I find the legs of the table answer just as well,' said the cobbler." (Chap. xliv.)

As these scenes show, there is pathos as well as humour in the *Pickwick Papers*, and indeed in *Pickwick*, as G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, Dickens's pathos is at its best. He shows a restraint and moderation here which is too often lacking in his other works. Every one must, I think, find it hard to tolerate the diluted sentiment of some of his *set* pathetic pieces; in the death of little Nell, for instance, and in many another we have the real Dickensian over-sentiment, and not either nature or true art. There is nothing of this in

*Pickwick*, and of course we need hardly point out how high the book stands in the quality of humour. One of the many sweeping generalisations which people are so fond of making about women is that they have no sense of humour, and as a confirmation of this statement I have heard it said that women cannot appreciate *Pickwick*. If that is so, I should suggest another possible reason. Women have with a questionable wisdom accepted without protest the strange presentments of themselves that occur so often in Literature. But there is a limit to even women's meekness, and there are things which "lambs cannot forgive nor worms forget," and greatly as I admire *Pickwick*, I confess that I do not wonder that women should not cherish it as a prime favourite, and for this reason: all the women in the story are, I think I may say without exception, preposterously silly or painfully spiteful. For them there is no development, no betterment, as even is allowed in the case of the scamp Job Trotter: from first to last they occupy a dead-level of imbecility. This is not pleasant, and perhaps we may be pardoned if we do not always quite see the fun in some of the episodes in *Pickwick* in which the women play a prominent part. But I rejoice to say that as Dickens's power in his art grew, and as his own character deepened, so, as we should expect, did his power of creating women characters become more subtle and varied.

As a proof of Dickens's wonderful energy in work, we may notice that while *Pickwick* was coming out month by month and delighting all England, *Oliver Twist* (1837) was already begun and was running side by side with it. The *Quarterly Review* with its wonted sagacity observed at the time:

"Indications are not wanting that the particular vein of humour which has hitherto yielded so much attractive metal is worked out; the fact is, Mr. Dickens writes too often and too fast. If he persists much longer in this course, it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell his fate—he has risen like a

rocket, and will come down like a stick." (*Forster's Life*, vol. i. p. 18.)

*Oliver Twist* showed, as indeed some of the *Sketches by Boz* and the Fleet chapters in *Pickwick* had already done, that Dickens had warm sympathy with the poor and oppressed, and that he had the power of drawing the dark and tragic side of life, as well as the gay and humorous; and perhaps nothing more strikingly reveals his rapid artistic development than his own remark as to two of his characters. Writing to his future wife when the early numbers of *Pickwick* were coming out, he says, speaking of Jingle, "Here is a character which I flatter myself will make a decided hit." But when he was nearing the end of *Oliver Twist* he told Forster, "I find Fagin such an out-and-outer that I don't know what to make of him!" In the first instance it is from the outside that he is viewing his creation; in the last, the creation of his own hand has laid hold of him, and its power is irresistibly bearing him along. "That which is creative must create itself," says Keats. In a letter to Forster, speaking of some of his characters, Dickens says: "As to the way in which these characters have opened out, that is to me one of the most surprising processes of the mind in this sort of invention. Given what one knows, what one does not know springs up; and I am as absolutely certain of its being true, as I am of the law of gravitation—if such a thing is possible—more so." No words could form a more striking comment on S. T. Coleridge's remarkable analysis of the nature of genius, where he says, amongst other things, "There is in genius itself an *unconscious* activity; nay, that is the genius of the man of genius" (*Biog. Lit.* vol. iii. p. 258). So real were his characters to Dickens that over and over again he tells us of their haunting presence in his mind and heart. He wrote the chapter in *Dombey and Son* telling of the death of little Paul on the 14th January 1847, and for the greater part of the night following he was wandering about the streets of Paris

“desolate and dejected.” How real his characters were to his readers we learn from the story of the man who rode miles at midnight that he might waken his friend with the great news, “Carker is dead!”

Dickens did not hesitate to commit the unforgivable artistic sin, according to some critics, of writing novels with a moral purpose; such of course, amongst others, are *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-4) and *Dombey and Son* (1846-7). In *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens sets forth the vice of Selfishness and shows its ugly characteristics and developments in a hundred different aspects in members of the same family. In *Dombey and Son* he deals with the hardening, blinding sins of Egoism and Pride in the person of Mr. Dombey:

“The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits to preserve inviolable a system of which they were the centre.” (Chap. i.) The description in Chapter xl. of the desolation that Dombey’s pride had brought him to, is an excellent bit of character-analysis; and it is the more interesting because Dickens did not often attempt this sort of thing.

In *Hard Times* Dickens has his fling at utilitarianism in education and training, and lustily does he lay about him; he has no mercy on those who wilfully ignore the heaven-implanted yearning for romance and beauty, and forget the part imagination and the affections ought to play in our life. He says many eloquent and convincing things, but the effective stroke in the book is not these indignant, vituperative protests, but the creation of Josiah Bounderby of Coketown, who is here pilloried for all time as the embodiment of blatant commercialism and vulgar commonplace. The key-note of the book is struck in the first lines, spoken by Gradgrind:

“Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls

nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts; nothing else will ever be of service to them. This is the principle upon which I bring up my own children. Stick to facts, sir." How Gradgrind's children develop under the system it is the business of the story to tell.

Whatever our view may be in general as to the artistic value of the novel with a purpose, we must confess that in Dickens's case the novels with the most pronounced and persistent purpose, as, for instance, *Hard Times* and *Our Mutual Friend*, are *not* his greatest; while *Pickwick* and *David Copperfield* with no insistent didacticism must rank with his best.

A very common criticism of Dickens is that he could not draw a gentleman. Certainly in this particular he is no match for his great contemporary, the creator of Colonel Newcome, Warrington, and Dobbin, but still I think he has come off very well in his picture, say, of Sir Leicester Dedlock, who with all his pomposity is a true gentleman at heart. Bernard Shaw classes the Rev. Septimus Crisparkle amongst the snobs. Nevertheless he is *not* a snob, but a gentleman, as is Mr. Grewgious in the same novel. It was not that Dickens did not understand the character, for of Nature's gentlemen he has given us numerous examples. His early life and associations had their influence, and he was never quite at home and at his ease, at any rate in his books, in a drawing-room, with men and women of high position. If we want to find Dickens's true lady as well as gentleman, we must look for them not in so-called "Society" but in his poor homes, amongst strolling actors, in the Marshalsea, in the kitchen or the garret. Dickens's heroes, like most stock heroes of romance, are for the most part far from exhilarating; Dickens himself feels little more interest in them than we do. Who can get up any enthusiasm for Nicholas Nickleby, Edward Chester, John Westlock, Walter Gay, or half a score others? We much prefer the

company of Ham Peggotty, Mr. Toots, or even "the young man of the name of Guppy." Indeed, the "hero" is a slippery eel to catch, and Thackeray escaped a troublesome literary pitfall when he wrote a novel avowedly "without a hero."

And now let me hasten to assure you that it is not my intention to take the works of Dickens and pass them in chronological review before you. I can only say a few words about some of the best known of the novels; two or three I shall only mention by name.

The three I have already spoken of form a very interesting group, representing as they do the earliest handiwork of Dickens, handiwork such as few men could show at so early a stage of their literary career. The *Sketches by Boz*, *Pickwick*, and *Oliver Twist* represent, too, the marvellous success that was Dickens's from the first. From the time when, as he tells us, he "dropped with nervous apprehension" his first MS. "into a dark little box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street," he passed from success to success, and as far as popularity was concerned he was never to meet with a reverse. He remained the people's favourite to his last hour; and to the present day he holds his own; year after year editions of his works follow one another in rapid succession; we are told on the authority of Lord Rosebery that there are 25,000,000 sets of his novels in the world at this moment; and the Trial of John Jasper which took place in January 1914 attests the lively interest we still feel in everything which came from his pen.

The *Sketches by Boz* foreshadowed what was to come. In the chapter, for instance, called "Our Parish," we recognise the first outlines of the great Mr. Bumble who is to play such a momentous part in the history of *Oliver Twist*. In these *Sketches* Dickens reveals his extraordinarily intimate knowledge of London, and begins that series of pictures of the city he loved so dearly, pictures as life-like and striking as those of Hogarth himself.

If we compare *Pickwick* with *Oliver Twist* we are struck at once with the comparatively small space in *Oliver Twist* accorded to humour, and indeed, leaving *Pickwick*, we pass from jollity and high revel into a region of almost unmitigated squalor and crime. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble, indeed, especially Mr. Bumble in his reduced condition, are provocative of a certain kind of mirth. When, for instance, this officious administrator of the law is humbled in the dust, he gives vent to his outraged parochial feelings in these pathetic words—words a little reminding us of those of our great first-parent on a like occasion:

“ ‘It was all Mrs. Bumble—she *would* do it,’ urged Mr. Bumble, first looking round to ascertain that his partner had left the room.

“ ‘That is no excuse,’ said Mr. Brownlow. ‘You were present on the occasion of the destruction of the trinkets, and indeed are the more guilty of the two in the eye of the law, for the law supposes that your wife acted under your directions.’

“ ‘If the law supposes that,’ said Mr. Bumble, squeezing his hat emphatically in both hands, ‘the law is a ass—a idiot. If that’s the eye of the Law, the Law is a bachelor, and the worst I wish the Law is that his eye may be opened by Experience—by *Experience*.’ ” (Chap. li.)

In *Oliver Twist* Dickens descends as low in the social and human scale as in any of his books, and yet it is noticeable that even in this story, full as it is of the most awful pictures of cruelty and vice and their attendant misery, he gives us striking instances of his never-failing optimism. Without for a moment condoning sin, or rendering it in any way attractive, he shows that generally a redeeming spark of goodness may lie perdu in the heart of the most abandoned character; that sometimes we may recognise a touch that reveals the better nature. Even Mr. Bumble has to clear his throat on the occasion of Oliver’s piteous appeal to him as they make their way to the undertaker’s (Chap. iv.), and from that

moment we feel that even Mr. Bumble is not entirely inhuman. Though we may search in vain in Sikes and in the Jew and in Noah Claypole for the sign of better things, in poor degraded Nancy it is clear enough, and indeed in many another, notably in Charlie Bates. There is nothing more telling in the story of the black crime of Sikes than the unquenchable horror and righteous indignation that this boy-thief manifests when Sikes takes refuge in the last hiding-place of his fellow-outcasts. Then the boy's better nature asserts itself, and thinking nothing of his own danger, he denounces Sikes and strives madly to give the murderer up to justice. Few scenes in Dickens surpass in power the whole of that return of Sikes, deserted even by his dog and received in silence and embarrassment by the reckless ruffians, whose horror at his dastardly crime raises them on to a higher platform, since it shows there are deeds that even they could not descend to. Nor does Dickens hesitate to make Oliver, surrounded as he is by crime and misery from his cradle, capable of holding on, almost in desperation, to what he feels to be good and pure.

Perhaps now we may glance at some of the types of character which Dickens has given us; at *some*, for, as I have already said, their name is legion.

First, his boys, Oliver, Paul Dombey, David, Pip, Johnnie Tetterby, Bailey Junior (if indeed he be a boy), Trabb's boy, Tom Scott, and last of the race, the very sublimation of the genus Imp, Deputy in *Edwin Drood*.

*David Copperfield* claims, I think, the first place. In the story of the little David we have much of the story of the early days of Dickens himself, and this alone gives the character supreme interest, and the tale of his innocent boyish joys, his cruel sorrows and pathetic loneliness, his initiation into the surprising mysteries of the Micawber entanglements, are drawn with a passion and a truth which only personal experience, combined with imaginative genius, could make



possible. There is one point in David's boyhood which I cannot reconcile myself to—I can never read with patience the description of the scene at Mr. Creakle's, where the insufferable Steerforth brow-beats Mr. Mell. It is natural enough as far as Steerforth goes, for he is throughout the story an inveterate cad, but that David should apparently admire his conduct, and not recoil from the vulgar-hearted bully, is to me distressing. Is it natural? Well, if it is, one is sorry that it should be so, and I should prefer to think that Tommy Traddles, who comes out luminously in the scene, is truer to boy-nature.

Pip in *Great Expectations*, one of Dickens's great books, runs David very close; but though alike in many ways as to circumstances, the two boys are absolutely different. Both stories are told in the first person and the interest circles, for great part of the tale, round the childhood of the narrator; both children are desolate little orphans; both are hardly treated; each finds a kind champion. Thus the danger of repetition was great and Dickens felt it to be so, but as Forster says, "Nowhere is Dickens's art shown to greater advantage than in the skill with which he keeps perfectly distinct these two stories of a boy's childhood." (*Forster*, vol. iii. p. 329.)

The relations between Betsy Trotwood and David, and those between Joe Gargery and Pip offer a charming companion study. Of course David is meant to be a hero; Pip is not.

I have spoken of Dickens's gentlemen—well, I think the incomparable little Paul Dombey should "range with these along." He stands alone amongst the boys of Dickens. Like David and Pip he is pathetic and charming, but there is a quality in him not seen in them. Though so frail and sickly in body, his is a dauntless spirit; his truthfulness, his sincerity, his shrewd intelligence, his quaint dignity in the awful presences that surround him, such as Mrs. Pipchin, "the child-queller," and his petrifying father; his passionate love for

Florence; the conquest he makes of Mr. Toots; the mellowing influence he has on every one he comes in contact with, from Diogenes, the dog, to Mr. Feeder, B.A.; all make up a picture worthy to stand by the side of the boy-portraits of a Vandyke or a Gainsborough. Even the over-done sentiment of his death-scene, so unnatural and unchildlike, even the sayings of the wild waves, cannot destroy our interest in the little fellow. I cannot here even touch upon other of Dickens's boy characters; space and time forbid; they are an almost exhaustless subject.

As to Dickens's heroines, I mean the duly qualified, certificated heroines, his ideals, women apparently after his own heart, such as Agnes Wickfield, Esther Summerson, Florence Dombey, and others of this type, I must confess one is apt to find them rather boring. Nevertheless, to be just, we must acknowledge that they have great qualities, and though Dickens never drew a grand woman, and though he has described some women with what actually amounts to spitefulness (for instance, Mrs. Snagsby, who is hardly relieved by humour), yet he recognises the power of good women in a high degree.

It is a thousand pities that *Edwin Drood* was never finished. In that story, the character of Helena Landless has the elements of greatness, and one longs to see how Dickens would have shown us the development of this, for him, unusual type of woman. But we are left to deplore the silence that falls upon her for ever, as well as that which falls upon her companions in that great fragment. It will be noticed that it is not, as is so often said, unselfishness that Dickens exalts as the first quality in his good women; this he expects in his good women as he expects it in his good men. He is too true a moralist to differentiate the sexes on this fundamental point, and to prove this we need only look at Tom Pinch, Joe Gargery, Tommy Traddles, and many others. How he despised selfishness in men may be seen in his portrayal of

young Martin before he gets to know Tapley and before he has learnt his lesson in misfortune's school; and in his Jack Maldens and Henry Gowans. No; Dickens, like the author of the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, seems to value most highly in his women practical ability, that blessed administrative power that brings order out of chaos, and produces peace and solid comfort in the home; they must, too, have never-failing sympathy and the protective mother-instinct. Not only does he look for these qualities in his good women, but when he is drawing his best, he expects them to lead and guide in the moral exigences of life, and it is in this last point that his heroines, to my mind, surpass not only in truth to Nature but in interest, some heroines of modern romance, who for the most part when the crisis comes are content to remain "passive as a water-weed in the sway of the tide" and to leave the moral decision to the hero.

Little Dorrit in extraordinarily sordid circumstances keeps her heart pure, and unaided and alone stands for rectitude and honour; Little Nell is heroic in her attempt to save her infatuated and imbecile old grandfather. Agnes Wickfield, though far from stimulating to the reader, holds the strings of the situation, so to speak, in her hands; the story centres in her, and she leads David to comfort and honour in his home and his work. Agnes is the only person, as far as I remember, who sees through the shallow character of Steerforth and estimates him at his true worth. *Great Expectations* may fairly be classed as a tragedy, not only because Pip is a snob, but because Estella's character is warped and she fails to rise to the occasion. Dickens, we must remember, did not mean when he planned the story that Pip and Estella should ultimately be happily united. He was persuaded by a friend to give the happy ending—Dickens was surely right and the friend wrong.

As for Dora, we can only say we love her; she is a favourite and deservedly so. She is almost the only heroine in the whole

series of Dickens's works whose atmosphere is warmed by the blessed presence of humour. She is, too, what few heroines are allowed to be—an individual. There is a delicious piquancy and freshness about her all her own. With all her childishness and her abnormal want of common-sense, we are always glad to be with her, for she is distinctly original; she is perfectly genuine. How refreshing it is to see the solemn, somewhat priggish David, with his good intentions, his cookery-book and his household accounts, routed and put to confusion by the combined efforts of Dora, Jip, and the pagoda! Dora's serene ignoring of troublesome duties is quite masterly:

“ ‘ Now don't get up at five o'clock, you naughty boy. It is so nonsensical.' ”

“ ‘ My love,' said I, ' I have work to do.' ”

“ ‘ But don't do it!' returned Dora. ' Why should you? ' ”

“ ‘ We must work to live,' I said. ”

“ ‘ Oh, how ridiculous!' cried Dora. ”

“ ‘ How shall we live without, Dora? ' I said. ”

“ ‘ How? Any how!' said Dora. ”

But Dora, sweet and charming as she is to us, utterly fails to reach the Dickens standard; she is hopelessly unpractical, and what can Dickens do with her?—he who has infinite belief in redemption of character (he can make even Mrs. Gummidge cheerful in the end) cannot cure Dora; he cannot give her what he feels to be the essential of womanly qualities; like David himself, he discovers that “ her mind is formed,” and it is past his skill to alter it. And so, as David has to realise complete happiness, Dickens with infinite tenderness, makes Dora die; he simply cannot bring himself to leave David to the terrors of Dora's housekeeping. Dora's death is an absolute necessity from the Dickens point of view if the story is not to be a tragedy. But Dora has a hold on our affections, as well as on David's; though she cannot regulate the household, she can make a home for herself in the heart of

Betsy Trotwood; she rises to magnanimity in the end, and the memory she leaves behind her is sweet. Still, for the woman who is to take her place in the world, and to shape the fortunes of those around her, it is, as we have said, necessary, according to Dickens, that she should have practical ability. Esther Summerson is a case in point. It is a pity she has to tell her own story; it strikes a false note; but Esther's never-failing sympathy with every one she comes in contact with, from Peepy upwards, is very beautiful, because it is not merely sentimental but because it bears fruit in active helpfulness. Esther serves, too, as an excellent foil to Skimpole, one of Dickens's meanest of characters.

On the other hand, whom has Dickens shown up more unsparingly than poor, imperturbable, slipshod Mrs. Jellyby, with her fine eyes fixed for ever on Africa and the kettle mislaid on the dressing-table? With a kindlier touch he has revealed the shabby troubles of a home presided over by a Mrs. Micawber. Mrs. Micawber has not to die as Dora had, but she has to emigrate!

Of all Dickens's women my favourite is Betsy Trotwood, upright and staunch. With all her angularities, her abruptness, her illegal war on donkeys, she is tender and true, a genuine and magnanimous woman; and in nothing is this more beautifully shown than in her sympathy and loving patience with Dora and her gallant championship of poor Mr. Dick. She has that which at any rate is seldom attributed to women—chivalry.

And what shall I say of the great Sarah Gamp? Here is, as we say in Yorkshire, "God's plenty." Sarah is too well known to need much comment, but perhaps I may be allowed to give one quotation which to some extent shows forth her great characteristics. She tells Mr. Pecksniff:

" 'When Gamp was summoned to his long home and when I see him laying in Guy's Hospital, I thought I should have fainted away. But I bore up.'

“ ‘ You have become indifferent since then,’ said Mr. Pecksniff,— ‘ use is second nature, Mrs. Gamp.’

“ ‘ You may well say second natur, sir,’ returned that lady. ‘ One’s first ways is to find sich things a trial to the feelings, and so is one’s lasting custom. If it were not for the nerve a little sip of liquor gives me (I never was able to do more than taste it), I never could go through with what I sometimes has to do. “ Mrs. Harris,” I says, at the very last case as ever I acted in, which it was but a young person, “ Mrs. Harris,” I says, “ leave the bottle on the chimley-piece and do not ask me to take none, but let me put my lips to it when I am so disposed, and then I will do what I’m engaged to do according to the best of my ability!” “ Mrs. Gamp,” she says, in answer, “ if ever there was a sober creetur to be got at eighteen-pence a day for working people, and three-and-six for gentlefolks,”—night watching,’ said Mrs. Gamp, with emphasis, ‘ being a extra charge,’—“ you are that inwallable person.” “ Mrs. Harris,” I says to her, “ do not name the charge, for if I could afford to lay all my feller-creeturs out for nothink, I would gladly do it, sich is the love I bears them.” ’ ” (Chap. xix.)

Sarah Gamp is a coarse, heartless woman—notice how she receives the news of Bailey Junior’s supposed death (she pretended to have an affection for him). “ He was born into a wale,” she says to poor Sweedlepipes, “ and he lived in a wale, and he must take the consequences of sich situation.” She was, I say, a coarse, heartless and wicked woman, and drunken to boot, but in her there is an extraordinary mixture of elements. She has flights of imagination; her stories of family calamities and vicissitudes partake of creative genius; she has a mythology all her own, and she rises into the regions of the Ideal when she sets forth the myth of the great Mrs. Harris, that glorious figment “ unbeknown ” to us as to Betsy Prig “ except by hearsay.” The introduction of this guardian angel who hovers, as it were, round the modest person of Mrs. Gamp and reveals to us all her hidden virtues is

a master-stroke of humour, and one of the finest touches of invention in Dickens. There is nothing like Mrs. Gamp in the whole range of literature; (her English alone is a national possession); yet she is pre-eminently true to life. She must always remain a sublime monument to Dickens's transcendent powers of observation and inimitable humour. In the heart of Mr. Mould, the undertaker, Mrs. Gamp raises admiration to the pitch of disinterested enthusiasm. "She is," he says, "the sort of woman, now, one would almost feel inclined to bury for nothing—and do it neatly too." (Chap. xxv.) Fully to appreciate Mrs. Gamp we should compare her with her "frequent pardner," Betsy Prig, who, though like Sarah in profession and condition, has a sour and brutal spirit. She has all her friend's vices without that lady's saving amenities.

So all-absorbing are Mrs. Gamp and Mr. Pecksniff in *Martin Chuzzlewit* that the story and many of the characters fall into insignificance beside them (it is difficult to realise that Mrs. Gamp does not put in an appearance till Chapter xix.). But there are great characters and great things in the book besides these two imposing figures. Mrs. Todgers's alone would make the fortune of a score of stories. Tom Pinch and Mark Tapley are noble personifications. It is somewhat the fashion to run down Dickens's *good* characters, to call them sentimental dummies, milksops, early Victorian and what not, but they have an important meaning. Exaggerated they may be, but they are the offspring of Dickens's great-heartedness. One might fill a page almost with the names of good and faithful men and women in the lower ranks of life whom Dickens has called forth from obscurity and drawn with penetrating truth and sympathy. Such is Guster in *Bleak House*. Just one word uttered by this poor girl is a revelation (as I think Forster points out) of Dickens's knowledge of and profound fellow-feeling with the poor. When describing her interview with Lady Dedlock in her trouble, Guster says: "She said she had

nothing to give me, and I said I was poor myself and consequently wanted nothing." (Chap. lix.)

As for the Marchioness, with her preternatural shrewdness, her alarming knowingness, her pathetic "make-believes," and her stoic endurance of cruelty, she stands for all time as the representative of London underground life, a Cinderella of the slums, awaiting rescue through the intervention of a Swiveller, immortality through the genius of a Dickens.

I suppose most people consider *David Copperfield* Dickens's masterpiece; certainly it was his own favourite—"of all my books I like it the best," he said. David is Dickens himself, of course, and some of his own people come into the story, for he did not seem to feel with Jane Austen, that to introduce into his stories real persons whom he had known, was "an invasion of the social proprieties," and in Mr. Micawber there are touches of his own father (as in Mrs. Nickleby there are, I grieve to say, touches of his mother). The great saying of Micawber as to an annual income is an almost verbatim reminiscence of his father's remark as he entered the Marshalsea: "My advice, Copperfield," said Mr. Micawber, "is well known to you. Annual income £20, annual expenditure £19 19s. 6d., result, happiness! Annual income £20, annual expenditure £20, ought and 6 pence, result, misery! The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the god of day goes down upon the dreary scene and—and, in short, you are for ever floored—As I am!" Mr. Micawber's letters are part of himself, and are only to be equalled by Mrs. Micawber's.

The flaw in *David Copperfield* has always seemed to me (and I think Chesterton notices it), that David after his rapturous falling in love with Dora, a quite idyllic episode, should for ever in his married life be repining, and charging himself with blindness and apostrophising his "undisciplined heart" because he has chosen Dora rather than Agnes. These laments grate upon one; they savour of treachery to Dora, and make us impatient with David and with Dickens.



Dickens bestowed unending labour on the writing of *David Copperfield*. The characters were very real to him. The death of Dora cost him much searching of heart. Writing to Forster as he was nearing the end of the book he says:

"I am within three pages of the shore; and am strangely divided between sorrow and joy. Oh, my dear Forster, if I were to say half of what *Copperfield* makes me feel to-night, how strangely, even to you, I should be turned inside out! I seem to be sending some part of myself into the shadowy world!"

What a storehouse of human character the book is! One stands amazed at the extraordinary number of what may be called first-rate creations in this one volume, but towering—or perhaps one ought rather to say pirouetting—above them all is the great Wilkins Micawber and the lady who would never desert him, Mrs. Micawber.

Perhaps in no story of Dickens (and it is saying much) are our sympathies for the poor and miserable more engaged than in *Bleak House*, where Jo, amongst others, stands for the class of outcasts, the product of a cruel civilisation. It is not only his misery, his ignorance, that touch us, but his goodness of heart; his gratitude for a word of kindness; his anguish when he thinks he has brought, all unconsciously, trouble upon her who has helped him and befriended him. "I don't know nothink, I don't," he says, but he knows the value of kindness when it comes his way; and he shows enduring gratitude to the man who had given him a kind word from time to time:

"He was very good to me, he wos; and wen I see him a layin' so striched out just now, I wished he could have heerd me tell him so. He was wery good to me, he wos!"

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds  
With coldness still returning;  
Alas! the gratitude of men  
Has oftener left me mourning."

Of some of the novels I have made no mention—and *A Tale of Two Cities* is amongst these. This is not because I do not

admire it, but because it would not be possible—short as it is—to deal with it adequately without giving it more space than the compass of this paper will allow. It is unique amongst Dickens's works, for in it incident counts for more than character; the storm and fury of the Revolution hurry and sweep its men and women along with the relentless force of the whirlwind; from beginning to end we are in the shadow of the Bastille and the guillotine; there is hardly a glimmer of humour throughout the story (unless indeed we except Jerry Cruncher and his truculent head of hair). But one cannot leave the story without paying a tribute of special admiration to the scene where Sidney Carton and the little seamstress go together to their death. Here Dickens's pathos rings true; here is no shadow of sentimentality, no *call* upon us to weep; all is as simple as Nature herself; nothing is forced—we forget everything but the two human creatures clinging to one another, oblivious of all around them, absorbed in the longing to help one another. It is, I think, the finest scene of its kind in all his books, and alone might raise *A Tale of Two Cities* to a very high place.

To Dickens we owe the revival of what, for lack of a better word, we may call the Christmas Cult. In his *Christmas Books* and *Christmas Stories*, especially in the former, he has emphasised in his own magic way the glorious gospel of Good Will. No book ever so beautifully, humorously, and effectively set forth the truths that Christmas-tide has to teach as *The Christmas Carol*. He conceived it in a flash in 1843 when on a flying visit to Manchester to preside at some public meeting; he wrote it when overwhelmed with work, with a host of engagements on hand, and *Martin Chuzzlewit* in mid-career; at such a time he created the Cratchits and Ebenezer Scrooge. The popularity of the *Carol* was enormous. Thackeray described it as a "national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it a personal kindness." It was one of Dickens's favourites for public reading, and I am always thankful that

as a girl I heard him read it; and to this day I feel as if I had seen, in his single person, on the platform of St. James's Hall, not only Scrooge and Scrooge's nephew and Scrooge's niece by marriage, but Bob Cratchit and Mrs. Cratchit and all the little Cratchits and especially Tiny Tim, not to speak of the intelligent boy who fetched the prize turkey with such alacrity—but above all, I saw Dickens!

In speaking of Dickens's novels I do not think we ought to forget his illustrator Phiz, Hablot K. Browne. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude, as did Dickens himself. Phiz was no mere illustrator; he was an imaginative interpreter. One of his happiest portraits is that of Mr. Pecksniff. Look at him, for instance, as he sits surrounded by his household gods; Charity on one side, Mercy on the other, and Mr. Pinch humbly in the background; the portrait of Mr. Pecksniff, by Spiller, smiling down upon the group, the bust of the same gentleman, by Spoker, in the recess, the drawings on the walls representing the architectural triumphs of that great man. The whole thing sums up the history and, one may say, the character of Pecksniff in the days of his prosperity. Or look at the picture of Betsy Prig and Sarah Gamp enjoying the cup that unfortunately *did* inebriate; notice how well the two women are differentiated. It is a magnificent rendering of that celebrated occasion which Edgar Browne, in his *Phiz and Dickens*, has well called, "One of the decisive battles of the world!"

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" There is  
One great society alone on earth:  
The noble Living and the noble Dead,"

says Wordsworth (*Prelude*, Book xi.). But may we not say that there is still another society, the society of the ever-living beings of man's imaginings, the creatures of his mind's world? Into that great company not many are admitted; its ranks are limited, its rules exclusive, and only those with a passport

to Immortality retain a place there. Into this region of shadows, and yet of realities, Dickens has passed some of his men and women; nay, is it not true that he has passed more into it than almost any other writer?

Charles Dickens is a great subject, and no one can feel more keenly than I do how inadequate is this attempt to estimate him. I suppose the more one admires a writer, the more difficult it is to say what one feels is worthy of him.

Dickens has been to me a life-long friend; his stories ministered to the romance and joy of my childhood. I am old enough to remember the excitement with which the new green-cover number was awaited; the glow of delight and expectation with which the family gathered round the fire for the evening reading. Gradually, as time went on, something of the real meaning of his work began to dawn upon me, and I saw that there was more than story, fun and terror; I began to recognise Dickens as a friend of the friendless, the champion of the poor and oppressed; the believer in noble ideals; the enemy of conventionality and artificiality; the lover of little children; the setter forth in beautiful and attractive garb of the quiet unobtrusive virtues; the uncompromising advocate of freedom and progress; the believer in human goodness and heroism.

“Lord, keep his memory green!”

## THREE OF SHAKESPEARE'S WOMEN

"Where women are honoured the Divinities are complacent: where they are despised, it is useless to pray to God."

If there is any truth in these words of the ancient Eastern Sage, it may not be unprofitable to give a little time to the study of the varying estimates of women put before us in song and story by those who are supposed to be leaders of thought in their time and generation. An innumerable host of women, phantoms of the imagination, rise before us as we think of the storehouse of character in English Literature alone, creatures far more real to us than our flesh and blood contemporaries, than any historical figure. Let us think for a moment of some of the women-figures we meet from time to time in our great national literature.

In the poem of *Beowulf*, belonging probably to the eighth century, the feminine interest is to some extent represented by the savage monster, Grendel's mother, who at any rate is not wanting in initiative, hurrying as she does countless warriors to ruin in her ghastly house beneath the mere. Yet even in this poem there are now and again pleasant, though slightly sketched, pictures of women:

"Then was laughter of heroes, the harp merry sounded,  
Winsome were words. Went Wealhtheow forth,  
The Queen of Hrothgar, mindful of courtesies,  
Gold adorned, greeted the men in the hall,  
And the high-born woman then gave the cup."

Her position is that of encourager, reward-giver and dispenser of food to the warrior heroes.

In the Middle Ages when monkish ideals prevailed, women were regarded as the evil *par excellence*; they of all creatures were to be avoided if a man would save his soul alive. That a wise Providence should have created her was only to be

explained by the fact that by no other means could so appropriate an instrument for the strengthening of man's virtue and fortitude be imagined; through exposure to her wiles might a man be best chastened; by patient endurance of her folly and her perversity might the saintly character be attained; but when all was said, complete safety alone lay in flight from her neighbourhood.

Curiously enough, along with this estimate runs another, the Romance or Chivalry ideal, where woman is not a fiend but an angel; a creature of complete unreality, to be worshipped and adored; in some cases she is little better than an allegorical abstraction. I always comfort myself in believing that this may account in some degree for Chaucer's picture of Griselda; I can only tolerate her when I try to think that Chaucer drew her to represent a virtue, the virtue of patience. When we examine her honestly we find it difficult to persuade ourselves that she is human. She is usually regarded by almost all readers as the embodiment of feminine virtue and wifely decorum. But to be this she abandons the very crown of womanliness; in her passivity and silly submission she ceases to have any touch of that magnanimity of motherhood which the meanest and tamest of domestic fowls shows on occasion; she weakly, and one may say wickedly, allows her children to be taken from her by her outrageous husband to be butchered, as she believes, without question and without remonstrance. It is the Griseldas, the Enids, fortunately the figments of men's imaginings, that encourage the tyrant and the bully.

Throughout our literature, even up to a late date, women have proved a most convenient butt for the satirist; hundreds of stories find their point in woman's folly, her ignorance, her bad temper, in a word, her smallness of mind. That some women should be silly is hardly to be wondered at. For generations she was carefully and systematically shut out from participation in rational education, nay, any education at all; her mind was left without wholesome food in any shape

or kind. Then the very persons who had thus legislated for her, amused themselves by laughing at the product of their own arrangements. The attitude of the great Milton illustrates the truth of all this: glorying in the magnificent education given to him by his good father, and estimating its blessings in his own case at the highest, Milton could yet leave his own daughters ignorant and untrained. And we all remember his views as to woman's position, summed up in the well-known and remarkable words about Eve:

" He for God only, she for God in Him,"

which, as Richard Garnett says, "condense every fallacy about woman's true relation to her husband and her Maker."

Countless instances could be given of the ridicule heaped upon women in literature, but perhaps one here will be enough. In Heyward's Interlude of *The Four P.'s*, a story of infinite wit, the sting lies, in a great degree at least, in this scorn of women.

A Pardner, a Palmer, and a Potheary engage to try who can tell the most egregious lie and the Pedlar is to be the judge. The Pardner and the Potheary tell incredible stories (the Pardner's is a monstrous satire on women), and it seems impossible that any one could go beyond their flagrant extravagance. The Palmer, however, by the consent of the judge, as well as by that of the other competitors, gains an easy victory by the following assertion:

" I have seen many a mile  
And many a woman in the while;  
Not one good city, town or borough  
In Christendom but I have been thorough,  
And this I would ye should understand,  
I have seen women five hundred thousand,  
And oft with them have long time tarried,  
Yet in all places where I have been,  
Of all the women that I have seen,  
I never saw nor knew in my conscience  
Any one woman out of patience! "

“By the Mass,” exclaims the Apothecary, “there is a great lie!”

“I never heard a greater,” says the Pardner, “by our Lady!”

“A greater!” adds the Pedlar, “nay, know you any so great?”

It is agreed that no lie could possibly exceed this and the prize therefore falls to the Palmer. (*Dodsley*, Vol. i.)

To some extent in the great Elizabethan time the estimate of women seems to have been influenced by the extraordinary figure of Queen Elizabeth. Just as in *The Faery Queen* Gloriana dominates the whole story, so Elizabeth's personality colours almost all the poetry of the men of her time; hence the estimate has to some degree a romantic tinge, with a notable exception, however, to be mentioned by and by.

The so-called Augustan Age had its own distinguishing view as to women and it is summed up in a few words which Thackeray puts into the mouth of Esmond:

“Indeed it was the fashion, as I must own, to look upon women as cheats, jades, jilts; and there's not a writer of my time of any note, with the exception of poor Dick Steele, that does not speak of woman as of a slave and scorn her as such—Mr. Pope, Mr. Congreve, Mr. Addison, Mr. Gray, every one of them.”

In *The Vicar of Wakefield* the three women of the story are of the lowest possible type; folly and vulgarity mark them for their own; of honour and rectitude they know nothing, and yet *The Vicar of Wakefield* was the most popular of novels.

In far too many stories even of our own time it is assumed, almost without comment, that women have a code of honour lower than that of men; that they are not only by circumstances but by nature deceitful; that being weak they are at liberty to be false. “A good housewife is of necessity a humbug,” says Thackeray.

In the popular novel of the present day it is surprising to



me to find how perverse is the view put forth as to women, a view hardly ever challenged by critic or general reader. On this point I consider Meredith hopelessly astray; and this is the more trying because Meredith is supposed to be the great champion of woman. Certainly he urges that women should cultivate *brains*, but unfortunately he does not make his women characters use what brains they may have. His typical heroine gets herself into perplexing straits from which some man has to deliver her. Diana, for instance, goes from blunder to blunder till she is rescued from herself by Redworth. A still more striking instance is afforded by Aminta. At the critical moment when Aminta's fate is hanging in the balance, it is Weyburn (by the way, the prince of prigs) who "acts upon his instinct" and decides for rectitude and honour. And what of Aminta? We are told "Aminta was passive as a water-weed in the sway of the tide; hearing it to be decided, she was relieved." Meredith, moreover, has a revolting way of representing the hero-lover as the conqueror, and the woman as rejoicing after a struggle in submission as to a master. I believe this presentation to be false; I know it to be pernicious.

It is pleasant now to turn to Shakespeare and to see what he has to say on our subject. When we open our Shakespeares we leave behind us allegory, abstraction and unreality and find ourselves with men and women. He introduces us to many types of women—the good, the bad, the colourless, the weak, the strong. With him we may study woman in almost every relation of life that it is given her to fill; that of daughter, wife, mother, friend. His picture of girl-friendship, for instance, between Celia and Rosalind, is very charming; and what a profound understanding he shows of the friendship of an older woman for a younger in that of the Countess for Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well*—Ruth and Naomi in Elizabethan dress. It is rather curious that nowhere in Shakespeare do we find any elaborate portrayal of the relation of mother and

daughter. True, we have Lady Capulet and Juliet, and also Hermione and Perdita, but in the last case it is only at the very end of the play that mother and daughter meet. The peep Shakespeare does give us makes us long for more. On the other hand, the relation of father and motherless daughter we have over and over again in his plays; as in the case of Miranda and Prospero, Ophelia and Polonius, Jessica and Shylock, Cordelia and Lear, and others; mother and son also again and again, as Coriolanus and Volumnia, Hamlet and Gertrude, Countess Rousillon and Bertram. It may be merely chance, but it is certainly noticeable.

The three women whom I have chosen differ in circumstances and character, but they are all called upon in stress and difficulty to show what may be in them. Two stand the test; one is found wanting.

The first possesses wealth and is in high position; she is the "cynosure of neighbouring eyes," she has to meet the insidious temptations which accompany high place and riches and independence; she is mistress of her wealth and of herself; and her magnanimity, her generosity and her fine powers of administration turn, what might have been, but for her, a tragedy into a joyful and healthy comedy. The second is a straw upon the rapids, whirled away powerless to stem the tide, broken herself in the rush of the torrent. The third moves in a dark and fateful tragedy, but by her truthfulness, her lofty ideal of honour, gives to the tempestuous and sombre story a redeeming gleam of heaven's own light.

It will be seen that the three women I have in mind are Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Ophelia, and Cordelia.

Let us begin then with Portia.

Shakespeare has in his *Merchant of Venice* created for us one of the most charming of women. Portia is upright, honourable and capable; full of resource and sweet helpfulness; a woman that had we known her we should go to in time of need with perfect confidence of getting help; who in time

of joy we should seek, sure of finding sympathy; and who when we were dull we should visit, satisfied that with her there would be entertainment.

*The Merchant of Venice* might have for its motto that ancient and pregnant saying, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. xi.) The play among many other things, is a noble exposition of the use and abuse of money; the free-handed, noble generosity of Portia is set over against the miserly and shortsighted greed of Shylock; and her radiant happiness in her unselfish disposal of her money, against the sordid misery of the old man, who, through his passion for gathering and keeping, loses all. Portia's father has left her endowed with wealth but under conditions which are, to say the least, perplexing. The man who shall marry her must make a right choice of one amongst three caskets. Portia knows which is the right one, but is in honour bound not to indicate by word or sign to the chooser which to take and which to leave.

That Portia finds the condition hard, we may see from her words:

"Oh me!" she says, "the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father." But she is loyal to this dead father's wishes and when Nerissa suggests that she might with easy conscience evade the conditions she replies:

"If I live to be as old as Sybilla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will." And when her happiness lies in the scale, depending upon the choice of the right casket by Bassanio, she says:

"I could teach you  
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn,  
So will I never be; so may you miss me."

This is a notable mark in Portia's character: with all her

lightheartedness, she never swerves an inch from the path of honour; though her happiness be wrecked she will not be forsworn. Her large-minded recognition of the real worth of her riches is seen when the news comes to Belmont of Antonio's ruin and Bassanio has to tell of the 3000 ducats borrowed by Antonio from Shylock for Bassanio's purposes:

"What," says Portia, "no more!  
 Pay him six thousand and deface the bond.  
 Double six thousand and then treble that  
 Before a friend of such description  
 Shall lose a hair thoro' Bassanio's fault.  
 First go with me to church and call me wife,  
 And then away to Venice to your friend;  
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side  
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold  
 To pay the paltry debt twenty times over—  
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along."

In the last words we may see a trait not often allowed to women, a trait which perhaps shows as much generosity as the free-handed offer of her money; some authors might have been inclined to make Portia show some jealousy of Bassanio's friend—not so Shakespeare:

"When it is paid, bring your true friend along."

Of Portia's wit, her resourcefulness, her lofty conception of mercy, of her sense of humour, we hardly need say a word, for in the trial scene, perhaps the best known scene in English drama, all these qualities are revealed. Though we read that scene a hundred times, can we ever read it without a flush of excitement? The reiterated appeals of Portia to the Jew to relax his bitter hold upon the life of Antonio; her indignation at the obdurate cruelty of Shylock, culminating in the irrepressible outburst of eloquence in her exposition of the nature of mercy, are no less brilliant than the sharpness of wit which puts the learning of the court to shame. The few significant words, "Tarry a little," strike us, familiar as they are, as they

must have struck the Jew; we almost hear the wretched and vengeful old man catch his breath as he hears them at the very moment when he thinks to lay hands on his prey. But at this point, I must acknowledge that Portia a little disappoints me. With her own fine words on mercy ringing in her ears, with her enemy at her feet, and her success assured, is it too much to expect a motion of commiseration for the fallen foe? Might we not look for some impulse of pity, some word to mitigate the rigour of the law? This we do not get. With all her gifts she lacks one thing; something that if she lives will not tarry. She needs a sorrow to make her tender as well as just; she is young and she is happy; she needs years and trials to make her capable of that rare and noble power of forgiveness, such as we see in Hermione. Still what a woman Portia is! How we love and admire her! Though it is spoken by her lover we feel that every word of this fine eulogium is true—

“ In Belmont is a lady richly left;  
 And she is fair and, fairer than that word,  
 Of wondrous virtues . . .  
 Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued  
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia!  
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,  
 For the four winds blow in from every coast  
 Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks  
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,  
 Which makes her seat of Belmont, Colchos' strand,  
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.”

Portia possesses a quality which I believe many great creators of character highly esteem in women; I mean practical ability. It is a quality which good women often possess in a conspicuous degree; the quality which if allowed full scope makes the successful home and the united family. Many women with comparatively little direct training will show themselves excellent administrators of money and organisers of work. In higher matters it shows itself in the power to guide and direct moral issues and to influence

character. Dickens no less than Shakespeare often endows his women with this valuable attribute.

Happiness and success are Portia's, and richly does she deserve them; she is worthy of all the world can give, for she is great enough to estimate its gifts at their true value and she can use them to noble and enduring ends.

From the sunny land of Belmont, and the invigorating company of the fascinating Portia, one turns with a sigh to the tangled and sad story of poor Ophelia. She is a complete contrast to Portia in circumstances and in character. She belongs to the conventional type of woman; the woman willing to be guided and led by whosoever may be nearest at hand; the woman who has little or no will, and whose love even is timid and moulded by events. She should have been born into happy and peaceful times, and have loved an ordinary commonplace man, or a man of firm purpose and in comfortable circumstances. She might then have been not only happy, but admirable. But the times are out of joint for her as well as for Hamlet; fate is hard upon her; she is a motherless girl in a corrupt court; with a father who has the soul of a courtier; with a conventional brother, and her only woman-friend is the weak and shallow queen. In judging Ophelia we must remember all this. Shakespeare remembers it, and his treatment of Ophelia is very tender, and he has infinite pity for her; but Nemesis is relentless, and not Shakespeare himself can divert her decrees. There is much that we love in Ophelia, but we must recognise that her character is feeble, she is unable to stand alone, unable to turn her love, which is genuine, to any account—even to help Hamlet in his sore need. She fails him at the critical moment, she allows her temporising old father to draw her into trick and deception, and instead of a force to help, she makes one of the distracting elements in the misery of the man she loves. Surely Shakespeare means us to see that her lack of instinctive resourcefulness, her want of courage

and rectitude hasten the catastrophe. Had Hamlet loved such a woman as Portia, there might have been tragedy but there need not have been heart-breaking failure.

*Hamlet* is not a play one can dogmatise about, but it always seems to me that one of the most striking things in the situation is the complete loneliness of Hamlet, and when we find he cannot trust and confide in Ophelia (and he loves her dearly), his loneliness is doubly emphasised.

When Hamlet, troubled and distracted, seeks Ophelia and would fain confide in her (at least so I read the scene), she has nothing to say to him, she believes him to be mad, and terrified she rushes to her father and pours forth her story to him:—

“ My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
 Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,  
 No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,  
 Ungartered and down-gyvéd to his ancle;  
 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
 And with a look so piteous in purport  
 As if he had been looséd out of Hell  
 To speak of horrors—he comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

*Oph.*

My Lord, I do not know,

But truly I do fear it.

*Pol.*

What said he?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
 Then goes he to the length of all his arm;  
 And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
 He falls to such perusal of my face  
 As he would draw it. Long stayed he so;  
 At last, a little shaking of my arm,  
 And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
 He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
 As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
 And end his being; that done, he lets me go;  
 And, with his head over his shoulder turned,  
 He seemed to find his way without his eyes;  
 For out of doors he went without their helps,  
 And, to the last, bended their light on me.”

What a description! Ophelia has the family facility of

expression, and her eloquent words show she had clearly recognised Hamlet's forlorn and desperate condition of mind. She is full of sorrow for him, but she has no instinct towards practical help; it does not seem to have occurred to her that she could do anything.

Hamlet looked into her eyes to see if indeed there was that in her which could minister to his great want, and he saw nothing but fear and horror! Her instinct is to run to her father for protection and to tell him all that has passed between her and Hamlet. And worse and worse, without a word of remonstrance she hands to her father Hamlet's love-letters, and allows herself to be one in a plot to surprise his secret from her unfortunate lover. She may do this with fair intention; but she seems to feel no longing, as a strong woman would have done, to throw herself into the breach; no resentment that any one should come between Hamlet and herself. Her father and the king ensconce themselves behind the curtain, and Ophelia acts as decoy to Hamlet so that he may pour out his trouble to her while the shabby spies listen to all that passes. It is not an edifying spectacle. No wonder catastrophe follows catastrophe and failure and confusion are the result. Doubtless with such a character as Hamlet's, tragedy was inevitable, but Ophelia might at any rate have made for him, by her confidence in him and by her sympathy, one bright spot, one resting-place for a moment of time. "But she thought he was mad," says Professor Bradley, "and that she was doing the best thing for Hamlet, in letting her father and the king into his secret." That may be so, but what sort of love was hers, which could see no farther than old Polonius and the other courtiers? Contrast with Ophelia's behaviour the daring courage and initiative of the *child* Juliet, who though swamped in tragedy yet in spirit rises above Fate and has left an immortal name amongst lovers—

"Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee."

Portia wrests her happiness, amidst conflicting and perplexing



circumstances, by command over herself and them; Ophelia is carried away in the mad current of troubles; she is powerless to assert even her love. She is the victim of convention not less than of Fate—"The pity of it . . . the pity of it!" is all that we can say.

With Cordelia again it is different. Circumstances, Fate if you will, as in Ophelia's case, are too strong for her, and her story is tragedy, but it is not failure. By her force of character, by her magnanimity, she rises superior to all, and the world is the nobler and humanity the sweeter that it has been given to man to represent so pure and strong a soul, and one may add, so true to nature. Were we to count up the words of Cordelia from first to last we should find them very few. She is not long upon the stage, but we are throughout the horror of the overwhelming tragedy conscious of her spirit of power and courage; and surrounded as we are by the most revolting examples of human depravity and treachery, the thought of her and of the good Kent keeps our fainting hope alive.

It seems something very like impertinence to discuss the character of Cordelia. Of all the women in literature she is the most beautiful, the most completely satisfying, and there is perhaps nothing which makes one realise more fully the magnitude of Shakespeare's genius than the contemplation and study of this woman-creation of his.

It is a commonplace in criticism to say that of Shakespeare's character we can know little or nothing; that his genius being dramatic, the man himself and his convictions are hidden from us. But can we doubt for a moment of the character of one who can draw a Cordelia and a Kent, and who by the whole trend of the play shows that he feels them to be almost ideal human creations? What does our reading of the plays amount to if we can hesitate to proclaim the creator of such men and women, as himself great and good? "By their fruits shall ye know them."

I think we may say that two at least of the distinguishing traits of Cordelia's character are truthfulness and reserve, a reserve too profound to profess in words what the heart is strong to *do*; and it is easy to see that if this is the case Cordelia's part is no easy one. At the very outset she is called upon, by her father's foolish demand, to outrage both these strong instincts of her being. The old man would force from her, as well as from her sisters, an avowal in words, *before the whole court*, of their affection for him. To the detestable Regan and Goneril the task is not difficult. Their glib and hypocritical utterances offend and disgust Cordelia, for she knows them for what they are worth. The first words we hear from the lips of Cordelia are the index of her character, that character which throughout the whirling tempest of the play remains steadfast, unshaken, immovable. Contrast them with the extravagant and hollow rhetoric of Goneril. When Lear asks Goneril how she loves him, she declaims in the following flashy strain:

“ Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty;  
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;  
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;  
A love that makes breath poor and speech unable;  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.”

After all this verbal display, Cordelia says aside:

“ What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.”

These few words speak volumes. Cordelia, we notice, says, “ What shall Cordelia *do* ? ” not what shall she *say* ? and her answer to herself is, “ *Love* and be silent.” To Cordelia to love and to do are one and the same; to *say* is nothing. As the play goes on and the story develops we find that Cordelia is true to this; her love is proved in action.

When she meets the good Kent long afterwards and would fain thank him for all he has done for her father she says:

" Oh thou good Kent, how shall I *live* and *work*  
 To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,  
 And every measure fail me." (iv. 7.)

Here too is that reserve in love which comes not from coldness and indifference but from the profound depth of passionate feeling. When Lear can scarcely believe his ears as she declares that she can say nothing in answer to his appeal for a declaration of love, and tells her to speak again, she says:

" Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
 My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty  
 According to my bond, nor more, *nor less.*"

This trait of reserve is never absent in Cordelia. France, who loves her and understands her, calls it a "tardiness in nature." When she learns how her unnatural sisters have driven the old king to distraction by their cruelty, we are told:

" There she shook  
 The holy water from her heavenly eyes;  
 . . . . Then away she started  
 To deal with grief alone." (iv. 3.)

This mastery of impulse, this reticence in the expression of emotion, this noble self-control which issues in action when the right moment comes, is one of the marks of this woman; it is a tower of strength, while her truthfulness is the foundation of her greatness.

It is sometimes said that Cordelia in this first scene with her father is harsh and unfeeling; that it would have been more amiable, more womanly to have humoured the old man and given him smooth words; that as she did truly love him, she might surely have told him so. This may be so, but the critic who feels this ranges himself with Lear, who failed so utterly to understand her. Shakespeare knew her through and through, and he knew that for Cordelia to do otherwise than she did was absolutely impossible; he knew that her failure to compromise, her obstinacy if you will, was to bring

on the tragedy, but he will not make her false to herself, nor will he be false to himself and make her *perfect*. Cordelia is human. Lear reproaches her with the words: "So young and so untender," and she answers, "So young, my Lord, and *true*." We must remember that the empty, false words of her sisters are still present to her mind, and that she is smarting under the misery of knowing that not only are these words false, but that her father accepted them as true and was by such transparent trickery made the dupe of his scheming and shameless daughters. How could she meet them but by silent scorn?

After the terrible scene when the king disinherits her, Cordelia goes forth from her home with the noble-hearted France, and we hear no more of her until the misery of the king and the ruin of the country are almost consummated. Then when she is needed, and hopes to be able to help, she comes once more upon the scene.

There is no scene in drama, to my mind, which can approach that in which Cordelia and Lear meet after their estrangement; when the hideous misery the old man has had to bear has completely broken him down. The whole beauty of Cordelia's character shines out, and it is impossible to imagine greater tenderness, pity and love. Here, too, is that passionate instinct to protect the thing it loves which is always a factor in the love of great and good women. A whole world of human tenderness and sorrow are gathered up in the few words uttered by Lear and Cordelia in that last scene of the Fourth Act. And where in the whole range of literature is forgiveness more marvellously revealed? The broken-hearted old king wakes from a sleep which has partially restored him, to find his daughter, whom when he last saw her, he had cursed and driven from his sight, bending over him with infinite compassion.

"Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?  
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity

To see another thus. I know not what to say.  
 I will not swear these are my hands: let's see,  
 I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured  
 Of my condition!

*Cor.* Oh, look upon me, sir,  
 And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:  
 No, sir, you must not kneel.

*Lear.* Pray, do not mock me:  
 I am a very foolish, fond old man,  
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less,  
 And, to deal plainly,  
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
 Methinks I should know you and know this man;  
 Yet I am doubtful; for I am mainly ignorant  
 What place this is; and all the skill I have  
 Remembers not these garments; nor I know not  
 Where I did lodge last night—Do not laugh at me,  
 For as I am a man, I think this lady  
 To be my child Cordelia.

*Cor.* And so I am, I am.

*Lear.* Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray weep not;  
 If you have poison for me, I will drink it;  
 I know you do not love me, for your sisters  
 Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:  
 You have some cause, they have not.

*Cor.* No cause, no cause."

It is noticeable that Shakespeare, with William Blake and Dickens, places the quality of forgiveness in the first rank of virtues. Shakespeare's greatest characters possess it and exercise it nobly; Hermione, Prospero, and Cordelia pre-eminently. In *A Tale of Two Cities* Dr. Manette and his daughter's ruin is accomplished through the fulfilment of Manette's own vengeful curse registered years before; while with Blake not to be able to forgive is the unforgivable sin.

The hint of the love Cordelia has inspired in the wayward but loyal heart of the Fool shows us something of Cordelia's worth and beauty of character. It is but a word, but it is sufficient. After Cordelia has left the court, the king misses his fool—he has not been seen for a couple of days and Lear asks for him. One of his followers says:

“ Since my young lady's going into France  
The fool hath much pined away.”

Perhaps the almost cruel bitterness with which the fool taunts Lear has to some extent its origin in his misery at her loss and the remembrance of the treatment she has received.

Here there are three pictures of three women, painted by an unerring observer of men and things. Are they true to life? May we trust the brain and heart that conceived them? or must we take the estimate of lesser men? For my part I believe that to stand with Shakespeare is to stand with an even greater than he, with Nature herself.

There are many voices in this twentieth century, some helpful enough, and in the hurry and rush of our times it is sometimes difficult to make our choice. But it cannot be amiss to turn now and again to the very greatest, to those who have stood the test of many generations, to those who are indeed the classics; to turn to the great writers, and to join hands with the men and women of their imaginary world, and to listen to their golden words; to study the thought of those of olden times, the masters of the human heart, and to read them not only for the intellectual pleasure they so richly give, not that we may *say* we have read them, but to sit at their feet and from their lessons in character and action try to mould our lives and conduct by their ideals, and engrave their “ brave actions ” on our hearts. One of them, the sunny-hearted Chaucer, says:

“ For out of olde felde, as men seith,  
Cometh all this new corn fro' yere to yere;  
And out of olde bookes, in good faith,  
Cometh all this new science that men lere.”

(*Parlement of Foules.*)

SOME ASPECTS OF WORDSWORTH'S TEACHING <sup>1</sup>

"The Poet's object is precisely that which every one seems ready to abandon as an idle dream: it is the recovery of Happiness.—LEGOUIS (*Life of Wordsworth*).

"It may be said that throughout nature, from the lowest to the highest, a tendency to self-realisation, and a manifestation of joy in existence are conspicuous."—SIR OLIVER LODGE (*The Substance of Faith*).

"Where dwells enjoyment there is He."—ROBERT BROWNING (*Paracelsus*).

"EVERY great poet is a teacher. I wish to be considered as a teacher or nothing."

These are the words of Wordsworth, and he looked upon the mission of Poetry as of the highest importance in the development and regeneration of mankind. In a letter written in 1807 (just one hundred years ago) he says:

"It is an awful truth, that there neither is nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful truth, because to be incapable of a feeling for poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God." <sup>2</sup>

These are strong words indeed, but we must remember in reading them what Wordsworth held to be the aim of true poetry, viz.—

"To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and therefore to become more actively and sincerely virtuous."

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1907 for the Woodbrooke Settlement.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Lady Beaumont, 1807.

Wordsworth's message embraces many aspects of truth, but I believe we may say that his special gospel is the Gospel of Joy. Throughout his poetical work, work stretching over a period of fifty years—work it is true of very unequal power—there is an astonishing unity of teaching, and the keynote of that teaching is the constraining and moulding force of the feelings, and amongst these one of the most potent and vital is Joy. This is the ever-recurring lesson to be found in the *Lyrical Ballads*, and is indeed that which gives them their meaning; and in *The Prelude*, in which Wordsworth sets forth what seem to him the saving conditions of life and happiness; and this is his abiding teaching even in his quite late work. I think it is hardly sufficiently recognised that much of the noble and stimulating optimism which is a marked feature of the thought of our time, embodied in the verse of Robert Browning, and at the present time scientifically formulated by many great thinkers, may be traced to some extent to the influence of Wordsworth.

It is invigorating to study Wordsworth, for his thought is unquestionably original; it is drawn, not from books and current opinion, but from his own experience, from his own feelings and meditations. "His sentiments and thoughts," says S. T. Coleridge, "are fresh and have the dew upon them." After his very earliest attempts there is nothing second-hand about his poetry, not a trace of imitation. "My creed," he says, "rises up of itself with the ease of an exhalation." In his best and happiest moments he does not dogmatise and theorise; but, as he tells us in that remarkable Book xiii. of *The Prelude*,

" 'Tis mine

To speak what I myself have known and felt."

As has been said by P. H. Wicksteed, "it is an experience rather than a philosophy." He cultivated "a wise passiveness"; and his susceptibility to beauty in Nature and in humanity; his extraordinary gift of remembering and reproducing his



impressions, give a vividness and an inevitability to Wordsworth's revelations which partake of the character of the processes of Nature herself.

His originality is a noteworthy quality. F. W. Myers, in speaking of *The Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*, one of Wordsworth's most characteristic poems, says:

"To compare small things with great—or rather, to compare great things with things vastly greater—the essential spirit of these lines was for practical purposes as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount."

"The first poet who ever wrote," says Walter Savage Landor, "was not more original than Wordsworth, and the best is hardly greater."

A careful study of his work, and a comparison of it with that of his great predecessors and contemporaries, will, I think, prove that, with the exception perhaps of William Blake, no writer was more original than Wordsworth. This originality cost him dear, as we know, only a few chosen spirits really understanding him during his life; amongst those however were to be counted such admirers as Lamb, Coleridge, and Dorothy Wordsworth—fit audience, though few indeed! Few poets, I should imagine, received less direct impulse from popular applause and appreciation than he did, and to some extent his work suffered from the intellectual isolation consequent on this. Time, that great revealer, and also, we must acknowledge, enlightened criticism, have taught us in our day to see the meaning of much in Wordsworth that to his contemporaries was little better than absurdity. It is amusing and instructive to turn to some of the criticism of his day. Take, for instance, the verdict of a person of no small literary reputation in her time. This is how Miss Seward, writing to Sir Walter Scott, speaks of a poem now regarded as one of the poet's masterpieces, *The Daffodils*:

"Surely Wordsworth must be as mad as was ever the poet Lee. Those volumes of his, which you were so good as to give

me, have excited, by turns, my tenderness and warm admiration; my contemptuous astonishment and disgust. The two latter rose to their utmost height while I read about his dancing daffodils, ten thousand, as he says, in high dance in the breeze beside the river, whose waves danced with them, and the poet's heart, we are told, danced too. Then he proceeds to say, that in the hours of pensive or of fancied contemplation, these same capering flowers flash on his memory; and his heart losing its care, dances with them again. Surely if his worst foe had chosen to caricature this too egotistic manufacturer of metaphysic importance upon trivial themes, he could not have done it more effectually."

One would be glad to know which of the poems met with this excellent lady's approbation!

Of Wordsworth's originality in choice of subjects for poetic treatment, and in his poetic diction, it is perhaps not necessary to say much here, except that they were points round which some of the keenest literary criticism of the time raged, amongst which not the least keen was Wordsworth's own. In passing, one may say that he often fails in practice to carry out strictly his own principles, not without advantage to his work.

It is well in studying a writer, perhaps with the exception of Shakespeare, to make up one's mind that there are some things we shall not get from him. Let us frankly state at the outset that in Wordsworth we shall look in vain for the saving grace of humour; that he was perhaps too apt "to find a tale in everything"; that he did not always show a sense of literary discrimination, and that in consequence we find him sometimes dull. But at the same time the true Wordsworthian would be loth to lose even those passages that are often felt to be heavy and prosaic. After all, they too are part of Wordsworth and I fancy with him we must love him "not at all or all in all." A reader who can read him only for his gems does not really know his Wordsworth. If he does not give us

everything he gives very much. Let us dwell upon this and be thankful!

Throughout the body of his work Wordsworth unflinchingly maintains that, provided we keep our lives simple and our hearts unworldly, we may safely put faith in our feelings; that to these we not only may, but must look for guidance and for inspiration; these according to him are our Heaven-given monitors, unerring and authoritative; and just so far as our lives are "wise and innocent" shall we become sensitive and responsive to the gentlest influences of love and joy exercised by Nature or Humanity; then

" Love is an unerring light,  
And joy its own security."

Love and joy will indeed work for us:

" Love, now a universal birth,  
From heart to heart is stealing,  
From earth to man, from man to earth:  
It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more  
Than fifty years of reason:  
Our minds shall drink at every pore  
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,  
Which they shall long obey:  
We for the year to come may take  
Our temper from to-day."

(*To my Sister.*)

And again in the poem called *The Tables Turned* :

" One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can."

John Morley in commenting on this verse is inclined to think that Wordsworth is here romancing; in other words, does not mean what he says; for John Morley the statement may have no value, but that Wordsworth, one of the most sincere of

writers, meant exactly what he here puts down, there can be no doubt. And he is not exaggerating. There are moments (rare indeed in the lives of us common mortals) when our mood is tempered to receive impulse from the sight of what is beautiful, and in these moments we may learn more and gain a deeper insight into life than the most diligent study of the greatest philosophers is likely to give us. The importance of the simple life, if the feelings are to be our guides, is naturally insisted on by Wordsworth; indeed in his system it is a *sine qua non*; for in the simple life only can our feelings have natural and healthy play, and by the simple life he means life amongst the joys and quiet teachings of Nature, if that is possible; but at any rate, life in which the soul may have full, undisturbed room for development, where it may make itself independent of convention, and keep itself free from the touch of the deadening hand of fashion. Do not let us be misled here. There is no specific virtue in the simple life *per se*; we may live on nuts and yet be far from unsophisticated in thought; we know there may be convention in the cottage as in the castle; the simple life for Wordsworth was precious because it set men and women free for high activities—"plain living" makes "high thinking" possible, though not inevitable, and gives the power

" to seek

Repose and hope among eternal things."

Stripping from him all extraneous trappings, Wordsworth reveals man to himself in his true being; in other words, he sets forth with irresistible force the eternal truth that man's life consisteth not in what he *has*, but in what he *is*; that his nobility, if he would but fairly gauge himself, derives from kinship with the Divine, and one of the great factors which may help him to realise this kinship is Nature, herself instinct with the presence of God:

" And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

(*Tintern Abbey.*)

Wordsworth, moreover, insists that these eternal glories of outlook are not only for the privileged few, but for all; the peasant, the poor gleaner in the field, the packman wandering from village to village, as well as for the lord in his castle, if he will but accept them; all may share in the potential joy. In his philosophy the meek do indeed here and now inherit the earth; with him all are equal, for all may enjoy. And it is his special function to point out sources of joy in unexpected directions—"the meanest flower that blows," the thistle-down upon the lake, the shadow of the flower on the naked rock; all these and a thousand other small things have infinite meaning for his receptive heart and retentive memory, and in discovering for us these hidden treasures, and opening out the heart of their mystery, he has enlarged the area of human happiness and shown us subtle links between Earth and Heaven, man and God. A characteristic poem is that in which he recognises the Spirit of Paradise itself prompting the heart of man, and making him co-operate in the creation, as it were, of a natural bit of beauty—the fringe of snowdrops round the rock's edge. He asks who could have contrived this pretty sight? was it a child or gentle maid?

"A man mature, or matron sage?  
Or old man toying with his age?"

I asked—'twas whispered: the device  
To each and all might well belong:  
It is the Spirit of Paradise  
That prompts such work, a spirit strong,  
That gives to all the self-same bent  
Where life is wise and innocent."

(*Who fancied what a pretty sight?*)

This poem and *The Daffodils* we are told Wordsworth con-

sidered as *test* poems, and he used to say: "Who loves these can walk through the recesses of my poetry with delight."

When collecting his poems and giving a new edition to the world, he chose for the motto of the volume words of his own written in 1802 when he was thirty-two years of age:

" My heart leaps up when I behold  
 A rainbow in the sky:  
 So was it when my life began;  
 So is it now I am a man;  
 So be it when I shall grow old,  
 Or let me die!  
 The child is Father of the man;  
 And I could wish my days to be  
 Bound each to each by natural piety."

These famous lines, only nine in number, will be found, upon examination, to present very aptly Wordsworth's ideals, and as such they acquire for us great interest. We find him placing the last three as a heading to his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, that great manifesto of his philosophy. The first line tells of that joy which he felt to be part of him and of his life—joy in Nature and in all her manifestations, joy that gave him insight into the heart of man and made him see the meaning and the beauty and the pathos of the sleeping city as he passed over Westminster Bridge, the joy that was with him as a child, and as a man, and which, if he was to lose, life would cease to have any meaning for him. As the child, so must the man be, in feeling; according to Wordsworth he only is a hero

" who, when brought  
 Among the real tasks of life, hath wrought  
 Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought."  
 (*The Happy Warrior.*)

The same thought occurs in *The Kitten and the Falling Leaves* :

" And I will have my careless season  
 Spite of melancholy reason,  
 Will walk thro' life in such a way  
 That, when time brings on decay,  
 Now and then I may possess  
 Hours of perfect gladness," etc.

It would, I think, be easy to show that the truth set forth in the lines on the rainbow runs like a thread through almost everything Wordsworth wrote. The spirit and the joy of the little, happy, natural child is to be ours throughout, and thus only can our days be

“ Bound each to each by natural piety.”

“ Unless ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven.” These were no mere *words* to the poet. In his *Excursion* he renders ardent praise to the Divine Spirit

“ Who didst wrap the cloud  
Of infancy around us, that thyself  
Therein, with our simplicity awhile  
Might'st hold on earth communion undisturbed.”

(Book iv.)

Wordsworth dwelt in memory much upon his childhood; he went back upon it constantly; and we know what a marvellous reconstruction of his boyhood, nay, even of his babyhood is to be found in the early books of *The Prelude*. He was for ever seeking to penetrate into the mind of the child; if he could only see into its workings, many of life's problems might, he held, be solved. Hence his eager and persistent and somewhat tactless questioning of children; hence such poems as *We are Seven* and *Anecdote for Fathers*, which have been stumbling-blocks to many of his readers; hence his interest in the childlike mind and character of the unsophisticated rustic. He had a profound reverence for the spirit of the little child, and he watched with jealous apprehension modes of education and habits of life calculated to diminish the simplicity and austerity of manners.

“ Our childhood sits,” he says,

“ Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne  
That hath more power than all the elements.”

(*Prelude*, Book v.)

And of course in the often challenged passage in the great *Ode*, where he apostrophises the baby as

“Thou best Philosopher,”

and

“Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!”

he sets forth his profound belief in the peculiarly close communion of the young soul with the great Spirit of the Universe, a belief in which even his admirer S. T. C. was unable to join. Looking then upon the child as in a way free from the trammels of custom and of worldly bondage, and specially responsive to the dictates of feeling; as one whose mind was open, and heart as yet unattached and capable of receiving and appreciating truths hidden from the mature mind, Wordsworth felt that to try to get at the very spirit of such a creature was of vital importance; and to interpret that spirit in sympathetic and attractive poetic form, one of the greatest functions of the poet. If we were to eliminate from his work the poems which set forth the modes of thought of the child and the peasant we should lose a large portion of his best poetry.

In the recognition of joy to be found in the simple things of life, we have, as it may be styled, Wordsworth's constructive protest against materialism and the worldly spirit. He not only passionately inveighs against these, but he offers living and satisfying substitutes; while he strikes with the fervour and fire of the moral iconoclast, he builds up with the spirit of the true reformer. He has the philosopher's stone, and can transmute the trivial, almost the commonplace, into burning gold, and can give to dull eyes the glories of the heavenly vision. As an instance of this, let me quote a few lines on so trivial a matter as a bit of thistledown blown by the breeze:

“And in our vacant mood,  
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft  
Of dandelion seed, or thistle's beard,  
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,  
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!  
And starting off again with freak as sudden;  
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,  
Making report of an invisible breeze



That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,  
Its playmate—rather say, its moving soul."

(*On the Naming of Places*, iv.)

It is needless to point out that such thoughts as these, inspired by such unassuming objects, could arise only in a soul whose life was of the simplest. And this reminds one of the often repeated objection as to Wordsworth's life that it was selfish in its retirement and isolation from the great current of human interests. Retired and isolated it was, but it has taught the world an inestimable lesson, namely, that there is a region of joy and beauty, a realm of exquisite sensation which can alone be entered by one who is willing to relinquish the more dazzling and garish attractions of the world. Wordsworth among the poets is the surest guide if one would sometimes go "for a while apart" and gain from the meek things of the earth inspiration and strength for future struggle. Here his strength lies, and the power and the impulse, the rest and peace that his poetry has brought to many whose lives are full and busy, are a proof that his life was rightly spent in the retirement and comparative isolation which made his poetry possible. It has been said, too, that his life was so sheltered and so fortunate that he could have no experience of the stress and tragedy that go to make up the *great* life. Certainly his life was a happy one, and considering its length, peculiarly smooth, but that it was happy was greatly owing to his "sweet content." And here lies the great lesson of his life, as Legouis points out; for he resolutely determined that his life should be happy, and he carried out his determination with a force of will which was extraordinary in any man, but in the artist, I should imagine, almost unexampled. He held that hope was the paramount *Duty* that

"Heaven lays,

For its own honour, on man's suffering heart,"

and that happiness, as it gives insight and illumination, is an indispensable item in the poet's outfit. He puts the whole

thing into a few words in *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey* where he speaks of "that blessed mood"

"When with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things."

Wordsworth had, notwithstanding, his dark moments, his times of deep depression and sombre doubt; his fits of melancholia—indeed his power of enjoyment had been less keen had he had no capacity for sorrow. So constantly, however, does he dwell on the joyful aspect of things in his poetry, so careful was he, as has been said, not to let his sadness *spread*, that it is not often we detect the gloomy note; but that he passed through deep waters may be seen clearly enough in *Stanzas written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence*, and in *Elegiac Stanzas* where he tells us that

"A deep distress hath humanised my soul";

and still more noticeably in the *Sonnet* beginning,

"I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret  
Yon slowly sinking star."

Much ridicule has been bestowed, from time to time, not only upon Wordsworth's retired life, but also upon his relationship with an admiring household. He is often represented as sitting enthroned, while his wife and sister worship at his feet. Well, I fancy, in cases of this kind of gossip it is well to take the view, not of the outsider, but of those most intimately concerned, and as to this charge we may be wise to listen to Wordsworth himself.

That his wife and sister sympathised with him and understood him, nay, profoundly admired him, there can be no doubt; but their feeling for him and for his work was no blind adoration. It was far otherwise. As to his sister, he himself was always mindful of, and always generous in acknowledging the inspiration, the poetic impulse, and the moral support he received from her. There is nothing more beautiful, not even

the unity of mind and heart of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, than the intellectual and spiritual kinship of Wordsworth and Dorothy—nothing more beautiful, unless indeed it be the poet's oft repeated acknowledgment of his debt:

“ She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;  
And humble cares, and delicate fears;  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;  
And love, and thought, and joy.”

(*The Sparrow's Nest.*)

When in the shock of disappointment that came in his manhood from the downfall of his hopes in the French Revolution, Wordsworth lost touch with nature, and life seemed stripped of all its glory, and his faith in man and God was shaken, he tells us in glowing words how it was through the gentle and lofty ministrations of his beloved sister that he was restored to sanity and hope. The mere adorer does not do these things.

As to his wife, who can read *She was a Phantom of Delight* without a feeling of gratitude, not only to the poet, but to the woman who inspired such words? or can read those lines written in 1824:

“ O dearer far than light and life are dear,”

without a thrill of love and admiration for the being so addressed? The relationship which these verses and many others indicate was not one of egotism on the one hand and mindless adulation on the other. That Wordsworth took a high and noble view of women, that he could write such lines as these, that he could draw such a character as Emily Norton, means that the women about him were no mere echoes of himself, but women of character and power.

Before condemning the retired, sequestered life, let us see what Wordsworth understood by such a life.

There is no poem in the English language which with such force, simplicity and directness sets forth the ennobling influence of the unsophisticated life, the life fostered by Nature's

silent yet potent lessons, than the poem *Michael*. Of this poem S. T. C. in his *Biographia Literaria*, that storehouse of good things, says: "The character of the shepherd of Greenhead Ghyll has all the verisimilitude and representative quality that the purposes of poetry can require of a known, abiding class, and his manners and sentiments are the natural product of circumstances common to the class."

"His bodily frame had been from youth to age  
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,  
 Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,  
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt  
 And watchful more than ordinary men.  
 Hence had he learnt the meaning of all winds,  
 Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,  
 When others heeded not, he heard the South  
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise  
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.  
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock  
 Bethought him and he to himself would say,  
 'The winds are now devising work for me!'  
 And truly, at all times, the storm that drives  
 The traveller to a shelter, summoned him  
 Up to the mountain: he had been alone  
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,  
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights.  
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past,  
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose  
 That the green valleys and the streams and rocks  
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.  
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed  
 The common air; hills, which with vigorous step  
 He had so often climbed; which had impressed  
 So many incidents upon his mind  
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;  
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory  
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,  
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts  
 The certainty of honourable gain;  
 Those fields, those hills—what could they less?—had laid  
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him  
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
 The pleasure which there is in life itself."

Wordsworth calls this poem a pastoral. It is truly so. It has to do with the life of the shepherd, the Westmoreland "statesman," whose love of the land he and his family have possessed is part of his being and character. There is nothing here of the fanciful shepherd life, as in the pastorals of Spenser, for instance; no Corydon and Strephon sitting beside their flock on the sunny hill-side, and piping to one another, or discussing church matters and high politics. Here we have to do with "winter and rough weather;" here the elemental forces of Nature and humanity are at work. We shall remember how Michael and his wife have a son born to them in late life; how this son, Luke, becomes to his father the embodiment of all he holds dear; how he works and battles with the hardships of the shepherd's life for the boy, and teaches him all his lore; how he takes him to a remote valley that he may help him to build a sheepfold; how before this is finished misfortune comes, and there is nothing for it but to let Luke go to a well-to-do kinsman in the busy town; how the lad falls into bad ways, and has to leave his country. The way in which the old man takes the awful blow is told with a reserve and naked force which is perhaps as fine as anything Wordsworth ever did. "Consolation," says Raleigh, "is sought in no special or personal alleviation, but in the processes of eternal law." And we are made to see that the noble and natural life the old man has led purifies and elevates his spirit so that he has risen to the height of a passionate love, a love which constrains him to bear with fortitude and submission a sorrow that otherwise must have been intolerable.

" There is a comfort in the strength of love;  
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else  
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:  
I have conversed with more than one who well  
Remember the old Man, and what he was  
Years after he had heard this heavy news.

How to that hollow dell from time to time

Did he repair, to build the Fold of which  
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet  
 The pity that was then in every heart  
 For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all  
 That many and many a day he thither went,  
 And never lifted up a single stone."

With what intensity Wordsworth believed that Nature can influence and mould the soul of man, how there may be communion between the spirit of man and the spirit of Nature, all who have read him at all will know. It is not a doctrine easily expounded in the cold blood of prose, but to some hearts it is, I believe, a reality nevertheless. Perhaps the little poem *Three Years She Grew* illustrates this belief of Wordsworth's as beautifully as any.

Nature is not always as gentle as she is here represented; she is occasionally the awe-inspiring monitor, who speaks with no uncertain voice to the erring, as in the well-known passage from *The Prelude* (Book i.) describing the stealthy, troubled pleasure of the schoolboy on the lake. This gives us with extraordinary vividness a glimpse into the workings of the boy Wordsworth's mind, and of that peculiar sensitiveness to the lessons of Nature, "Æolian visitings," as he called them, which must be taken into account if we would understand him and his highest teaching. With these lines should be compared the remarkable little poem called *Nutting* in which he tells of the "spirit in the woods."

The sense of the harmony of Nature which man violates at his peril, naturally caused Wordsworth to regard all animal life with peculiar tenderness, nay, even respect. Here he joins hands with the great poets of his time, for this love of animals is a special note in the poetry of Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron. But I believe we may claim for Wordsworth an unusual feeling as to animals. It is not only as pets and companions of man, though in his little poem *Fidelity* he has immortalised the dog's extraordinary faithfulness to his human friend; not even only as beautiful manifestations of life

and energy and joy, that he deals with animals, though no one could more charmingly describe them under this aspect, as, for instance, in *The Green Linnet*; but he sometimes does more: he surrounds them with a halo, as it were, of the supernatural, and gives to them an active, though unconscious, power to shape human destiny and minister, as Heaven's agents, to man's spiritual needs. Such poems as *Hartleap Well* and *The White Doe of Rylstone* may be cited as unique from this point of view. Nowhere do Wordsworth's originality and independence of thought more noticeably reveal themselves. In these remarkable poems the poet declares a truth which sooner or later must be acknowledged, namely, that a subtle but very real sympathy may be traced between the animal world and humanity; that strange and unexpected influences may be exercised by the lower animals upon men and women. That through our intercourse with and treatment of animals we may sometimes learn lessons of vast importance to our soul's welfare may be seen from the much ridiculed and little read poem *Peter Bell*.

Wordsworth had a noble love of Freedom—freedom to be valued and striven for because, when Freedom is ours, then alone can Duty be accepted and made vital by choice. We know how he was fired by the French Revolution; how in *The Prelude* he tells us of the wild enthusiasm with which he followed the early events of that great upheaval:

“ Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,  
France standing on the top of golden hours,  
And human nature seeming born again.” (Book vi.)

“ For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood  
Upon our side, us who were strong in love!  
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven!” (Book xi.)

Bitterly as he was disappointed in the end, cast down even into the depths of despair as he witnessed what he looked upon as the abandonment by the Revolutionists of the great prin-

ciples by which they were at first actuated, Wordsworth kept his love of liberty, equality, and fraternity in spirit if not in the revolutionist sense of those terms. He has been cruelly criticised because in his declining years he seems to have lost his early enthusiasm and leaned to the conventional and conservative side in politics and religion. But, nevertheless, no songs of liberty have a truer, sincerer ring than his; no patriotic hymns have more reality of feeling. In his recognition of the glory and eternal beauty and meaning of the small and weak things of the earth, and the capacity of *all* to enjoy these, he in the truest, deepest sense equalises all men. It was his profound desire that he might sing

“Of joy in widest commonalty spread.” (*The Recluse.*)

In his belief in the lofty destiny of the soul of man and his superiority to his outward conditions, he has forever vindicated the brotherhood of men.

It is in the light of this recognition of the true meaning of Liberty that we must read *The Ode to Duty*, *Laodamia*, and *Dion*, poems which must take rank with the greatest. And as we read these and others, the power and importance of Wordsworth's work can hardly be exaggerated, whether we regard it from the intellectual, the spiritual, or the moral standpoint. Let us look for a moment at one of these, *The Ode to Duty*. With Wordsworth Duty is the bedrock upon which, not only conduct, but beauty and grace and joy have their foundation. Duty is the divine law, and divine law is harmony and peace, the natural element of the free spirit. In the beautiful little poem, *The Primrose of the Rock*, written in 1831, he speaks of the outward harmony which is the symbol of this inner and divine law:

“The flowers, still faithful to the stems,  
 Their fellowship renew;  
 The stems are faithful to the root,  
 That worketh out of view;  
 And to the rock the root adheres  
 In every fibre true.



Close clings to earth the living rock,  
 Tho' threatening still to fall;  
 The earth is constant to her sphere;  
 And God upholds them all:  
 So blooms the lonely Plant, nor dreads  
 Her annual funeral."

So, though Duty is the "stern daughter of the Voice of God," "a rod to check the erring," yet she is a "victory to set free," and there are happy, youthful spirits who fulfil her bidding unconsciously, who living in innocence and freedom, do her work and know it not; for such, "love is an unerring light, and joy its own security."

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear  
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;  
 Nor know we anything so fair  
 As is the smile upon thy face:  
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds  
 And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;  
 And the most ancient Heavens, through thee,  
 are fresh and strong."

In this Ode as well as in *Laodamia* Wordsworth's leanings towards the Stoic philosophy are clearly seen. In *The Leech-gatherer* he personifies Fortitude in his own striking manner. Here he sets before us the solitary old man who is not only physically akin to the rugged landscape in which he is found by the poet, like a stone "couched on the bold top of an eminence," but who in his resolute patience and strenuous industry seems to have gathered to himself the quiet and enduring vitality of Nature's great activities, and thus, old, ignorant and poor, he comes to teach the young poet the lesson of fortitude and resolution. This recognition of the force of patience and endurance is a constantly recurring note and gives to Wordsworth's teaching its strenuous and stimulating power. He insists on the force and energy that are gathered through fortitude and victory in adversity, and also through life lived in accordance with Nature. His love of Nature is not

merely the æsthetic love of her grandeur and her beauty and tenderness, but of her constraining influences. In his recognition, too, of Nature's submission to law, he sees an example to men to submit to Duty, the divine law.

Wordsworth believed, and often expressed his belief in his poetry, that we are part of a greater, vaster whole; that we come from a divine home, and that to that home it is meant we should return; but that even here on earth God manifests Himself in Nature, whose privilege it is to lead us on "from joy to joy" (see *Tintern Abbey*, lines 122-125), and our highest wisdom, our dearest privilege, is to set ourselves to try to grasp the meaning of the beauty all around us, a genuine appreciation of which will work for our redemption.

All these were vital truths to the poet, of which he had intimate experience, and without which life would have been meaningless to him:

" So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die."

It may be of use to enumerate here the points which I have touched upon as characteristic of Wordsworth's teaching:

1. That our feelings may be our best guides, provided our lives are pure and innocent. That amongst our feelings Joy is perhaps the most potent for good, as it gives us, if truly ours, insight and light. That we are bound to try to make it ours by cultivating the temper of joy and hope.

2. That Wordsworth's practice of putting thought to the test of experience makes his poetry extremely valuable, and is an element of originality.

3. That simple life and tastes make it possible for us to recognise and accept the delicate influences of Nature that are round about us; that they give room and opportunity for the development of noble and passionate love, and render us capable of entering into the meaning of the meek and gracious things of life. That life with Nature, and love of her Beauty

which the simple life makes possible, may actually influence and mould the soul of man and even give grace to his bodily form.

4. That it is all-important for the poet to come close to the mind and heart of the little child and of the peasant, and that great part of his function is to interpret the child to the mature, and the peasant to the sophisticated, and to insist on the need for every one to keep the childlike spirit throughout life. That animals and their ministrations to man are not beneath the poet's notice.

5. That Freedom is our most precious heritage, not that we may be lawless, but that through it we may make Duty vital by our joyful choosing of it.

6. Finally, that Wordsworth from first to last in his life and in his work recognised that there is an eternal moral order, belief in which makes for man's happiness. It is this, as William James points out in *Pragmatism*, which gives to his poetry "its extraordinary tonic and consoling power."

This, then, is the teaching of a poet. Is it therefore fanciful and unsubstantial? No, our heart tells us it is the truth, and truth lit by the splendour of Imagination, and embodied in the lasting glory of "wingèd words." Truth has manifold and diverse Interpreters to lead us in our pilgrimage through the many chambers of the House Beautiful, and I believe that of her many messengers few are more trustworthy, none so gracious, as the poets, and amongst our English brotherhood of singers, not one holds, to my mind, a higher place as teacher and guide than William Wordsworth, for of him may be said, what can be said of none but the greatest, that to him was

" the glorious faculty assigned  
To elevate the more-than-reasoning mind,  
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.  
Imagination is that sacred power,  
Imagination lofty and refined:  
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower

Of Faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind  
 Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,  
 And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind."

*(Weak is the Will of Man.)*

In this short paper I have dealt only with *some* of the aspects of Wordsworth's teaching; there are many great lessons taught by the poet, much of his philosophy, which I have left untouched, and lovers of Wordsworth will recognise how imperfect this attempt at an interpretation is. Nevertheless, it has been a pleasure to me to speak of one who has been throughout my life a never-failing source of strength and inspiration. And if anything I have said should induce those who have not yet felt the attractive force of Wordsworth, to study him, I shall indeed be glad. If we can grasp *some* of his meaning, can learn *some* of his lessons, we shall have gained much. To the busy workers in the absorbing labour of social reform, he has much to offer. From him these may gain the gladness of spirit which makes this strenuous life endurable; to those who are weary with the long battle against selfishness and vice, he gives eyes to recognise around them silent ministers of beauty, and witnesses of love, which may lead them up the pleasant paths of Hope and may enable them sometimes to exclaim:

" Enough, if something from our hands have power  
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour;  
 And if, as tow'rd the silent tomb we go,  
 Thro' love, thro' hope, and faith's transcendent dower,  
 We feel that we are greater than we know."

*(After-Thought, Duddon Sonnets.)*

ANN RADCLIFFE—NOVELIST<sup>1</sup>

(1764-1823)

AMONGST the many good things said by Dr. Johnson there is one very excellent remark on books for children: "Babies," said he, "do not want to hear about babies; they like to be told about giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds."

This I believe is equally true of men and women. There is inherent in human nature a love of romance; a desire to have the powers of imagination exercised, and a longing to escape from the grasp of the commonplace, and to live for a time at least in a world that is not bounded by matter-of-fact or limited by reason. Every now and then they refuse to be prosaic, and demand food that shall satisfy their appetite for wonder.

About the middle of the eighteenth century such a spirit seemed to be abroad, and the reading public, without much warning and surrounded with much which would seem to forbid such a movement, found themselves in the midst of a revival. It was the revival of Romance, or what Theodore Watts-Dunton has so aptly styled, "the Renaissance of Wonder." It took shape in fiction and in poetry. It is somewhat difficult to account for the almost sudden development, but one factor was no doubt the study of Shakespeare, after a period of neglect. At the same time one must confess that this very study needs explanation, for it is itself a symptom of the change of taste.

Whatever may have been the cause, the effect upon our literature was striking, and we cannot read the fiction and poetry of the last half of the century without finding ourselves

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1911.

confronted with instances of its deep-rooted hold on the taste and feeling of the time.

It is because Mrs. Radcliffe was one of the foremost to gratify this taste, and because she personified in a pre-eminent degree its spirit, as expressed in prose, that any study of her works, however slight, may prove perhaps interesting.

Though very early in the field, Mrs. Radcliffe was not actually the first. Horace Walpole in his *Castle of Otranto* (1764) opens the ball. Gray writing to Walpole from Cambridge in December of that year, says: "I have received the *Castle of Otranto*, and return my thanks for it. It engages our attention here; makes some of us cry a little, and all in general afraid to go to bed a' nights."

It is a short story, but it is crowded with extraordinary and unaccountable incidents from first to last. Almost in every page the reader is startled, and deafened, as it were, by some surprising event. In places it seems as if the author were trying just how much of the incredible his reader would stand.

The marriage of the only son of the lord of the Castle of Otranto is about to be celebrated; guests are assembled; the bride waits, but the bridegroom is not there. Impatience and surprise fill the minds of his parents. Suddenly the company of expectant persons is petrified by a terrific shout: "The Prince! The Prince! The Helmet! The Helmet!" "Shocked with these lamentations and dreading he knew not what, the father of the Prince advanced hastily—but what a sight for a father's eyes! he beheld his child dashed to pieces and almost buried under an enormous helmet, a hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers. The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around as to how the misfortune had happened, and, above all, the tremendous phenomenon before him took away the father's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision;

and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding, mangled remains of the young Prince, divert the eyes of Manfred from the portent before him."

This prodigious helmet surprised more persons than Manfred, and was a portent of what was to hold the reading public for many a year. It is the beginning of a long series of wonders.

On this hint Mrs. Radcliffe spoke. Her five novels, ranging from 1789 to 1797, give her a unique place amongst the prose writers of the Romantic School. She appealed to a very large audience and she was followed by a host of imitators. She counted amongst her admirers no less a critic than Sir Walter Scott, and Byron paid her the sincere compliment of plagiarising her (*Lara*, c. i. v.). It has been said that she "drew the man that Lord Byron tried to be."

Ann Ward, afterwards Radcliffe, was born in 1764 in London. At the age of twenty-five she began her writing. Her first book, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, depicting clan quarrels in the Highlands of Scotland, appeared in 1789. From that time she continued to write till 1797, when her last story, *The Italian*, was published. Each succeeding book raised her reputation as a writer, but though she did not die till 1823 she published nothing after *The Italian*, a strange and unaccountable silence on the part of one whose imagination was so active and whose resources were apparently so far from exhausted. She wrote *Gaston de Blondville* in 1802, posthumously published.

Some notion of Mrs. Radcliffe's popularity may be gathered from the words of Scott, when speaking of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*:

"The very name was fascinating, and the public, who rushed upon it with the eagerness of curiosity, rose from it with unsated appetite. When a family was numerous, the volumes always flew, and were sometimes torn, from hand to

hand, and the complaints of those whose studies were thus interrupted were a general tribute to the genius of the author."

Mrs. Radcliffe wrote for those who, as Pater says, "long for a shudder." She wielded with extraordinary skill a wand that called up the mysterious and the awful. With the exception of her first novel she lays her stories in foreign lands, amongst wild and romantic scenes. She has a large assortment of machinery which she works with great skill—the trap-door, the sliding panel, the subterranean passage, the secret cavern; the bloodstained floor, the rusty dagger, the faded MS. No one knew better than she how to produce the sense of fear and horror through the potent medium of *suggestion*—silence broken by a single foot-fall; strains of distant music; the sighing of the wind; the rustle of garments; the far-away closing of a door; the dying lamp. She makes use also, with great effect, of suspense. Adeline, the heroine of *The Romance of the Forest*, in a remote and lonely chamber, in a ruined Abbey, at the dead hour of midnight, attempts to read a MS. found by her in a secret and dismal apartment. She has made out part of the document, written by some poor dying prisoner, and has come to the words—

"All the thunders of Heaven seem launched at this defenceless head! Oh fortitude! nerve my breast!"

"Adeline's light was now expiring in the socket, and the paleness of the ink, so feebly shone upon, baffled her efforts to discriminate the letters: it was impossible to procure a light from below, without discovering that she was yet up, a circumstance which would excite surprise and lead to explanation, such as she did not wish to enter upon. Thus compelled to suspend inquiry, which so many attendant circumstances had rendered awfully interesting, she retired to her humble bed."

Again, the effect is produced as much by what is left



unsaid as by what is described. This is notably the case in the instance of the veiled picture which plays such an important part in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The heroine Emily is in great distress and we read—

“ To withdraw her thoughts, however, from the subject of her misfortunes, she attempted to read, but her attention wandered from the page, and at length she threw aside the book, and determined to explore the adjoining chambers of the castle. Her imagination was pleased with the view of ancient grandeur, and an emotion of melancholy awe awakened all its powers, as she walked through rooms obscure and desolate, where no footsteps had passed probably for many years, and remembered the strange history of the former possessor of the edifice. This brought to her recollection the veiled picture, which had attracted her curiosity on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. As she passed through the chambers that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated; its connections with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil, throwing a mystery over the object that excited a fatal degree of terror. But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object from which we appear to shrink.

“ Emily passed on with faltering steps, and having paused a moment at the door, before she attempted to open it, she then hastily entered the chamber, and went towards the picture, which appeared to be enclosed in a frame of uncommon size, that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again, and then, with a timid hand, lifted the veil, but instantly let it fall—perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor.”

Readers of Jane Austen will be reminded by these extracts

of that author's delicious parody of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; of the researches of the charming but nonsensical Catherine and her discovery of the washing lists. Indeed it is worth while to read Mrs. Radcliffe, if for nothing else than to enable us to enter into the fun and keen satire of *Northanger Abbey*.

Sir Walter Scott used to say that though he did not believe in ghosts he had made more use of them than most men. Mrs. Radcliffe might have said the same, for with all her love of marvel and mystery, her joy in making us quake, she is conscientiously anxious not to mislead her readers or to tempt them into belief in ghost or vision. With uncompromising and laborious precision, she sets herself to unravel, at the end of the tale, all supernatural occurrences. In almost every instance the strange and fearsome complications are accounted for. This is thoroughly characteristic and reminds us that after all she is a daughter of the eighteenth century. Yet it is noticeable that in *Gaston de Blondville*, the book she wrote last but never published, she has recourse to the actual supernatural. But in thus explaining everything she somewhat weakens the charm, and takes away with one hand what she has given with the other. And these explanations, it must be confessed, are sometimes disappointing, if not ludicrous. For instance, having gone through an agony of suspense and, like the heroine, having worked ourselves into a great state of agitation about the mystery of the veiled picture, we cannot help feeling to some extent cheated, when we are told in cold blood that what Emily gazed upon was but a wax-work figure!

In this Mrs. Radcliffe separates herself from writers of greater and more audacious genius. It is easy to imagine the fine scorn with which Charlotte Brontë would have received any suggestion for the explanation of the voice heard by Jane at midnight which called her once more to the side of Rochester.

In Mrs. Gaskell's *The Old Nurse's Story*, surely one of the

best ghost stories ever told, any attempt to explain away the sense of the haunting spirits of evil, would not only be an outrage, but would be impossible.

To all the paraphernalia of mystery, Mrs. Radcliffe added that which was truly remarkable at the time of her writing—a sincere love of wild scenery, and she had a graphic pen to describe the sublime in nature, the picturesque in ancient ruin and frowning castle. Here she occupied the place of pioneer, for she is the first to introduce into the novel studied descriptions of Nature and architecture. She has indeed the poet's eye for all that is beautiful, and in this she links herself with the poets of the new School, Thomson, Gray, Collins, Wordsworth and Coleridge. She loved poetry, and the headings of her chapters show that she was well read in the poetry of her time. She often, in the person of her heroine, breaks into verse. But here she is not successful. Her prose may be poetic, but her poetry is certainly prosaic. As an instance of the description of places, the word-picture given of the Castle of Udolpho may be quoted—it is the first view the heroine gets of the dark pile in which she is subjected to such unceasing persecution and terror:

“Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the East, a vista opened and exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur than any that Emily had seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadows stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour

of these illuminated objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

“ ‘There,’ said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, ‘is Udolpho.’ Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle which she understood to be Montoni’s; for though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipt with splendour. From those, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was involved in the solemn darkness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity; and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose rich shade the carriage soon after began to ascend.”

Whether we should regard this description as *more or less* excellent when we learn that Mrs. Radcliffe never was in Italy, is a question for critics. She had visited the Rhineland, and no doubt the scenery of that romantic river had fired her imagination, but this, as far as we know, was her only continental experience, and her Italian and South of France descriptions must have been the result of her reading, and the product of her own constructive imagination. Awe-inspiring scenes suited her best, but every now and then there are little touches which show she had an eye for the minuter beauties which would have pleased Wordsworth.

Adeline walks out into the forest at an early hour (all Mrs. Radcliffe’s heroines are exemplary in the matter of early rising, even after the most disturbed and sleepless night):

“ The beauty of the hour invited her to walk, and she went

forth into the forest to taste the sweets of morning. The carols of the new-waked birds saluted her as she passed, and the fresh gale came scented with the breath of flowers, whose tints glowed more vivid through the dew-drops that hung on their leaves."

The last few words remind us of another lover of birds and early morning:

" And fyry Phœbus ryseth up so bright,  
That all the orient laugheth of the light,  
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves,  
The silver dropes, hanging on the leaves."

(*Knight's Tale*, 1493.)

Readers of Mrs. Radcliffe must not look for anything like historic precision. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, for instance, is laid in the year 1584, but in it modern accessories and sentiments are unblushingly introduced. If we were not told that we are in the sixteenth century we might well think we were in the twentieth:—French fashions, boxes at the French Opera, ices, coffee, tobacco, elaborately constructed green-houses are common affairs. Once we find ourselves assisting at a " *Conversazione*," at the house of a lady, the leader of a literary coterie. We accompany an elderly and invalid gentleman, who travels in a chaise with one servant and his lovely daughter, through the wilds of the forests of the Pyrenees; we picnic with them in remote and desolate woods careless of wolves, and sleep in lonely cottages unmolested by robbers. Again, we are somewhat surprised to find a young French lady, a Roman Catholic to boot, expressing the following sentiments—sentiments of the most praiseworthy description, but in the circumstances quite out of all keeping:

" ' Who could first invent convents? ' said Emily, ' and who could first persuade people to go into them? and to make religion a pretence, too, where all that should inspire us is shut out! God is best pleased with the homage of a grateful heart: and when we view his glories, we feel most

grateful. I never felt so much devotion during the many dull years I was in a convent, as I have done in the few hours that I have been here, where I need only look around me, to adore God in my inmost heart.' ”

But the story is so interesting, so crowded with events and sudden surprises that we read on and are quite ready to forgive, if we cannot quite forget, these trifling anachronisms. It is impossible to begin one of the stories without feeling a desire to go on; and this power of holding our attention is the more remarkable because, if familiar with the writer at all, we are quite prepared for her usual complications of adventure.

Of the great and saving grace of humour Mrs. Radcliffe has, it must be owned, very little indeed. It is this lack of humour which more than anything else tends to make her books “smell of mortality.” Not only would a spice of this inestimable gift of the gods have helped to add vivacity and *élan* to her stories, but its presence would have saved Mrs. Radcliffe from falling into what sometimes amounts to bathos. I will not inflict upon my hearers examples of these arid places in her books, which do occur, though not often, and chiefly in her early work. But should any have the curiosity to see how low the author of fiction without humour may be brought, let him read the chapter in *The Romance of the Forest* where La Luc's moral education of Clara is described. What humour there is in these novels is supplied by the “lower classes”: the valet and the serving-maid and the postillion are its sole exponents, and its style, like the style of the heroine, never varies. From the heroine we could not with propriety expect anything approaching the humorous; she is as constantly accompanied by a delicate and engaging melancholy as by her lute, which she touches with such exquisite skill. The hero is too strenuously engaged in extricating his lady from her unexampled miseries to produce anything more joyous than a sonnet or two. The dukes and

earls, the marquises and marchionesses, the lords and ladies, who walk with such stately grace through the story, so far from perpetrating anything in the nature of a joke would, we feel convinced, consider it derogatory to their high station even to *see* one, should it happen to come their way. It is the servants alone who produce the comic effect, and it is secured through the never-failing irrelevancy with which they tell a tale, answer a plain question, or deliver a message. When a clear and short statement of fact can alone save the heroine from immediate death, these persons proceed to speak with a roundabout inconsistency, compared with which the narratives of Mrs. Nickleby are straightforward. No matter that everything depends upon expedition, and the loss of a moment may prove fatal, Peter or Paolo or Annette must have their way, and they accordingly drive the anxious reader to the verge of distraction by their meandering recitations of trivial details. They are all alike in their extraordinary powers of irritation, but we may, I think, give the palm to Peter in *The Romance of the Forest*.

Here is one instance of his peculiar powers. He thus informs his master, who is in hiding from his enemies, that he is discovered:

“ ‘Oh, Sir! I’ve heard something that has astonished me, as well it may,’ cried Peter, ‘and so it will you, when you come to know it. As I was standing in the blacksmith’s shop, while the smith was driving a nail into the horse’s shoe; by the bye the horse lost it in an odd way; I’ll tell you, Sir, how it was——’

“ ‘Nay, prithee leave it till another time, and go on with your story——’

“ ‘Why then, Sir, as I was standing in the blacksmith’s shop, comes in a man with a pipe in his mouth, and a large pouch of tobacco in his hand——’

“ ‘Well—what has the pipe to do with the story?’

“ ‘Nay, Sir, you put me out; I can’t go on, unless you let

me tell it my own way. As I was saying—with a pipe in his mouth—I think I was there, your Honour!’

“ ‘Yes, yes.’

“ ‘He sets himself down on the bench, and taking the pipe from his mouth, says to the blacksmith——’ ”

And so he twaddles on for five or six pages, at the end of which it is seen that his master's escape with his life can only be accomplished by instant retreat. The wonder is that before he comes to the end of his tale, his master, who has not the mildest of tempers, does not brain him. Paolo in *The Italian* is the most successful of these humorists—the terrors of the Inquisition itself cannot quell his volubility—but his cheerfulness and jollity in misfortune, his devotion to his master, his insistent demand to be sent to the Inquisition prison with him, and his attempt to cheer his master by his stories, when they are both safely imprisoned, fill us with admiration and respect for the young fellow, and remind us, at a great distance, of the immortal Sam Weller.

As Mrs. Radcliffe has a complete set of machinery for the production of her effects, so she has a certain set of figures which play their part in her fictions. The heroine of romance is here in all her panoply. She is, of course, always beautiful; her hair is always auburn; her eyes are always blue; she is always of noble birth; her figure is perfect; her mind is elegant and she is highly accomplished; her tastes are refined; she loves poetry with enthusiasm and is prepared upon the shortest notice and in the most alarming circumstances to throw off a sonnet, or as Mrs. Radcliffe expresses it, “to reanimate the landscape with the following little story,” or “personify the hour in the following lines.” She is, above all, full of delicate sensibility; her appreciation of music is sincere, and of Nature genuine, though out of date. She has a peculiarly rash habit of wandering forth alone just as the sun is going down to enjoy the landscape, thus inviting, and generally experiencing, disaster. One may



smile perhaps at the young lady's romantic love of scenery, but that Mrs. Radcliffe herself should have been capable of this enthusiasm is very remarkable, for we must remember she wrote long before Scott or Byron, and not so very far from the time when people looked upon mountains only as painful and troublesome obstacles to their progress in travelling and wearisomely obscuring the view. It is needless to mention that all the heroines are called upon to undergo heartrending sorrows; separation from the devoted lover; machinations of hardened villains; terrors of every description. But though they are naturally expected to weep abundantly, and to faint very often indeed, there is withal a certain moral strenuousness in these unfortunate ladies which is truly admirable. Their love of freedom and of justice; their high standard of honour and truthfulness; their persistence in the path they think right, place them on an altogether higher level than that occupied by some of their physically robuster sisters of modern fiction. They do not look for guidance and moral instruction from their lovers, as is common in some popular, up-to-date novels; nor do they, because they are in love, become passive instruments of the will of another, and abandon their right of independent judgment and action.

The following is a description of Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* which is characteristic:

“The observations and general behaviour of Adeline already bespoke a good understanding and an amiable heart, but she had yet more—she had genius. She was now in her nineteenth year; her figure of the middling size, and turned to the most exquisite proportion; her hair was dark auburn, her eyes blue, and whether they sparkled with intelligence, or melted in tenderness, they were equally attractive: her form had the airy lightness of a nymph, and when she smiled, her countenance might have been drawn for the younger sister of Hebe; the captivations of her beauty were heightened

by the grace and simplicity of her manners, and confirmed by the intrinsic value of a heart

‘ That might be shrined in crystal,  
And have all its movements scanned.’ ”

The heroine, as I have said, has to pass through many troubles and vicissitudes; her days are full of adventure, her nights of alarms.

Here is a description, taken almost at haphazard, of the *usual* way in which Emily spends her solitude when at Udolpho. It is, as the auctioneer says, “ a fair sample.”

“ When night returned, Emily recollected the mysterious strains of music that she had lately heard, in which she still felt some degree of interest, and of which she hoped to hear again the soothing sweetness. The influence of superstition now gained on the weakness of her long harassed mind. She looked with enthusiastic expectation to the guardian spirit of her father, and, having dismissed Annette for the night, determined to watch alone for their return. It was not yet, however, near the time when she had heard the music on a former night; and anxious to call off her thoughts from distressing subjects, she sat down with one of the few books that she had brought from France. But her mind, refusing control, became restless and agitated and she went often to the casement to listen for a sound. Once she thought she heard a voice, but then, everything without remaining still, she concluded that her fancy had deceived her.

“ Thus passed the time till twelve o’clock, soon after which the distant sounds that murmured through the castle ceased, and sleep seemed to reign over all. Emily then seated herself at the casement, where she was soon recalled from the reverie into which she had sunk, by very unusual sounds, not of music, but like the low moaning of some person in distress. As she listened, her heart faltered in terror, and she became convinced that the former sound was more than imaginary. Still, at intervals, she heard a kind of feeble lamentation, and

sought to discover whence it came. There were several rooms underneath, adjoining the ramparts, which had been long shut up, and, as the sound probably rose from one of these, she leaned from the casement to observe whether any light was visible there. The chambers as far as she could perceive were quite dark; but at a little distance on the ramparts below, she thought she saw something move.

“The faint twilight which the stars shed did not enable her to distinguish what it was; but she judged it to be a sentinel on watch, and she removed her light to a remote part of the chamber, that she might escape notice, during her farther observation.

“The same object still appeared. Presently it advanced along the rampart, towards her window, and she then distinguished something like a human form, but the silence with which it moved convinced her it was no sentinel. As it drew near, she hesitated whether to retire—a thrilling curiosity inclined her to stay, but a dread of she scarcely knew what, warned her to withdraw. While she paused, the figure came opposite to her casement, and was stationary. Everything remained quiet; she had not heard even a footfall; and the solemnity of this silence, with the mysterious form she saw, subdued her spirits, so that she was moving from the casement, when on a sudden, she observed the figure start away, and glide down the rampart, after which it was soon lost in the obscurity of night. Emily continued to gaze, for some time, on the way it had passed, and then retired within her chamber, musing on this strange circumstance, and scarcely doubting that she had witnessed a supernatural appearance.”

The hero is young and handsome; ingenuous and as thoroughly romantic as the heroine herself; he, too, delights in wild and savage scenery, and it is the chief part of his wooing to participate in his lady's love of the grandeur and terror of the landscape. He is invariably master of at least one instrument, and he indulges his passion by the production

of melancholy strains heard at midnight by the heroine. He usually "bounds" into the story at some crisis and lays his heart immediately at the foot of Adeline, Emily, or Ellena, as the case may be. His ardour is only equalled by his modesty, and the respectful terms in which he expresses his sentiments are praiseworthy:

"If I might dare to hope," says Valancourt in *Udolpho*, "that you think me not unworthy of such honour, and might be permitted sometimes to inquire after your health, I should now leave you with comparative tranquillity." (Oh, shades of Rochester!)

It is, however, in depicting the accomplished villain that Mrs. Radcliffe excels. In all her books the black, mysterious, guilty spirit with a terrible past appears—La Motte, Montalt, Montori, and above all Schedoni in *The Italian*. In the delineation of this character of Schedoni, Mrs. Radcliffe worked with peculiar care, and the result is a masterpiece, one that will not easily be surpassed. He is the prototype of the Byronic hero, and in his *Lara* (1814) Byron reproduces some of the most telling traits of Schedoni.

It is worth while to quote the description of this strange character. It has the arresting power of a Rembrandt portrait with its striking touches of light and shade:

"Amongst his associates no one loved him, many disliked him, and more feared him. His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in his air; something almost supernatural. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, increased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eyes, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily

be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny or even endure them twice. Yet, notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons whom he wished to conciliate, with astonishing facility, and generally with complete success."

*The Mysteries of Udolpho* is generally considered Mrs. Radcliffe's finest novel; it is certainly the best known. But it is in *The Italian*, as it seems to me, that she is at her best, and much of its power lies in the skilful drawing of this character of Schedoni. In this book her powers of characterisation are more matured—character has become more than circumstance. Here she does not rely so much upon what one may call the clap-trap of mystery, as in her earlier work. The effect is produced by the dramatic situation and the complications of the working of the human mind and heart. The unwonted promptings of pity which seize and master the hardened heart of Schedoni when he meets Ellena; the feelings which he himself cannot comprehend, are analysed with much skill. There is, too, more variety of character than in her other books. The portrayal of the nun Olivia is tender and delicate. The Abbess, though the sketch is but slight, is excellently hit off:

"The Abbess appeared, a stately lady apparently occupied with opinion of her own importance, and prepared to receive her guest with rigour and supercilious haughtiness. The Abbess, who was herself a woman of some distinction, believed that of all possible crimes, next to sacrilege, offences against persons of rank were the least pardonable."

Paolo is the best of Mrs. Radcliffe's serving men; Ellena the finest of her heroines. She is, of course, romantic like all her sisters, but the fortitude with which she bears her sorrows and refuses to stoop to artifice in order to save her life, is very praiseworthy. We may notice that Ellena is the only heroine who does not express herself from time to time in verse, and the abstention on her part is a great improvement.

*The Italian, or Confessional of the Black Penitents* (the title itself is impressive), shows such great and growing power, that one is surprised and grieved that it should be Mrs. Radcliffe's last. Shortly the story is this:

A youth of high birth and fortune, Vivaldi by name, falls in love, with Romeo-like swiftmess, with Ellena, a beautiful girl seemingly of low degree. Union is opposed by his family, chiefly through the pride of his mother, the Marchesa di Vivaldi. To break the scandalous connection she calls to her aid her father confessor, Schedoni. Ellena is placed in a convent where she is treated as a criminal; from this durance Vivaldi rescues her; they are about to be married, when, at the altar, they are seized by the emissaries of Schedoni. Vivaldi is placed in the Inquisition with his faithful Paolo, and Ellena is carried off to a lonely, desolate house on the Adriatic, there to be murdered by Schedoni, as planned by him and the Marchesa. As Schedoni raises his hand to strike the sleeping girl he recognises in her, as he thinks, his own daughter. This is a great scene. Hardly less impressive is that in which Vivaldi is led blindfold before the secret tribunal of the Inquisition, when a mysterious voice interrupts the proceedings, and the council is dissolved. All the entanglements are cleverly unwound. Schedoni's machinations are discovered—and he dies in prison. The Marchesa also meets with deserved punishment, and happiness crowns the faithful lovers.

A famous scene is that in which Schedoni and the Marchesa in the church of St. Nicholas plot the murder of Ellena. Both

long for her death, but neither is willing to make the definite proposal. After some very neat skirmishing the conversation proceeds thus:

“‘Speak low, father,’ said the Marchesa, though he spoke almost in a whisper, ‘the cloister appears solitary, yet some person may lurk behind those pillars. Advise me how this business may be managed; I am ignorant of the particular means.’

“‘There is some hazard in the accomplishment of it, I grant,’ replied Schedoni; ‘I know not whom you may confide in. The men who make a trade of blood——’ ‘Hush!’ said the Marchesa, looking round through the twilight, ‘a step!’ ‘It is the Friar’s, yonder, who crosses to the choir,’ replied Schedoni.

“They were watchful for a few moments, and then he resumed the subject. . . . ‘This confidence with which you have thought proper to honour me,’ said Schedoni at length, and paused; ‘This affair, so momentous——’

“‘Ay, this affair,’ interrupted the Marchesa, in a hurried manner, ‘but when and where, good father? Being once convinced, I am anxious to have it settled.’ ‘That must be as occasion offers,’ replied the Monk, thoughtfully. ‘On the shore of the Adriatic, in the province of Apulia, not far from Manfredonia, is a house that might suit the purpose. It is a lone dwelling on the beach, and concealed from travellers; amongst forests which spread for many miles along the coast.’ . . . ‘Avoid violence, if that be possible,’ said the Marchesa, immediately comprehending him, ‘but let her die quickly! The punishment is due to the crime.’

“The Marchesa happened, as she said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over the Confessional, where appeared, in black letters, these awful words, ‘God hears thee!’ It appeared an awful warning. Her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. ‘You were speaking of a place, father,’ resumed the Marchesa. ‘You mentioned a——’

“‘Ay,’ muttered the Monk, still musing, ‘in a chamber of that house there is——’

“‘What noise is that?’ said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again. . . . ‘That chamber?’ continued the Marchesa—

“‘In that chamber,’ said Schedoni, ‘is a secret door, constructed long ago——’

“‘And for what purpose constructed?’ said the Marchesa.

“‘A passage leads to the sea,’ continued Schedoni, without replying to the question. ‘There, on the shore, when darkness covers it, there, plunged amidst the waves, no stain shall hint of——’

“‘Hark!’ interrupted the Marchesa, starting, ‘that note again! . . . who is dead? it is a requiem.’

“‘Peace be with the departed,’ exclaimed Schedoni and crossed himself. ‘Peace rest with his soul!’ . . . They listened in silence. . . . ‘We will converse on this business at a future time,’ said she, ‘at present my spirits are disordered. Good-night, father! Remember me in your orisons!’

“‘Peace be with you, Lady!’ said Schedoni gravely—and they parted.”

Scenes such as this—and many might be cited from her works—manifest great dramatic powers, and we cannot but recognise in Mrs. Radcliffe an original and gifted writer. Though the power of putting her thought into poetic *form* was denied her, she had keen poetic sense, as may be seen in her descriptions of scenery, which she harmonises so aptly with the feelings and circumstances of the human beings who form part of the picture.

Scott considered *The Sicilian Romance* (1789) the first modern English example of the poetical novel. She had, as I have said, many imitators, but all inferior to her—she was superseded but not eclipsed; no one who could hold her generation spell-bound, as she undoubtedly did, can pass



quite into oblivion, and her name will always be one to conjure with. She does not belong to that group of the elect, who, if we accept Clement Shorter's estimate, can be numbered on the fingers of one hand; novelists whose achievements in English fiction may be called supreme—Fielding, Scott, Austen, Brontë, Dickens; though she cannot approach these, she has a distinction of her own.

It is not without interest to notice that even before Mrs. Radcliffe was at the height of her fame, another woman was busy writing a novel which inaugurated the School that was to put to rout the Romanticists, and to found a new dynasty under which we now, in the twentieth century, live.

In 1778, Fanny Burney published her *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. It was a new and entirely original departure. When we are told that women never initiate anything, do not let us forget Mrs. Radcliffe and Fanny Burney. Miss Burney's heroine, Evelina, though still somewhat of the Radcliffe type and often placed in distressing conditions, is no longer surrounded by unspeakable horrors, confined in lonely castles and haunted by ghosts. Instead of sojourning on the coast of the Adriatic or in the wilds of the Apennines we find her in High Holborn or Vauxhall, infested not by banditti, but by what perhaps was not less trying, tormentors in the persons of the Brangtons, and subjected, not to the terrors of the dagger and the poisoned cup, but to the humiliation of having to acknowledge the relationship, and bear the company of those aggressive and irrepressible "bounders."

Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, written in 1798, registers in charming form the realistic reaction already in force; and Maria Edgeworth in *Castle Rackrent*, published in 1800, draws for us, not the picture of the feudal lord in his gloomy baronial hall, harassed by the uneasy spirits of his ancestors, and pursued by an evil conscience, but tells in the homely words of old Thady Quirk of the downfall of an ancient family and the

wreck of their fortunes through the avenging Nemesis of Unthrift and the hapless spirit of happy-go-lucky.

*Sic transit gloria mundi!* So do tastes change and fashions alter. Each actor in his time plays his part, and then quits the stage, making room for other performers.

Let us gratefully acknowledge our debt to one of these. Mrs. Radcliffe charmed her contemporaries; and, as "the abstract and brief chronicle of the time," she has recorded for us with artistic skill the shifting tastes and interests of another age.

KING ALFRED AS A MAN OF LETTERS<sup>1</sup>

I MAY, I think, adopt the words of the quaint old chronicler William of Malmesbury, who in writing of Alfred in the twelfth century says:

“ To trace in detail the mazy labyrinth of his labours, was never my design; because a recapitulation of his exploits in their exact order of time would occasion some confusion to the reader; for to relate how a hostile army, driven by himself or his generals, from one part of a district retreated to another; and dislodged thence, sought a fresh scene of operation and filled every place with rapine and slaughter; and, if I may use the expression, ‘ to go round the island with him,’ might to some seem the height of folly. Consequently I shall touch on all points summarily.”

So for me to attempt to-night anything like a life of the great King of the West Saxons, would seem indeed “ the height of folly.” His life and his history are so well known that I shall dwell only upon one part of Alfred’s many-sided character, and attempt only to say a little about that portion of his work which was, I believe, as near his heart as any that he undertook, I mean his writings and his schemes for the reviving and keeping alive of the love of letters amongst his people.

It is, I think, Stanley who says somewhere that all who try to study history, must be struck with the advantage which those enjoy who live within the neighbourhood of great historical monuments, and we who are citizens of the historic town of York, rich in association and teeming with archæological interest, know this to be true, and we must often be

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1901. Read to The Mount School, and at a Meeting of the York Friends’ Book Society held at Bootham School.

thankful that we are dwellers in a city where the casual sight of almost every street-name brings to our mind and remembrance some far-off time and condition, and helps us to people these very streets with strange and shadowy figures of bygone times; thankful too that the pages of history are open to us through education, and that through the records of the past we may have intercourse with the life, the thoughts and doings of men and women of long ago; thankful that some historic imagination may have been cultivated in us, so that we may now and again penetrate the obstructions of the Present, and live for a moment or two in the world of our remote ancestors. At any rate we need not be like the lady who, coming from the glories of a fashionable watering-place, not a hundred miles from here, remarked that it was tiresome she had to spend an afternoon in our city, for, said she, "the worst of York is that there is nothing to see in it!"

If we can appreciate this opportunity of living in a historic city, may we not also appreciate the fact that we are living in a country where from time to time great men and women have been raised up who have so impressed themselves upon their own time and generation that we of this country may still feel the glow of kinship, and in a way join hands with England's worthies and hear them speak "in our own language in which we were born." No man has, I believe, so intimately penetrated English life and character as Alfred the king who died a thousand years ago—the event which we have been commemorating within the last few weeks, and the record of which is thus simply given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:

"901. Here (or in this year) died Alfred, the son of Ethelwulf, six days before the mass of All Hallows (Nov. 1). He was king over all the nation of the English, except that part which was under the dominion of the Danes, and he held the kingdom one year and a half less than thirty years."

To appreciate in any degree Alfred's literary work and to understand the countless difficulties he had to contend with

in carrying it out, we must give one glance at his surroundings.

In his early manhood, Alfred found himself face to face with the savage and perfidious Danes, the enemies not only of the English but of every form of learning and industry; all that had represented letters and religion was ruthlessly destroyed by the wild hordes of savages whose one aim seems to have been to destroy and wreck everything they could not carry away: where there had been schools and monasteries, libraries and churches, industrious and happy scholars, desolation and ruin now laid their hideous hand.

The Danes were now no longer content to make summer raids upon the English coast, sailing away to leave the country in peace for the winter months, satisfied for the time with the plunder they carried with them, but as we read in the short and pathetic annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, were settling in the country, passing inland, and carrying red ruin wherever they came. Perhaps here I might be allowed to read one or two extracts from the invaluable Chronicle, the compiling and preservation of which is one of Alfred's greatest gifts to the English nation.

“787. This year King Bertric took to wife Eadburga, King Offa's daughter; and in his days first came three ships of Northmen out of Hærétha-land (Denmark). And then the reve rode to the place and would have driven them to the king's, because he knew not who they were: and they there slew him. These were the first ships of Danish men which sought the land of the English nation.”

“793. In this year on the 6th before the Ides of January, the ravaging of heathen men lamentably destroyed God's church at Lindisfarne through rapine and slaughter.”

We read under the year 871 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:

“871. Then Alfred, son of Ethelwulf and brother of Ethelred, succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons. And about one month after this, King Alfred with a small band fought against the whole army at Wilton and put them to

flight for a good part of the day; but the Danes had possession of the place of carnage. And this year nine general battles were fought against the army in the kingdom south of the Thames, besides which, Alfred and single ealdormen and king's thanes, oftentimes made incursions on them, which were not counted: and within the year, nine earls and one king (Ethelred) were slain."

It was Alfred who, after such times as these, raised from the ground the well-nigh extinguished torch of English learning; who beat it into life and light, until it shone steadily once more, and was ready to be handed down from one to another, so that the flame, so preserved, still gleams bright and clear in the twentieth century.

It is indeed a curious thing that no national epic has clustered round the deeds and name of Alfred. Strangely enough, it is the *Celtic* Arthur whom we English love to honour and whom we have made our national hero, *not* the English Alfred. This is not the fault of the old English Chronicle, for there we find him, in his descent at any rate, surrounded with the halo of romance, nay, even with the glamour of religious myth and Biblical genealogy. Is it not curious to find the pious and Christian king and Englishman thus deified?

This is how the descent of Alfred is given under the year 855 when the death of Ethelwulf is recorded: "And Alfred was the son of Ethelwulf and Ethelwulf of Egbert, Egbert of Elmund, Elmund of Eafa, Eafa of Eoppa, Eoppa of Ingild, Ingild was Ina's brother, King of the West Saxons," and so on through Kenred, Ceolwald, Cutha, Cuthwin, Ceawlin, Cynric, Cerdic, until we come to . . . "Bedwig, that is the son of Noah, he was born in Noah's ark, Lamech, Methusalem, Enoh . . . Enos, Seth, Adam, the first man, and our Father, that is Christ, Amen."

Alfred has many descriptive names: "The Great"—which Lord Rosebery seems to hold so cheap, and which we are told he only received in the sixteenth century—"England's

Darling," "England's Shepherd," "England's Joy," "The Arms-doer." But of all these names given to him by his followers and friends, none is so fine as Alfred the "Truth-teller," or "Truth-lover."

His right to this beautiful name comes out in nothing more strikingly than in his writings. Asser tells us that he had an unquenchable love of knowledge, "that he was curiously eager to investigate things unknown," which is only another way of saying that he was for ever longing to get at the truth in religion, in life, in art and in letters. It is curious and noteworthy that our good Queen Victoria, whose proudest title, one thinks, must have been her claim to lineal descent from Alfred, was also remarkable for her truthfulness. John Bright, whose standard of truth was, we know, a high one, said after seeing something of the Queen, that she was the most truthful person he had ever met. Of all the names that one could feel it best to have and to deserve, Truth-teller or Truth-lover would be the best. I once knew a boy whose nickname at school was "Truth and Daylight," and that nickname always seemed to me the finest testimonial he was likely to get throughout his life, whatever his fortunes might be or whatever honours afterwards might be his. This quality of truthfulness so marked in Alfred went along with another rare gift of heart, a quality which made him eager to *share* the truth he mastered and to hand it on to others; he was, when he had gained knowledge, restless and unsatisfied until those about him could participate with him in the happiness and delight which came to him with the acquisition. It is not always that the scholar recognises the rights of others to learning; there are often curiously exclusive aristocrats in the courts of the learned, such as Milton, who with a lofty love of erudition and a keen appreciation of the sweets of culture and knowledge, are yet content to leave others in Egyptian darkness, and are anxious to maintain class and sex distinction in the realm of study. That was not Alfred's feeling. Amidst all the countless calls

upon his energies and his time; with feeble health and with manifold drawbacks and interruptions, he began those series of translations of the books which he held would be most useful for his people of all conditions. Of Alfred it has been well said by S. R. Gardiner that he exemplified the saying, "If any man would be greatest amongst you let him be servant of all."

Seeing a need he set himself practically to meet it, to minister to the wants of those about him. He turned many books into English, for his aim and desire were, as he says, "that the whole body of the free-born youth in his kingdom, who possessed the means, may be obliged to learn, as long as they have to attend to no other business, until they can read English writing perfectly, and then let those who are dedicated to Learning and the service of the church be instructed in Latin." We are glad to find that Alfred recognised that women should not be excluded from education. Asser tells us that Ethelwitha his daughter, as well as his son Edward, was carefully instructed. "Yea," says he, "they abide even until now, dearly beloved of all, in all lowliness, courtesy, and gentleness toward all, both inland folk and outland, and in wholehearted obedience to their father. Nor are they suffered slothfully and heedlessly to lack the discipline of a liberal education, amid such other pursuits as become the highborn in this life. For they have learnt the psalms, and Saxon books and Saxon songs above all, and are for ever reading." (*Alfred in the Chronicle*, p. 104.) Alfred's children grew up worthy of their father and of their education. The words which Alfred is said to have addressed to Edward show that he felt him worthy, and History proves that the father's hope was not disappointed.

" My Son now I bid thee,  
My dear one, my own,  
Thou father thy folk  
And be thou true Lord.  
To orphans be parent,  
To widows be friend,



To poor men be comfort,  
To weak men be stay;  
And wronged men right  
With all thy might.  
And keep thou the Law;  
And love thou the Lord;  
And think above all  
Of God, with full mind;  
And abide till *He* rede thee  
In all thy deed;  
The more shall He help thee  
To all thy will."

It is a pretty comment on these lines to read in the old Chronicle of Edward that he never failed to visit his old nurse whenever his progresses brought him into the neighbourhood where she dwelt. "He had thought it shame not to do so."

How Alfred's daughter, "the Lady of Mercia," put her education to the test we may read in the story of her noble work as queen and ruler in her land.

Not only was the good of his people forever present in the mind of Alfred, but he knew well what they really needed; he entered into their troubles, understood their joys, and recognised their shortcomings. He had, it would seem too, the royal power of finding what was worthful and excellent in the character of those he had to do with. It is, I know, now thought to be bad form and quite out of date, when speaking of Alfred, even to allude to the cakes story, but perhaps the origin of that tradition is not without meaning.

Florence of Worcester (died 1118) in his account of the elevation of Denewulf to the bishopric of Winchester, says:

"Denewulf, if fame is to be trusted, to an advanced age was not merely unlettered, but a mere swineherd, whom King Alfred, when he fled to the woods for the violence of his enemies, lit upon as he was feeding his pigs in the oak forest. Perceiving his good wit, he put him to school, and after he was fully instructed, created him Bishop of Winchester; a truly miraculous transaction!" Is it possible that the anger of the

swineherd's wife was caused not by the burning of the cakes—and I never believe Alfred would have forgotten the cakes if he had undertaken to watch them—but the luring away of the good man from his pigs that he might learn his A B C—to her no doubt a “miraculous transaction.”

If we are to speak of Alfred's literary work we must leave his childhood, his youth, and early manhood and pass to the time when with infinite patience he had mastered the almost insuperable difficulties which he found himself heir to and when some slight respite from the incessant turmoil and harass of war was vouchsafed him. But we must not forget the time of the sowing of the seed, that seed ready to spring forth, but abiding its time through all the long misery of the Danish wars.

Two circumstances of his childhood we feel certain must have influenced Alfred in a remarkable degree: the encouragement given to him by his mother to love and to learn poetry; and his journey to Rome with his pious father when he was only six years of age.

How he learnt the Saxon poetry by heart we read in the pages of Asser. The story is well known, but so pretty that I must quote it. “On a certain day, therefore, his mother was showing him and his brothers a Saxon book of poetry, which she held in her hand and said, ‘Whichever of you shall the soonest learn this volume shall have it for his own.’ Stimulated by these words, or rather by the Divine inspiration, and allured by the beautifully illuminated letter at the beginning of the volume, he spoke before all his brothers, who, though his seniors in age, were not so in grace, and answered, ‘Will you really give that book to one of us, that is to say, to him who can first understand and repeat it to you?’ At this his mother smiled with satisfaction, and confirmed what she had before said. Upon which the boy took the book out of her hand, and went to his master to read it, and in due time brought it to his mother and recited it.”

What the songs and poetry were we may guess. The "Song of Beowulf," who fought the monsters of mere and moorland, and who died to save his country from the fiery dragon; the "Song of the Traveller"; Cædmon's pious lays and Cynewulf's beautiful stories, such as "The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," and many others. These must have lived in his heart and brain, and may have beguiled many a weary march or anxious hour of waiting.

As for his visit to Rome, the historic monuments of the city, the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church, the stores of precious manuscripts and works of art must have fired the imagination of the boy and the memories of these things must have made him long to emulate in his own land the greatness of the Eternal City, and resolve, when peaceful times should come, to restore the Christian services, build up the churches and monasteries, and himself to master the treasures of classic lore. What his ardour for letters must have been we know; so great was it that in manhood, when he had for years played the part of lawgiver, conqueror, and king, he was ready and willing to undertake a task which all acknowledge to be one of the most difficult and tiresome in the world, the task of acquiring learning after youth has passed. This task Alfred accomplished, showing not only indomitable industry and patience, but the humility and teachableness which alone make learning possible and profitable.

It is, of course, difficult to date Alfred's writings and to give the order of their production. And by the way it is really quite refreshing to find that as yet no one else is supposed to have written Alfred's translations and Prefaces for him. Even the all-pervading genius of Bacon, now, I believe, considered the source of all Elizabethan literature, can hardly claim to have done much for Alfred!

We may begin perhaps by glancing first at the king's laws, a revision and adaptation of the ancient code of Ina.

The nature of these laws, and Alfred's additions and

omissions are deeply interesting from a political and historical point of view, but on these aspects of them I cannot here say anything. I may perhaps mention one enactment of interest which shows that we owe the strictness with which we regard Sunday, not as is often thought to the Puritans but to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers; the law as to the observance of the Sunday in Alfred's code is taken from Ina's law, and this dates back to a time as early as A.D. 688. "If a theowman work on Sunday at his Lord's behest, he is free and the lord forfeit 30 shillings. If he work without behest let him suffer in his hide. If a freeman work that day let him forfeit his freedom or 60 shillings. And let a priest be held doubly guilty."

The way in which Alfred introduces his laws is curiously indicative of his character and of the nature of his ambition for the people he ruled over. His code or book of laws begins with extracts from the Bible, both from the Old Testament and the New. These are the opening words: "And the Lord spake these words and said, 'I am the Lord thy God,' etc.; then follow the Ten Commandments, omitting the second (in accordance with the decree of the Council of Nice). . . . Then followed, with a few omissions, the 21st, 22nd, and the first part of the 23rd chapters of Exodus which contain the Mosaic laws treating of the relations between masters and servants, of the punishments for murder, homicide and theft and other heinous sins, as well as of the sacred observance of holy and festival days. Then come these words: "These are the laws spoken to Moses by the Almighty God himself who commanded him to keep them, and afterwards the only Son of God, who is Christ our Saviour, came upon earth and said, that he did not come to destroy these laws and to abolish them, but in every way to fulfil them; and he taught mercy and humility. Then, after he had suffered, but before his apostles had gone forth to teach in all lands, and whilst they were still together, they converted many heathens to God and still remaining together, they sent messengers into

Antioch and Syria to preach Christ's laws. But when they learnt that these messengers met with no success, the apostles sent them a letter. And this is the letter sent by the apostles to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, which places are now converted from heathenism." Here follows literally the Epistle from the Acts of the Apostles xv. 23-29. Alfred then added from Matthew vii. 12, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" "by this one commandment," says Alfred, "man shall know whether he does right, and then he will require no other law-book." It is thus that Alfred speaks of his work in drawing up these laws:

"I, Alfred the King, gathered these laws together and ordered many to be written which our forefathers held, such as I approved; and many which I approved not I rejected, and had other ordinances enacted with the counsel of my Witan; for I dared not venture to set much of my own upon the Statute-book, for I knew not what might be approved by those who should come after us. But such ordinances as I found, either in the time of my kinsman Ina, or of Offa, king of the Mercians, or of Ethelberht, who first received baptism in England—such as seemed to me rightest I have collected here, and the rest I have let drop. I, then, Alfred, King of the West Saxons, showed these laws to all my Witan, and they then said that they all approved of them as proper to be holden."

All this shows clearly that in making his laws he appealed to eternal truths, and that his religious feeling was profound. Alfred combined what is not often met with in one man, a grasp of the practical necessities and wants of the Present, with a deep and genuine reverence for the Past, and along with this a realisation of the things of eternity—we may see in everything he did and wrote that he recognised that all action to be enduring must stretch forward beyond this transitory being to the eternal life; the spiritual and the eternal meaning of things was for ever present with him, and this is what makes all he did so vital. He lived a thousand

years ago, yet the spirit of his thought is fresh even to us in the twentieth century, and is appropriate to modern needs and ideals.

To give some notion of Alfred's great industry, I must quote a few lines from Asser:

"In the meantime, the king, during the frequent wars and other trammels of this present life, the invasions of the pagans and his own daily infirmities of body, continued to carry on the government, and to exercise hunting in all its branches; to teach his workers and artificers of all kinds, his falconer, hawkers, and dogkeepers; to build houses, majestic and good, beyond all the precedents of his ancestors, by his new mechanical inventions; to recite the Saxon books, and especially to learn by heart the Saxon poems and to make others learn them; and he alone never desisted from studying most diligently to the best of his ability; he attended the Mass and other daily services of religion; he was frequent in psalm-singing and prayer at the hour of both day and night. He also went to the churches, as we have already said, in the night-time to pray secretly and unknown to his courtiers; he bestowed alms and largesses on both natives and foreigners of all countries; he was affable and pleasant to all, and curiously eager to investigate things unknown."

After telling of his almost unending charities, Asser says:

"Then minded he him of the word that is written: 'Whoso will give alms let him first give himself.' And duly began he to think out what he might offer unto God of the service of his own body and soul; for of this he purposed to dedicate to God no less than of his outward wealth. Yea, moreover, and he vowed, so far as his infirmity and occasions would permit, to give up to God the full half of his service, by night and by day, with a good will and with all his might. But inasmuch as he could not readily tell the hours by night for the darkness (nor yet oft-times by day, for the storms and clouds), he bethought him how best and easiest, trusting on

God's mercy, he might duly perform and keep his vow according to the tenor, even unto death." And then Asser goes on to tell us how by "shrewd wit" he hit upon the notion of a lantern, one of those notable inventions which we all think so simple after they have been made.

We may now perhaps turn for a few moments to Alfred's actual writings. And here I should like to offer an apology. To take most of the time in giving my second-hand notions of Alfred, and then in the last moments to consider his own priceless thought, is, I feel, a terribly topsy-turvy arrangement; but indeed Alfred's words are so fine that I have hesitated to drag any away from their context, and to sandwich them in with mine. I shall give only a few extracts, and a sentence or two from his biographer Asser, and refer you to the works themselves which now are to be had in many excellent editions. One paragraph written by such a man as Alfred, and read by a thoughtful reader, is worth, of course, a thousand biographies, and ten thousand commentaries. We may feel a little how true this is when we compare the compilations of historians with some of the entries of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which seem to live and breathe, as it were, before us as we read, because they are the words of eye-witnesses. In passing, I may just repeat that this unique Chronicle, one of the noblest monuments of the English people, we owe to Alfred. It has been edited by Earle, translated by Giles, published by Bohn and may be had for a few shillings. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is the happy possessor of a MS. copy of it which it is thought Alfred himself may have handled!

Alfred's Manual or Hand-Book has disappeared, but Asser gives us a charming account of its compilation. (*Alfred in the Chronicles*, p. 110.)

He translated Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* or, as he calls it, *The Herdsman's Book*; it was a manual for the priest, and so valuable did Alfred consider it that he took care to

send a copy to every bishop's see in his kingdom. The translation is thought to belong to the year 889, and the preface, written entirely by Alfred, is full of the deepest interest, for in it he lays before us the condition of learning, or rather the lack of learning in England at that time, and the picture it gives us of the good king sitting down himself to try to remedy the evils of ignorance is very beautiful. (See Stopford Brooke's *King Alfred as Educator*, p. 10.)

In translating Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* Alfred was offering to the people, not to the clergy only, the story of their nation and trying to rouse their interest and awaken their enthusiasm for the deeds that had been done "in the brave days of old," for Bede's *History* is by no means an ecclesiastical history only. His beautiful rendering of Bede's account of the birth of poetry in England in the person of Cædmon under the auspices of the great Abbess Hild is far too well known to be quoted, but it will always remain one of our most precious legacies from Alfred.

In his translations he had a delightful and regal way of leaving his author when he thought fit and introducing episodes of his own. It is to this habit of his that we owe the fine stories of Othere and Wulfstan in his *Orosius*. As we read we can conjure up the picture of the King questioning the sturdy old sailors and explorers and "plucking" from them by acute question and remark "the heart of their mystery." (See Longfellow's fine poem on Othere.)

It has seemed natural to dwell to-night chiefly upon Alfred's literary work for many reasons; first, because I am addressing a *Book* meeting; secondly, because it seems to me one of the most characteristic aspects under which to study the great King; it is his distinctive mark; others have shown the qualities of great rulers, statesmen, lawgivers, and warriors. Alfred in adding to all these a love of poetry and learning, and himself writing for his people, added a something which gives a special and peculiar graciousness to his memory. Is it not



appropriate also that we should emphasise that side of his work in speaking in this place [Bootham School] where literature and learning must so largely enter into the life of its inmates? The very meaning and function of such a school as this in which we meet to-night—as the noble library now rising at the instance of the Old Scholars will soon attest—is, broadly speaking, the cultivation of the love of reading, the appreciation of poetry, the study of our own beautiful mother-tongue, as used by its greatest masters. These are the stepping-stones by which we rise to the pleasant paths of the higher culture; and these indeed if properly fostered may bring us to the Delectable Mountains from whence we may catch glimpses of the Gate of the Celestial City itself.

It is in these words that Alfred's death is told in the Chronicle of St. Neot's:

“ In the year 900<sup>1</sup> Alfred the Truth-teller, that keenest of all warriors, that noblest of all kings of Wessex, prudent, religious, of excellent wisdom, this year, to the great grief of his people, went the way of all flesh. . . . And in the royal city of Winchester was buried meetly, with all kingly worship, in the Church of S. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles.”

Fuller in his *Worthies* tells us that Alfred was “ a prince who cannot be painted to the life without his loss, no words reaching his worth. He left Learning where he found ignorance; Justice where he found oppression; Peace where he found distraction. He loved religion more than superstition; favoured learned men more than lazy monks, which perchance is the cause that his memory is not laden with miracles, and he not solemnly sainted with other Saxon Kings, who far less deserved it.”

Generations of men have passed away since Alfred lived; the whole aspect of our land has changed, and yet after all these centuries we see how his love of Learning; his unflinching

<sup>1</sup> Some MSS. give this date.

and genuine desire to help his people; his industry; his unquenchable love of freedom; his keen spiritual insight, have left their mark upon England for ever. We see him standing, a solitary figure amidst the darkness of barbarism and the fast gathering clouds of ignorance and superstition; with his wondrous lantern dispelling, as it were, the darkness and pointing the way to a Promised Land he was not to reach.

One might appropriately close by reading the first few lines of Ecclesiasticus xlv., in which the writer puts forward in beautiful words his notion of a great leader, but perhaps these few verses, written in the twelfth or thirteenth century, describing the actual Alfred and setting forth the popular estimate of the great Englishman will suffice :

“ Sat there at Seaford  
 Many a Thane,  
 Many wise Bishops,  
 Much folk book-learned;  
 Proud were the Earls there,  
 Noble the Knights.

There was Earl Alfric,  
 Wise he in law-lore;  
 There too was Alfred,  
 England's Darling,  
 England's Shepherd,  
 England's King.

Them gan he learn,  
 As now ye hear,  
 How they their life  
 Might bestmost lead.

Alfred was of England King,  
 Strong and skilled in everything;  
 He was King and he was clerk,  
 Lovéd he full well God's work;

Wise in word,  
 And ware in deed;  
 Sure the wisest man was he  
 Of all folk that England's be.”

*Alfred's Proverbs.*

## JOHN WOOLMAN

(By permission from "The Vineyard," May 1912)

MORE than a thousand years ago it was clear to at least one great thinker that men may sometimes learn the nature and character of God through the manifestation of that nature and character in their fellow-creatures. "There are as many unveilings of God," says John the Scot in the ninth century, "as there are saintly souls." And he who will read with an open mind the record of the comparatively short life of John Woolman, the Quaker, as set forth in his quaint and unpretending *Journal*, will be ready to acknowledge that here is a "saintly soul," who has in his own way done something to make his fellows understand the Spirit of God.

John Woolman was born in 1720 in Northampton, West Jersey, America, of Quaker parents. He was one of a large family, and his people were far from rich; but the home must have been one of refinement, and he early learnt from his father and mother lessons of piety. "Before I was seven years old," he says in his *Journal*, "I began to be acquainted with the operations of divine love." He learnt the handicraft of tailoring, and this was his trade throughout his life. He married happily, and had children. When almost a youth he felt called to the ministry in the Society of Friends, of which he was a member; and his life was spent in carrying from place to place the gospel of good tidings. He died while on a visit to England in the year 1772.

He was a mystic, and he had that which almost always accompanies the mystic temperament, the devouring zeal of the practical reformer, and he never hesitated to bring his spiritual intuitions to the test of practical issues. His soul was consumed with a passionate love of God and of man. The

misery of the poor, the tyranny of the rich, lay like a burden on his heart even from childhood. The suffering of animals in the hands of the cruel is the first matter to wring from him one of those bitter cries of anguish with which the reader of the *Journal* becomes familiar. The thoughtless killing of a mother-robin when he was a little boy is the earliest recorded event in his *Journal*, and he styles it "a remarkable circumstance." His account of the deed reads like a solemn confession of guilt, and the wanton destruction of the little creature is the one active moral lapse which he has to register. The confession is characteristic of the whole attitude of the man, and must be given in his own words:

"I may here mention a remarkable circumstance that occurred in my childhood. On going to a neighbour's house, I saw on my way a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off; but having young ones, she flew about and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, and one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror at having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them. After some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably. In this case I believed that Scripture proverb was fulfilled: 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I then went on my errand, and for some time could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled. Thus He whose tender mercies are over all His works hath placed a principle in the human mind which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature, and this being singly attended to, people become tender-hearted and sympathising; but when frequently and totally

rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition."

"The child is father of the man," and when we read this experience of the boy and see how it took hold of him, we cannot wonder that as he grew to man's estate he not only grieved over the suffering world, but, like Catherine of Siena, identified himself in a most intimate way with the misery of man and beast. The tragedy of life was for ever before him, and he lamented as did Wordsworth over "what man has made of man." Occasionally a holy peace entered his heart and he was at rest; but his visions, and he records one or two, were tinged with sombre shadows; not often does he seem to have experienced that ecstasy of exaltation enjoyed by some of the saints in their dreams and revelations. On the contrary, his visions often bring to him a farther and profounder sense of the sorrow of mankind, and his own share in it.

"In a time of sickness . . . I was brought so near the gates of death that I forgot my name. Being then desirous to know who I was, I saw a mass of matter of a dull gloomy colour between the south and the east, and was informed that this mass was human beings in as great misery as they could be and live, and that I was mixed with them, and that henceforth I might not consider myself as a distinct and separate being."

Here we see, as elsewhere, that the special note of Woolman's gospel was compassion in all the fulness of that great word's meaning. His was a pity which entered into the very essence of suffering; he himself was part of the sorrow and pain he saw around him; his pity had something of the Divine in its character, and no man, not St. Francis himself, has done more than Woolman to help the world to understand that God has put power into man's hand that he may learn to exercise mercy and magnanimity towards the weak and helpless, so to bring harmony out of chaos. The power of his teaching lay not in eloquent words and convincing theories, but

in his daily, nay hourly, renunciation of anything and everything which he felt might injure others. But though he seems to have walked so constantly through the valley of the shadow he never allows the burden of trouble to paralyse or crush him. His visions, his lonely meditations, all pointed him on to active service for the betterment of his fellows, and there was no detail of social evil that was too trivial for him "to bear his testimony against"; no wickedness too powerful for him to oppose and endeavour to remedy. To help his own generation was meat and drink to him; nor, indeed, was he ever unmindful of posterity.

"Do we feel," he says, "an affectionate regard to posterity, and are we employed to promote their happiness?"

This gave to his philanthropy a wide and sometimes a prophetic wisdom. His keen eye saw that institutions and customs regarded in his day by rulers and people as useful and beneficial, had in them the seed of danger and disaster. As he moved about America the condition of the slaves filled him with horror and anxiety. But the unfortunate negroes were not, as it seemed to him, the only sufferers; far away in the dim procession of the years, he saw the upholders of the system reckoning with inexorable Nemesis.

"The slaves," he says, "look like a burdensome stone to such as burden themselves with them; and if the white people retain a resolution to prefer their outward prospects of gain to all other considerations . . . I believe that burden will grow heavier and heavier, until times change in a way disagreeable to us."

The American Civil War, and the present difficulty facing the American statesmen as to the problem of the coloured population in the States, are striking comments on this lonely thinker's view.

"I often," he says, "felt a cry rise from the centre of my mind," a cry to Heaven that this evil of slavery might be blotted out. But his protests were not only exclamatory.

They took many forms. His pamphlet, *Considerations on Keeping Negroes*, is passionate in its appeal, and yet reasonable in its argument and moderate in its expression. So valuable was it felt to be by the Society of Friends that they offered to have it printed at their expense; but Woolman characteristically refused, "feeling most easy" to publish it at his own cost. He travelled much, passing from one Friend's family to another. But where he found that his entertainers were served by slaves, that his conscience might be free from the burden of participation in the evil thing, he imposed upon himself one of those minor martyrdoms from which throughout his life he never shrank.

"If I believed I should not keep clear from the gain of oppression without leaving money, I spoke to one of the heads of the family privately and desired them to accept of pieces of silver and give them to such of their negroes as they believed would make best use of them; and I gave them to the negroes myself as way looked clear. Before I came out I had provided a large number of small pieces for the purpose, and this offering to some who appeared to be wealthy people was a trial to me and to them . . . but few, if any, manifested any resentment at the offer, and most of them, after some conversation, accepted it."

So gentle was this determined reformer, so courteous, so entirely devoid of self-seeking in what he said and did that he was able, as we see in this instance, to venture on the most difficult and delicate ground without raising bad feeling or causing bitterness. To say one word against the great Institution of Slavery needed at that time the courage of a hero and the ardour of a saint; sensitiveness on the subject was, as we know, excessive, a sensitiveness of the most irritable description, born as it was of an uneasy conscience. But John Woolman had no fear of man when he pleaded the cause of the weak, and his words, though always tempered by the Spirit of Christ, were direct and uncompromising. He says

himself: "Some glances of real beauty may be seen in their faces who dwell in true meekness," and those who held converse with him must have recognised, in spite of his prophetic message of warning, that this true meekness was indeed his dwelling-place.

It is an almost Christ-like figure which we see clad in strange and noticeable garb passing from place to place: now through wild and desolate country; now amongst disaffected Indians; now through populous cities amongst the wealthy and the respectable. At one time he was in the habit of making his journeys on horseback; and if there is one matter which this humble pilgrim seems to have regarded with something like self-complacency, it is the number of miles he rode on these pastoral journeys of his; at the end of each account there is usually an exact record given of the number of miles gone over. But even this "exaltation of the creature" was to cease, for there comes a time when he tells us in his antique tongue, "to proceed without a horse seemed clearest to me." When travelling in Maryland he determined to travel on foot, that "by so doing I might have a more lively feeling of the condition of the oppressed slaves, set an example of lowliness before the eyes of their masters, and be more out of the way of temptation to unprofitable converse."

In the same spirit, when crossing the Atlantic on his visit to England, he insisted, in spite of remonstrance from friends, on going in the steerage. The arrangements for the cabin passengers seemed to him to partake of that "degree of luxury which had connection with evil."

On the other hand, to be a steerage passenger gave him the opportunity of sharing the hardships of the poorer travellers, and afforded him an insight into the comfortless condition of the common sailors upon whom the safety of the vessel so greatly depended and whose services were so poorly paid. When Woolman crossed the ocean in 1772 the voyage took from May 1 to June 8. That a man far from physically



strong and whose love of cleanliness amounted almost to a passion, should have subjected himself to all the wretchedness of the steerage passage, and for the reasons he assigns, gives us cause for thought in these days when men's time, energy, ingenuity and money are devoted with eager enthusiasm to secure for themselves luxurious modes of locomotion, and when travelling has become an end and not a means.

Nothing, however, in the *Journal* is perhaps more striking than Woolman's account of his journey amongst the Indians. His "mind was fastened upon the visit," though there was war and rumour of war in the Border districts, and though to a man of his delicate make the hardships of the journey were certain to be very severe. In the course of his wanderings he came to a place called Wehaloosing, and this is what he tells us:

"The first Indian that we saw was a woman of modest countenance, with a Bible, who spake first to our guide, and then with harmonious voice expressed her gladness at seeing us, having before heard of our coming. By the direction of our guide we sat down on a log while he went to the town to tell the people we were come. My companion and I, sitting thus together in a deep inward stillness, the poor woman came and sat near us; and great awfulness coming over us, we rejoiced in a sense of God's love manifested in our poor souls."

Countless treatises have been written to expound the Quaker faith in the constraining power of silence in worship. This short and simple narrative, this exquisite picture of the three gentle souls on their log in the quiet woods, makes it, we might almost say, *visible* to us.

He then meets with a company of Indians and he says:

"After sitting with them a short time I stood up and in some tenderness of spirit acquainted them in a few short sentences with the nature of my visit, and that a concern for their good had made me willing to come thus far to see them . . . and there appeared gladness among them. The inter-

preters endeavoured to acquaint the people with what I said, but found some difficulty. . . . They helped one another, however, and we laboured along, Divine love attending. Afterwards feeling my mind covered with the spirit of prayer, I told the interpreters that I found it in my heart to pray to God, and believed if I prayed aright He would hear me; and I expressed my willingness for them to omit interpreting. So our meeting ended with a degree of Divine love. Afterwards I heard that an old Indian had said to one of the interpreters, 'I love to feel where words come from.'" As Bunyan preached what he felt, what he "smartingly felt," so Woolman tells us that he preached that which he "tasted," and the old Indian must have recognised that the preacher's words had a sweet source, and that he had "an understanding of the mind of Truth."

This carrying of a message of love and brotherhood to the Indians reads like a story of the apostolic times; it has all that simplicity which belongs to great things and speaks the faith that removes mountains.

The account of his visit to England has not less the note of greatness. His sufferings and discomfort during the five long weeks of the sea voyage, his "floating pilgrimage," as he calls it, we can easily picture to ourselves. When he landed, rejoicing in his delivery from the terrors of the sea and the confinement of his miserable quarters, and hastened to meet the Friends in London, then assembled at their Yearly Meeting, his gentle heart was to undergo another and a severer trial.

It was one of his fixed beliefs that it was right for him at least, let others do as they would, to dress in undyed clothes; first, because he thought dyeing spoilt the cloth, rendering it less enduring, and so necessitating useless expenditure; second, because it was uncleanly, covering up and hiding away dirt. When he presented himself in the decorous precincts of the Friends' Meeting House, and entered the assembly

of "grave and potent seniors," his appearance caused a sort of consternation. The Heads of Assembly looked askance, and the question seemed to pass from one to the other, "Can one so strange in garb have anything but a strange and outlandish message?" Instead of the warm welcome which the poor traveller had expected, he perceived nothing but cold looks; and one authoritative voice indicated that since the stranger, in presenting himself to the meeting, had fulfilled his mission, he would now perhaps feel free to return from whence he came. Woolman sat silent for a space. He was deeply grieved by the reception, and his tears flowed. He rose at last and stated he could not feel himself released from his prospect of labour in England. He could not go back as had been suggested, but he was, he said, acquainted with a mechanical trade, that of tailor, and while the impediment to his services continued he hoped Friends would be kindly willing to employ him in such business as he was capable of, that he might not be chargeable to any. A deep silence ensued, after which he rose and addressed the meeting in words which were given him to utter as a minister of Christ. When he sat down the Friend who had advised his return got up and humbly confessed his error, and avowed his full sympathy with the stranger. Of this unhappy experience no word escapes Woolman in his *Journal*. We learn of the incident from another source.

Many things in England caused him pain. He considered the stage-coach horses over-driven and the postboys over-worked, and in consequence he was unable to travel by coach. He found wages very low and food very dear, and his heart was filled with compassion for the poor. "Oh, may the wealthy," he exclaimed, "consider the poor!" He puts his finger on many a weak spot, and points out again and again how in this Christian land "various sorts of traffic are carried on in impure channels," and how the love of gain makes men "to dwell as amongst the tombs."

Many thinkers of the present day must sympathise with his views as expressed in his carefully-thought-out little pamphlet, *A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich*. In this we may read of his longing for something like equality of happiness and opportunity for all; of his sorrow over the decay of handicrafts, and the substitution of city life for the sweet uses of agriculture; of his deep-rooted abhorrence of "every form and degree of luxury;" of his belief that the rigorous abstention from superfluities by the rich must ultimately bring about a more just equalisation of riches and of labour.

"Were all the superfluities and the desire of outward greatness laid aside, and the right use of things universally attended to, such a number of people might be employed in useful things as that moderate labour with the blessing of Heaven would answer all good purposes, and a sufficient number would have time to attend to the proper affairs of civil society."

That some men should be overworked that others might live in idleness was a constant source of grief to Woolman, and it is curious to notice how closely in agreement he is, on this head, with some of the most pronounced of modern theorists. Woolman has much to say about superfluities, indulgence in which "puts the wheels of perfect brotherhood out of order. . . . Let us reflect on the condition of a poor, innocent man, on whom the rich man, from a desire after wealth and luxuries, lays heavy burdens; when this labourer looks over the cause of his heavy toil, and considers that it is laid on him to support that which hath no foundation in pure wisdom, we may well suppose that an uneasiness ariseth in his mind towards one who might without any inconvenience deal more favourably with him." He raises his voice against the mad race to make great and hasty fortunes, irrespective of the means employed, and insists that it is this sordid spirit of selfishness and really short-sighted

greed which breeds war and all its attendant miseries. To him righteousness is more than legal right, and he goes to the bedrock of truth when he says, "If we trace an unrighteous claim and find gifts and grants proved by sufficient seals and witnesses, it gives not the claimant a right, for that which is opposite to righteousness is wrong and the nature of it must be changed before it can be right." Woolman would have endorsed the sonorous words of Sir Thomas Browne when he wrote, "Let not the law of thy country be the non-ultra of thine honesty; nor think that always good enough which the law makes good." (*Christian Morals.*)

Woolman was no mere theorist. Every day of his life proved to all about him, not less through his temper than through his actions, that he could agree to no compromise with evil customs, however long established; could have no part in what he felt to be wrong, no matter how authoritatively condoned. In these days, when we seem to have but little faith in individual effort, but put our trust rather in the big battalions, in elaborate organisations, in swelling committees, in monster millionaire endowments, it may perhaps be salutary for us to pause sometimes and meditate upon the influence exercise by a lonely soul, such as Woolman, whose consistent walk and honourable character were his gospel, and whose most valuable legacy was the sweet savour of his holy living and dying.

Woolman's *Journal* shows in every page the penetrating insight of one whose heart was pure and tender, and who had the courage to act upon its dictates, and to follow them out to their logical consequences. Yet, though his soul was ardent, and even passionate in its zeal for righteousness and justice, nowhere in his writings can we find a word that would indicate fanaticism, rancour, or intemperance. His attack is never personal; it is sin and folly he assails, never the sinner or the fool. The moderation of his language, the strenuous reserve of expression, render the fervour of his appeal the more

striking and impressive. And so it comes about that the style of this unlearned, simple writer often rises to greatness.

He closed his days in the ancient city of York, under the shadow of the great Minster, and on his death-bed he declared that he was at peace and that his soul had found rest from its troubles.

His life was obscure; he belonged to the meek of the earth. But in his gracious courtesy, in his selflessness, in his identification of himself with the sorrows of men and animals, in his scrupulous sense of honour, in his heroic courage in great things and in small, in his obedience to the heavenly vision, he passes beyond the limitations of worldly estimates and takes his place amongst the free spirits who stand for universal things.

*The Journal of John Woolman*, with Introduction, by John G. Whittier.

*The Journal with other Writings of John Woolman*, Everyman's Library.

## AN APOSTLE OF JOY

THOMAS TRAHERNE

*(By permission from "The Vineyard," Christmas 1910)*

IN the shortening days of the autumn of 1674, Thomas Traherne, thirty-eight years of age, lay on his deathbed. Few men during their earthly pilgrimage had lived more in heavenly places than this saint and poet; had more truly made "the omnipotence of God their house, and eternity their habitation." Yet none could have claimed to love and enter into the beauty of earth, to enjoy the rapture of living more than he. Of the world's riches he possessed hardly anything. He bequeathed to relatives, friends, and domestics, property (including his "best hat") amounting to some few pounds sterling; that is to say, in the significant phraseology of the world, at his death he was "worth," say, fifteen pounds. But this man had lived such a life, had spoken such words, had written such things, seen such visions, that now, after more than two hundred years, we, his heirs, find it difficult adequately to estimate the value of the legacy he has left us. We are only just beginning to recognise what we owe to him. For this rich inheritance, treasure of thought and word, has lain lost to sight, unknown, unclaimed, until in a happy moment it fell into pious hands. Now, he who will, may enter into possession. Two hundred years of silence and oblivion! Was it indeed oblivion? There is such a quiver and pulsation, such ecstasy of life in his words and thoughts, such detachment from limitations, that we might without much straining of the imagination believe that the genius of Traherne had, during those long years, hovered round kindred spirits here below, and touched them to fine issues. Thoughts, fancies, even turns of expression in his writings seem to tell of

a mystic communion with later poets. Blake, in one of his excursions into heaven, might surely have held converse with him; and we could almost believe that he walked and talked with Wordsworth when *The Prelude* and the great Ode were being thought out. Or we might please ourselves by imagining that Traherne's MSS. lying untouched in some dim garret, the paper yellowing and the ink fading, exhaled a sweet fragrance, like the scent of rose-leaves, permeating the air and filling the mind with gentle thoughts of early innocence and joy.

Traherne remains a voice, for little is heard of him as a man. He was unknown to contemporary fame; and though we hear from a friend that he not only "wrote greatly, but lived greatly," our knowledge of him is but slight, and the facts of his life have with difficulty been sought out by his Editor. His origin was humble; he was the son of a shoemaker of Hereford; he went to Brazenose, Oxford; took orders and became rector of Credinhill, near Hereford. Here he remained some nine years, and then became private chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, an honourable statesman and lawyer. On Bridgman's retirement, Traherne accompanied him to his home at Teddington, where he died a few months after his patron.

The record is scanty, but from his writings we are left in no doubt as to the nature of the man. Every word he wrote speaks of one whose heart was pure and sweet, of one whose affections were warm, and whose purposes were sincere. The beautiful words dedicating his incomparable book of *Meditations* to some nameless woman-friend tell of the delicate sympathy and spiritual tact which must have won many a heart:

"I will fill it (his book) with those Truths you love without knowing them; with those things which, if it be possible, shall show my Love—to you in communicating most enriching Truths; to Truth in exalting her beauties in such a Soul."



These words, almost too sacred for comment, raise for a moment the veil of the inner sanctuary.

Traherne had a message to give to mankind, a message as rare as it was glorious. He came to teach men the meaning and the genius of Joy; not only to tell them of the glories of the Hereafter, but to point out to them, and with no uncertain voice, the joy of here and now. He longed to drive home the fact that Joy not only clarifies man's vision and enlarges his heart and intellect, but makes the meaning of life manifest and communion with God possible and natural. He was a saint; but there is not a hint in his writings of that ascetic terror of happiness, that shrinking from enjoyment, which characterises the thought of many of the great religious teachers. Indeed, he seems almost to stand alone in his unshakable belief in the moral and spiritual efficacy of Joy. But joy must be active and alert in its nature. No mere resignation or content will do:

“Contentment is a sleepy thing  
If it in Death alone must die;  
A quiet mind is worse than Poverty,  
Unless it from enjoyment spring.”

(*Poems*, p. 166.)

And Joy was to be made ours by the exercise of the great faculty, Imagination, that crowning treasure of man's soul and intellect. Not Blake himself placed Imagination higher than did Traherne, and no man possessed that magic gift more abundantly. He commiserates those who wrong themselves by refusing “to be present in all ages, who neglect to see the beauty of all kingdoms . . . and busy themselves only with pots and cups and things at home” (*Med.* p. 64). “The mystery of Felicity” is open to all, for all have this godlike quality of Imagination, which, if they will employ it, will reveal to them unspeakable things. “The contemplation of Eternity maketh the soul immortal.” (*Med.* p. 38.)

In his life, in his thoughts, and in his reading Traherne

threw himself into the Past and the Future, where he ranged in imagination, as he says, "in all ages;" and by means of this capacity every breath brought enjoyment, every thought illumination. Every faculty of his being was intent, and satiety for him was impossible. What is meant by Imagination may be read in these exquisite words, which also indicate a central thought in his Philosophy:

" This made me present evermore  
 With whatso'er I saw.  
 An object, if it were before  
 My eye, was by Dame Nature's law  
 Without my soul. Her store  
 Was all at once within me; all her treasures  
 Were my immediate and internal pleasures,  
 Substantial joys which did inform my mind.  
 With all she wrought  
 My soul was fraught,  
 And every object in my heart a thought  
 Begot, or was; I could not tell  
 Whether the things did there  
 Themselves appear,  
 Which in my spirit truly seemed to dwell;  
 Or whether my conforming mind  
 Were not even all that therein shined."

*(Poems, p. 43.)*

What Joy was to Traherne can only be told in his own words:

" Your enjoyment of the world is never right till every morning you awake in Heaven; see yourself in your Father's Palace, and look upon the skies, the earth, and air as celestial Joys. . . . You never enjoy the world aright till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars. . . . Till your spirit filleth the whole world and the stars are your jewels; till you are familiar with the ways of God in all ages as with your walk and table; till you are intimately acquainted with that shady nothing out of which the world was made; till you love men so as to desire their happiness with a thirst

equal to the zeal of your own; till you delight in God for being good to all, you never enjoy the world." (*Med.* p. 20.)

Mystic of mystics, Traherne is no lover of solitude, no recluse:

"Thou, Lord, hast made thy servant a sociable creature, for which I praise Thy name. A lover of company, a delighter in equals," and he goes on to enumerate things in which he delights, "Markets, tillage, Courts of Judicature, marriages, feasts and assemblies, navies, armies, priests and Sabbaths, trades and business, the voice of the Bridegroom, musical instruments, the light of candles, the grinding of mills," until we wonder whether his editor has made a mistake and slipped in a page of Walt Whitman.

As he breathed the air of Joy, so he lived the life of Hope. He was in a perpetual condition of expectancy; for ever on the brink of a great revelation. And this never failed him. "Insatiableness is good," he says, and his was an insatiable spiritual ambition, and for him the glory never faded into "the light of common day." Desires, "wants," as he calls them, were, he says, "sacred occasions and means of Felicity;" "they are the bands and cements between God and us;" nay, they presuppose and assure us of the unseen realities: "Be present with your want of a Deity and you shall be present with the Deity."

From earliest childhood he was expecting News, and was for ever on tiptoe to welcome the invisible realities.

"News from a foreign country came,  
As if my treasure and my wealth lay there:  
So much it did my heart inflame  
'Twas wont to call my soul into mine ear,  
Which thither went to meet  
The approaching sweet,  
And on the threshold stood  
To entertain the unknown good.  
It hovered there  
As if 'twould leave mine ear,

And was so eager to embrace  
 The joyful tidings as they came,  
 'Twould almost leave its dwelling-place  
 To entertain the same."

(*Poems*, p. 135.)

In spite, or perhaps one might better say, in consequence, of this living in the region of the unseen, the possession of beauty near at hand was especially his. Shelley was not more ecstatically in love with Beauty, nor Wordsworth more profoundly enthralled by the loveliness of earth and sky than was Traherne; no one more completely enjoyed the blessing promised to the meek of inheriting the earth.

"The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me, their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart leap and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. . . . Eternity was manifest in the Light of Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared which talked with my expectation and moved my desire." (*Med.* p. 157.)

This was a vision of his fancy, and though he tells us that education and devices of the world robbed him for a time of his vision beautiful, he was able later to recover the light and to become "as it were a little child again, that I might enter the kingdom of God."

Indeed, Traherne's were no mere *glimpses* of the Infinite; he passed his days in vision, and was no stranger in the streets of the New Jerusalem. Nor was he, as we have seen, desirous or even willing to walk alone in his paths of blessedness. "A joy to be a joy," he says, "must be shared; the same thing is multiplied by being enjoyed," and it is this sharing that reveals to us "the seeds of Eternity sparkling in our natures." He goes a step farther, and in bold unequivocal words declares

again and again his belief that God shares, too, in man's enjoyment; that all the beauties of Creation would lose their meaning in God's eye if man delighted not in them.

“ If we despise His glorious works,  
Such sin and mischief in it lurks  
That they are all made vain;  
And this is even endless pain  
To Him that sees it: whose diviner grief  
Is hereupon (ah me!) without relief.”

(*Poems*, p. 95.)

Almost every poem he wrote, almost every meditation and thought speak of three great qualities—joy, hope, and love; and withal he has a sincerity which is absolute. These are great equipments, but Traherne has also that which gives immortality: an eloquence as remarkable for its simplicity as its beauty and persuasiveness; and all these qualities of heart and mind are fused and welded and made radiant by limitless imagination.

In his *Christian Ethics*, a volume unfortunately almost impossible to procure, Traherne defines the magnanimous person, and in his description he touches upon qualities which we feel were his:

“ A magnanimous soul,” he says, “ is always awake. The whole globe of the earth is but a nutshell in comparison of its enjoyment. The sun is its lamp, the sea is its fishpond, the stars its jewels, men, angels its attendants, and God alone its sovereign delight and supreme complacency.”

Traherne never feels it his part to belittle the soul or mind of man. On the contrary, he exhorts us, in passionate words of entreaty, to look aloft and hold on to the great possibilities; to rise to the height God means us to reach. In words which glow with sincerity and hope and which lift the reader from the dust of earth and carry him into Paradise, he calls upon all to rise to their highest:

“ As it becometh you to retain a glorious sense of the world,

because the earth and the heavens are the magnificent and glorious territories of God's kingdom, so are you to remember always the unsearchable extent and unlimited greatness of your own soul, the length and breadth and depth and height of your own understanding." (*Med.* p. 146.)

It is difficult perhaps in this day to grasp *all* that Traherne would offer us; it is hard to enter into his possession of Hope and Joy; into his lofty belief in the greatness of the soul. But no one can lay down his book without that sense of refreshment and uplifting which communion with a bright and noble spirit must bring; without some stirrings of Hope, some sense of the Infinite and the Eternal, "some shoots of everlastingness."

*The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*, edited by Bertram Dobell; *Centuries of Meditations*, by Thomas Traherne, edited by Bertram Dobell. Published by the Editor, 77, Charing Cross Road, W.C.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE <sup>1</sup>

SINCE your Secretary asked me in July last to write a paper for your society,

“ Our world has passed away,  
In wantonness o'erthrown; ”

our social habit has been shaken to the foundations; war and desolation still hang their awful banners over us, and nothing is as it was. In that quiet time, which now seems so far away and which it is almost impossible to realise ever existed for us, I accepted with a light heart your kind invitation and I selected as my subject the translated works of the great oriental poet and thinker Rabindranath Tagore.

You will, I am sure, find it easy to understand that when, in August after war had been declared, I took up Tagore and turned over the pages of his writings; when I re-read his mystic lyrics palpitating as they do with the passionate longing of a pure soul for the harmonies of life and for union with the great Spirit of love; when I began to study his philosophy setting forth the ancient Indian doctrines in his *Sādhanā*; when I took up his charming dramatic parables, *Chitra*, *The King of the Dark Chamber*, and *The Post Office*, a feeling almost of despair came over me, for in the circumstances it seemed hopeless to attain the attitude of mind and soul to enjoy, much less to interpret, his lessons. For this tremendous cataclysm of war has not only convulsed the world, but has shattered and unstrung our mental nerves, and rendered concentration on anything but the practical, extraordinarily difficult, nay, almost distasteful. How in such a condition could one hope to understand Tagore? For when we take his hand he leads us on through exquisite forest glades

<sup>1</sup> Read to the York Friends' Literary Society, November 17, 1914.

to watch in peace of soul the joy of innocent wood-creatures; he leads us by the still waters of the river to contemplate the glory of the sky, the fleeting, changing beauty of the clouds; he leads us to the village to share the tranquil happiness of the home; to watch the play of little children; to enter into sympathy with the love of youth and maid. By him we are invited to enter that mystic region of meditation and brooding thought which characterises oriental literature. At the present moment we should feel perhaps more inclined to take down our Shakespeare, to choose the volume of tragedies, and select from these the most gigantic of them all, the story of King Lear, where the storm of human agony and the crash of the elements offer, as it would seem, a more fitting environment for our troubled spirits. So difficult did I find my self-imposed task that I was tempted (and I am sorry to say I succumbed to the temptation) to ask your Secretary to let me off. But he encouraged me, and one does not at any time wish to be a shirker, and least of all just now, and so I am here to do my best.

And after all, perhaps wisdom lies in bracing ourselves to leave the maddening details of the war, and to try to enter, for a time at least, into regions not of material but of spiritual adventure; to scale the mountain side so that our horizon shall rise and enlarge as we struggle upwards to gain a point of vantage where we may hope to discern what is important and what is unimportant; to discriminate between the substance and the shadow. And this we may hope with confidence to do with Tagore as our companion, for though W. B. Yeats may be right when he says, "To read one line of Tagore's is to forget the troubles of the world," yet it is not less true that, like all great mystics, he shows us also how to face Reality.

As an ambassador is sent from one great nation to another that he may represent in the fullest way the spirit of his native land and may interpret in his person its policy and feeling towards the people he abides amongst, so Tagore through



his pen has opened up to the English-speaking peoples the character and the aims, the genius and the aspirations of India as it has scarcely been possible for any other to do. Just now when East and West are brought together on the battlefield and when we stand amazed at the miracle, for such it almost seems, of the devotion of India to England in her need, we read with something like an electric thrill the exquisite songs, the profoundly mystic revelations of the great oriental thinker in our own mother-tongue—"the tongue that Shakespeare spake." And as we read the throbbing lines, the limitations of nationality, of space, of time pass away and we are amongst essential and universal things. Yet we have the delicious freshness of a very real national personality; Tagore puts familiar truths before us, he deals with the great human realities, and he reveals to us fundamental and everlasting principles, but along with all these we scent the aroma of the Indian forest; we partake of the joys of the gentler life of an ancient, proud yet primitive civilisation. It is this, added to the poet's matchless command of English, his haunting melody of line, his detachment from the commonplace and trivial, which constitutes his peculiar charm.

Tagore is, I believe, known personally to many English people as well as Americans; he has lived in England and in America, where he has lectured, but little seems to be known generally amongst us as to his life-history. Interesting peeps, however, into the circumstances of the poet's family may be gathered from a little volume just published, the *Autobiography of his father, the Maharshi, or Saint, Derendranath Tagore*. As it is clear that Rabindranath must have been greatly influenced by his father and his views, it may not be out of place for me to say a few words about the book. It is a work which may range with some of the great classics in autobiography, and as an exposition of Indian life and thought it is most illuminating. It is beautifully translated by his son and his granddaughter. We are startled every now and then as we

read its pages to come across sayings which might well have fallen from the lips of St. Augustine, Julian of Norwich, or John Woolman. "In the midst," he says, "of untold wealth, my soul was in agony, not having found Thee. Now having found Thee I have found everything." And again: "I was satisfied with getting so much; but He was not content with giving so little."

Derendranath Tagore was a man of great originality and freedom of thought, and a reformer of no common kind. He rejected without hesitation, and thereby incurred persecution, such doctrines as commended themselves only through their antiquity and their acceptance by the majority, and anything that ran counter to his own personal spiritual experience he refused to accept at any cost. Like all the great mystics he followed the divine guidance of enlightened, spiritual common-sense; for mere formulæ he had little respect, though he was a reverent and diligent student of the ancient religious literature of his country. His son says of him: "He lived his long life in the closest communion with God, while not neglecting his duties to the world, or allowing his keen interest in human affairs to suffer any abatement." He was no ascetic and enjoyed to the full all that life had to offer. And though he experienced his greatest joy in the revelation of God which came to him in solitary meditation on the hill-top, or in the deserted temple, he mixed in the affairs of men and took an active part in business as well as in the dissemination of the truth as it appeared to him, both by preaching and by writing. The delightful description of his early days and of his love for his grandmother, or Didima, will be read by the admirers of his great son with interest, for it gives us pleasant little glimpses of the happy home-life which forms the background of so much in the poems and especially in the little volume called *The Crescent Moon*.

"My grandmother was very fond of me. To me also she was all in all during the days of my childhood. My sleeping,

sitting, eating, all were at her side. Whenever she went to Kalighat (Temple at Calcutta), I used to accompany her. I cried bitterly when she went (away) leaving me behind. She was a deeply religious woman. Every day she used to bathe in the Ganges very early in the morning: every day she used to weave garlands of flowers with her own hands for the Shaligram. . . . She was as lovely in appearance as she was skilled in her work and steadfast in her religious faith. . . . There was a certain freedom of mind in her, together with her blind faith in religion. I never liked to leave her but would sit in her lap and watch everything quietly from the window. Now my Didima is no more. But after how long, and after how much seeking, have I found the Didima that is hers also: and seated on Her lap, am watching the pageant of this world." (Autobiography, pp. 35-37.)

He loved nature and he gained inspiration and comfort during lonely travel amongst the Himaláya Mountains, of which he gives account in his Autobiography, an inspiration common to all teachers of his people. In speaking of the great revelation of God as set forth in the Upanishad, he says: "The Upanishad is the Upanishad of the forest; in the forest was it composed, in the forest was it taught. It was forbidden even to read it in the house."

The mystery of the forest seems to have dominated the minds of the ancient teachers of India, and it still exercises a profound influence, as we see in the writings of the Tagores, father and son. In the Autobiography he tells of a wondrous vision which came to him in the forests of the Himalayas. The vision was a turning point in his life, as had been the reading of certain passages in the Upanishad. After describing a long day's wandering alone in the wooded hill-country he says:

"I then saw that it was evening and the sun had set. Must I not retrace the whole long way? I turned and walked back quickly, but night also gained quickly on me. Hill, forest, and glade, all were covered with darkness. Like a lamp in that

darkness the half-moon accompanied me on my journey. No sound was to be heard on any side, save that of my footsteps crackling in the dry leaves of the road. A solemn feeling was aroused in my breast, together with that of fear. With thrilling heart I saw the eyes of God within that forest. His sleepless gaze was fixed upon me. Those eyes were my guides in this difficult path. Fearless in the midst of many fearsome things, I reached home before eight o'clock at night. This gaze of His has become rooted indelibly in my heart. Whenever I fall into trouble I see those eyes of his."

But in spite of these wonderful inspirations which he gathered in the forest solitudes, there came a time when the call reached him to leave the lonely life and to carry his message to busy and struggling men. Very soon after this forest vision he stood musing on a bridge watching a mountain torrent taking its downward course into the plain to fulfil its part in fertilising the land. Suddenly as he watched, the solemn commandment of the Guide within was heard:

" 'Give up thy pride,' said the voice, 'and be lowly like this river. The truth thou hast gained, the devotion and trustfulness that thou hast learnt here—go, make them known to the world.' I was startled! Must I then turn back from the holyland of the Himalayas? I had never thought of this. After having gone through so much trouble to detach myself from the world, must I again return to it, and be one with worldly people?" He did not linger, but the next day set his face towards Calcutta.

We are told that the Tagores are a family of artists and philosophers and that "for generations great men have come out of its cradles." Lovers of nature they all seem to be, and of one of the poet's brothers, a great philosopher, it is said that the squirrels come from the boughs and climb on his knees, and the birds alight on his hands. The same witness tells us that once upon a river another member of the family fell into contemplation because of the beauty of the landscape. The rowers

waited eight hours before they could continue their journey! Imagine Englishmen's patient endurance of such a mood!

I now turn to the story of the poet. At the age of nineteen Rabindranath Tagore was already famous, and the years have but added to his universal popularity:

"We have other poets," says one of his compatriots, "but none that are his equals; we call this the epoch of Rabindranath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is amongst us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India into Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken. In his early years he wrote novels and plays, and these last are still played in Calcutta. I so much admire the completeness of his life; when he was very young he wrote much of natural objects; he would sit all day in his garden. From his twenty-fifth year or so to his thirty-fifth, perhaps, when he had a great sorrow, he wrote the most beautiful love-poetry in our language; words can never express what I owed at seventeen to his love-poetry. After that his art grew deeper, it became religious and philosophical; all the aspirations of mankind are in his hymns." (*Gitanjali*, Introduction, pp. viii.-ix.)

We are told by another admirer of his concentrated power of contemplation:

"Every morning at three—I know, for I have seen it—he sits immovable in contemplation, and for two hours does not awake from his reverie upon the nature of God." Yet he goes on to say: "He is the first amongst our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of life itself, and that is why we love him." For the same reason *we* give him our love. To most western minds it is a satisfaction to find that Tagore had not, any more than his father, sympathy with asceticism; and that, moreover, like his father, he repudiates the doctrine of Nirvana, the doctrine that has been defined as "Salvation by annihilation," or at best by absorption. Again and again we find Tagore in the lyrics and in *Sādhana* empha-

sising the fact that "an invincible separateness is an essential factor in the closest union of love"; the human soul is not swamped even in the divine essence, but in its power of separateness it may vindicate the reality of union. In one of the lyrics (*Git.* Sect. 84), he says: "It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite sky," and so in the soul the sense of separation involves the possibility of union.

I think if I were asked which of Tagore's books known to me gives the most intimate insight into his character and genius, I should name the volume called *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings*. In this he reveals himself in many ways—here he shows perhaps the finest examples of his poetic powers. The songs are in a tongue not native to the poet, and it is possible that in the translation some of the glamour of the original may have escaped; but *we* are not conscious of this, and can only accept with thankful heart the joy that the rhythm and form give us. This power of manipulating with consummate skill a medium so illusive as a foreign language, and conveying not only the thought, but preserving that thought in such an exquisite casket, makes his reader realise something of the subtlety of intellect which is one of the characteristics of the Indian mind. We are no more conscious of the translator in Tagore's poetry than we are of the translator in our English Bible. Of course we enjoy the unusual advantage of having the poet himself and none other as translator. The mastery of the language, its ease and perfection are a miracle.

Let me here read one or two of the lyrics. And I will take first one of the vignettes from *The Gardener*, where Tagore's power of painting a picture with a stroke or two, his love of children and of animals, and his skill in raising the simple tale to the height of a great parable are all strikingly exemplified:

"The workman and his wife from the West Country are busy digging to make bricks for the kiln.

“ Their little daughter goes to the landing-place by the river; there she has no end of scouring and scrubbing of pots and pans.

“ Her little brother with shaven head and brown, naked, mud-covered limbs follows after her and waits patiently on the high bank at her bidding.

“ She goes back home with the full pitcher poised on her head, the shining brass pot in her left hand, holding the child with her right—she, the tiny servant of her mother, grave with the weight of her household cares.

“ One day I saw this naked boy sitting with legs outstretched.

“ In the water his sister sat rubbing a drinking pot with a handful of earth, turning it round and round.

“ Near by a soft-headed lamb stood grazing along the bank.

“ It came close to where the boy sat, and suddenly it bleated aloud, and the child started up and screamed.

“ His sister left off cleaning her pot and ran up. She took up her brother in one arm and the lamb in the other, and dividing her caresses between them, bound in one bond of affection the offspring of beast and man.

“ It was in May. The sultry noon seemed endlessly long. The dry earth gaped with thirst in the heat.

“ When I heard from the riverside a voice calling, ‘ Come, my darling! ’

“ I shut my book and opened the window to look out.

“ I saw a big buffalo with mud-stained hide standing near the river with placid, patient eyes; and a youth, knee-deep in water, calling it to its bath.

“ I smiled amused and felt a touch of sweetness in my heart.” (*The Gardener*, Sections 77, 78.)

Here are two songs from *The Crescent Moon*, that most delicious baby book for grown-up people:

## BABY'S WAY

" If baby only wanted to, he could fly up to heaven this moment.

" It is not for nothing that he does not leave us.

" He loves to rest his head on mother's bosom, and cannot ever bear to lose sight of her.

" Baby knows all manner of wise words, though few on earth can understand their meaning.

" It is not for nothing that he never wants to speak.

" The one thing he wants is to learn mother's words from mother's lips. That is why he looks so innocent.

" Baby had a heap of gold and pearls, yet he came like a beggar on to this earth.

" It is not for nothing that he came in such a disguise.

" This dear little naked mendicant pretends to be utterly helpless, so that he may beg for mother's wealth of love.

" Baby was so free from every tie in the land of the tiny crescent moon.

" It was not for nothing he gave up his freedom.

" He knows that there is room for endless joy in mother's little corner of a heart, and it is sweeter far than liberty to be caught and pressed in her dear arms.

" Baby never knew how to cry. He dwelt in the land of perfect bliss.

" It is not for nothing he has chosen to shed tears.

" Though with the smile of his dear face he draws mother's yearning heart to him, yet his little cries over tiny troubles weave the double bond of pity and love."

## THE CHILD ANGEL

" They clamour and fight, they doubt and despair, they know no end to their wranglings.



“ Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence.

“ They are cruel in their greed and their envy, their words are like hidden knives thirsting for blood.

“ Go and stand amidst their scowling hearts, my child, and let your gentle eyes fall upon them like the forgiving peace of the evening over the strife of the day.

“ Let them see your face, my child, and thus know the meaning of all things; let them love you and thus love each other.

“ Come and take your seat in the bosom of the limitless, my child. At sunrise open and raise your heart like a blossoming flower, and at sunset bend your head and in silence complete the worship of the day.”

Does not this seem like an echo of words long ago spoken in Palestine when a child was set in the midst?

Now and then there is a clarion call which stirs our hearts and wakes within us a true and worthy patriotism. I do not allude to the poem published a short time ago in the *Times*, called *The Trumpet*, but to one of the songs in the *Gitanjali* volume:

“ Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

“ Where knowledge is free;

“ Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

“ Where words come out from the depth of truth;

“ Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

“ Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

“ Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—

“ Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.” (*Gitanjali*, Section 35.)

And here is a song which seems to me one of the most

beautiful as well as the most characteristic; it is "Tagore of Tagore," and yet few could read it without being struck with its likeness to Francis Thompson's great poem:

"Have you not heard his silent steps?

"He comes, comes, ever comes.

"Every moment and every age, every day and every night, he comes, comes, ever comes.

"Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes.'

"In the fragrant days of sunny April through the forest path, he comes, comes, ever comes.

"In the rainy gloom of July nights on the thundering chariot of clouds, he comes, comes, ever comes.

"In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of his feet that makes my joy to shine." (*Gitanjali*, Section 45.)

Tagore has a magnanimous soul, and therefore it is hardly needful to point out that his sympathy with the poor and humble, the sad and neglected is sincere and intimate. One might quote almost numberless passages to prove this; one example must suffice here:

"Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

"When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

"Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble, among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

"My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the companionless among the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost." (*Gitanjali*, Section 10.)

It is noticeable that just at a time when a considerable number of Western intellectuals are ready to repudiate much

of the Christian teaching, here in Tagore we meet with its spirit embodied, as it were, in new and striking garb. Much of *Sādhanā*, very many of the lyrics are instinct with the mind of Christ:

“Leave this chanting and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely, dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

“He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground, and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

“Deliverance? where is this deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation: he is bound with us all for ever.

“Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.” (*Gitanjali*, Section II.)

In reading these lyrics one would be inclined to doubt whether Tagore's genius could express itself in drama. Yet he has written plays which are not only very beautiful as literature, but which are said to act very successfully. I myself have never seen any of them acted, but I find them fascinating reading, for they have, like everything Tagore touches, a unique quality. All the simplicity, along with the subtlety of the oriental parable is here in dramatic form. The charm lies not so much in plot and characterisation as in their curiously delicate spiritual lesson which unfolds with the unobtrusiveness of the opening bud.

One of the earliest plays, I believe, is *Chitra*, written, he tells us, twenty-five years ago.

In this one-act play, composed on the simplest lines, we are brought face to face with the time-honoured problem of

the relation of man and woman. It is a well-worn theme. It has been treated of from every point of view—from the sentimental, *ad nauseam*, from the scientific, the social, the economic; in almost every manner—the satirical, the humorous, the sympathetic, the vindictive, pre-eminently the vulgar. Upon this old, old subject Tagore now throws a penetrating light, and in his allegory, for such it is, he reveals elemental truths, stripping from the presentation all the deadening commonplaces of the conventional dogmatist. The fact that this little drama emanates from the East, that it was written twenty-five years ago, adds to its surprising qualities, for its burden is, that the perfection of life and love can only be possible when the woman-soul shall be recognised by both man and woman as an individual and independent entity; that if man himself is to attain his highest he must learn to regard woman, not as beauty embodied for his gratification, nor as a mind and spirit merely supplementary to his, but as a comrade to be reckoned with in all his activities; nay, that when man truly knows himself he is restless and unsatisfied until he find this spirit in his mate. With great delicacy Tagore shows forth this truth in the story of Arjuna and Chitra. Arjuna stands for all that is admirable and heroic in manhood; while Chitra startles us by the revelation of the unconquerable spirit of the essential woman, dependent for power, not upon beauty of form, not upon man's chivalry, but upon an integrity and a passion which is all her own.

Chitra, the only child of a great king, is trained from her cradle in strenuous ways; she is dressed in male attire and she takes her part in the government of the land. "I have," she says, "no feminine wiles for winning hearts. My hands are strong to bend the bow, but I have never learned Cupid's archery, the play of the eyes." She has conceived a passionate admiration for the great hero, Arjuna, the foremost warrior of the Kuru tribe. Him in due time she meets, only to find

that for the love she is ready to lay at his feet he has no desire, for he can divine no glory of love beneath the boyish appearance. She dons woman's dress and seeks him in the temple of Shiva. Her proffered love he still puts aside; she has no attraction for him, she is not beautiful, and he coldly tells her that for twelve years he is vowed to celibacy. In her trouble she seeks help from Madana, the god of Love, and from Vashanta, the god of Eternal Youth. They grant her request for perfect loveliness, and for one year this great gift is hers.

Arjuna and Chitra meet in the temple, and Chitra's beauty now entirely subdues the heart of Arjuna, so that he is ready to renounce his vow of celibacy, and he declares his love, though who she is he does not yet know.

"*Chitra*. Then it is not true that Arjuna has taken a vow of celibacy for twelve years?

"*Arjuna*. You have dissolved my vow, even as the moon dissolves the night's vow of obscurity.

"*Chitra*. Oh, shame upon you! What have you seen in me that makes you false to yourself? Whom do you seek in these dark eyes, in these milk-white arms, if you are ready to pay for her at the price of your probity? Not my true self, I know. Surely this cannot be love, this is not man's highest homage to woman! Alas, that this frail disguise, the body, should make one blind to the light of the deathless spirit. . . . Alas, it is not I, not I, Arjuna! It is the deceit of a god. Go, go, my hero, go. Woo not falsehood, offer not your great heart to an illusion. Go."

But though her heart misgives her, persuaded by the god, she goes back to "the mad festival" of love. As the end of the year approaches, Arjuna becomes restless; he must away to the active life, and there are moreover stirrings in his heart which make him long for something more than his lover, with all her beauty, can give him. Strange to say, he has visions of the wonderful Chitra of whom he hears on all hands, the ruler and defender of her people.

"*Arjuna*. I am eager to learn all about her. I am like a traveller come to a strange city at midnight. Domes and towers and garden-trees look vague and shadowy, and the dull moan of the sea comes fitfully through the silence of sleep. Wistfully he waits for the morning to reveal to him all the strange wonders. Oh, tell me her story." When he has come to this point Chitra can reveal her true self, and what a revelation it is!

"*Chitra (cloaked)*. I have brought from the garden of heaven flowers of incomparable beauty with which to worship you, god of my heart. If the rites are over, if the flowers have faded, let me throw them out of the temple. (*Unveiling in the original male attire.*) Now, look at your worshipper with gracious eyes. I am not beautifully perfect as the flowers with which I worshipped. I have many flaws and blemishes. I am a traveller in the great world-path, my garments are dusty, and my feet are bleeding with thorns. Where should I achieve flower-beauty, the unsullied loveliness of a moment's life? The gift that I proudly bring you is the heart of a woman. Here have all pains and joys gathered, the hopes and fears and shames of a daughter of the dust; here love springs up struggling towards immortal life. To-day I can only offer you Chitra, the daughter of a king.

"*Arjuna*. Beloved, my life is full."

So ends this remarkable allegory; who runs may read; it needs no interpreter to point its moral or teach its meaning, for truth is simple, and the play sets forth a fundamental truth, and in the simple terms of great art.

Of *The King of the Dark Chamber*, a vivid dramatic allegory, glowing with life and deep human passion, here and there lightened up by gleams of humour, and facing profoundest spiritual problems, I can only say that it must be read. No digest of it, no quotations can in any way reveal its meaning or its beauty, for it is an organic whole, and like all great works of art its form and matter are inextricably interlaced,

the one interpreting and illuminating the other. To try to analyse it were as seemly as to botanise upon our mother's grave. Yet one word as to its meaning should perhaps be risked, though I offer it with the greatest possible diffidence. So many-sided is Tagore's allegory that probably there will be as many interpretations as there are reflective readers of the play, and the individual experience of each soul will in this strangely beautiful parable find an echo.

It holds in its story the very core and heart of the mystic secret; it might be called a drama of mysticism. Some of its pronouncements, though set forth with the greatest simplicity, yet reveal mystic experiences which so often completely illude expression and make words the despair of the would-be exponent of their truth. Do not such sentences as these, for instance, establish a fact for us which we *know*, but which has defied our attempts to give it voice? The Queen asks her friend, whose spiritual level is higher than hers:

“How can you perceive when he comes?”

“I cannot say: I seem to feel his footsteps in my own heart. Being his servant in this dark chamber, I have developed a sense—I can know and feel without seeing.”

And again in these words which the Queen addresses to the King when he tells her that she is free and may go from him as far as she likes, we are made to realise the anguish and the torture of the soul unable to grasp the meaning of the binding yet gracious power of love or the courteous constraint of the law of liberty.

“*Queen*. I cannot fly away from you just because you do not prevent my going. Why do you not hold me back, hold me by the hair, saying, ‘You shall not go’? Why do you not strike me? Oh, punish me, strike me, beat me with violent hands! But your resistless silence makes me wild. Oh! I cannot bear it.”

Here is a soul's tragedy packed into a few words—a soul

turning in anger from the inexorable word: "Thou thyself must choose; man *cannot* force thee, and God *will* not."

The drama shows the soul's perplexed and passionate longing to lift the veil and penetrate the impenetrable cloud which hides from mortal ken the Divine Love. In his dark chamber, the king stern, nay, cruel in his aloofness, allows the soul, in the person of the Queen, to grope and agonise for some sign. But she is allowed to pass from error to error; to seek safety in leaving the King, to give herself up to the false and showy Pretender; to suffer shame; to cry in danger for help which does not come; to lose one clue after another and to wander rudderless and disconsolate. Around her she sees evil in act and in thought triumph; and still the king remains unseen in the cold gloom of the dark chamber. Stories of his harshness, nay, of his injustice fill her soul with dismay. When she asks explanation of all this from her friend Surangama who has through suffering caught glimpses of light hidden from the queen, she receives a curious answer.

"*Queen*. How did you get this devotion towards the King?

"*Surangama*. How can I tell you? Perhaps I could rely and depend on him *because* he was so hard, so pitiless."

The Queen asks: "Is he not beautiful?"

"*Suran*. No, my Queen. To call him beautiful would be to say too little about him.

"*Queen*. All your words are like that—dark, strange and vague. I cannot understand what you mean.

"*Suran*. It is because he is not beautiful that he is so wonderful, so superb, so miraculous."

At last, when she is defeated and humiliated, freedom comes to her—it comes through suffering and through the noble offices of Surangama, who stands for loyalty to the Highest and the Best; it comes through the words and songs of the "Grandfather," who is the embodiment of the innocent child-spirit, and that wisdom which is the fruit of sweet human experiences.



The Queen had fled from the Dark Chamber. Now her darkened mind gains a glimpse of light and she knows she must return to seek the King. It is not for him to come to her, but for her to go to him; salvation she sees lies in *willing* return. And she sets out on the open road upon which the King had let her journey forth. She will meet him and will say: "I came of my own will. I have not awaited your coming. I shall say: 'For your sake have I trodden the hard and weary roads, and bitter, ceaseless has been my weeping all the way.' I shall at least have this pride in me when I meet him."

The answer she receives from Surangama is significant, and holds in its few words much of Tagore's teaching:

"But," she says, "even that pride will not last. He came before you did—who else could have sent you on the road?"

Once more in the Dark Chamber with the King, light and understanding come to her and all is clear.

The King asks her, "Will you be able to bear me now?"

"Oh, yes, yes, I shall. Your sight repelled me because I sought to find you in the pleasure garden, in my Queen's chambers: there even your meanest servant looks handsomer than you. That fever of longing has left my eyes for ever. You are not beautiful, my lord—you stand beyond all comparison!

"*King*. That which can be comparable with me lies within yourself.

"*Queen*. If this be so, then that too is beyond comparison. . . .

"*King*. I open the doors of this dark room to-day—the game is finished here! Come, come with me now, come outside—*into the light!*"

The last of Tagore's plays to be published is that with the rather curious title *The Post Office*. It is short and may be read in an hour—but it will leave an abiding mark on heart and spirit. It is the story of a little child upon whom Death has set his seal. Shut up in his quiet chamber he watches the

busy life of the street below; unable to take active part in the doings of those who pass like figures in a camera-obscura before his windows, he yet by his gentle sympathy and loving wiles influences and attracts, all unconsciously, those who come near him. Through the magic of the dramatist we see picture after picture of Eastern street life pass before us through the eyes of the little Amal. But though the scene is Eastern and all the figures and landscape are more or less unfamiliar to us, we are at home in it nevertheless, for the yearning of the boy's heart for the great unknown, the longing to lay aside the trammels of the body and to range the mountain heights, is a touch of nature which makes us kin with every human heart, and citizens of every country. The little fellow's song is the song which Tagore, in a beautiful passage in *Sādhanā*, tells us is on the lips of many an Indian peasant and traveller: "Ferryman, take me over, take me over to the other side"—a cry which has an echo in every heart. The letter from the Great King comes at last, and the Physician at the boy's bedside says:

"Now be quiet, all of you. Sleep is coming over him. I will sit by his pillow, he is dropping asleep. Blow out the lamp. Only let the starlight stream in. Hush, he sleeps."

And so the little spirit passes to the Palace of the Great King of the Post Office, leaving behind an immortal legacy of love and sweet good-will for all who have stayed for a moment at his window and listened with kindly and understanding hearts to his gentle questions, and tried to cheer him in his solitude. We think of the story of Pippa as we close the little play.

Of the book called *Sādhanā* or *the Realisation of Life*, a collection of addresses read before the Harvard University, I can here say little; but it is not a book to be neglected by any one wishing to understand Tagore's life-philosophy, or to come near to the workings of the oriental mystic mind. It is one of the great messages of the present day; a message

fraught with deep meaning set forth in enchanting literary form; a message which, though unquestionably national and personal, has yet the ring of a spiritual cosmopolitanism. Once more India has laid her treasures at England's feet. In his Introduction to the book Tagore himself says:

“ In these pages it may be hoped Western readers will have an opportunity of coming into touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in our sacred texts and manifested in the life of to-day.”

Every sentence in the volume is pregnant and any one who is in the habit of marking striking passages as he reads, will find when he finishes the book that hardly any single page has escaped his pencil. It is difficult to choose from such a mine, but here is a passage which appeals strongly at least to one reader:

“ The real misery of man is in the fact that he has not fully come out, that he is self-obsured, lost in the midst of his own desires. He cannot feel himself beyond his personal surroundings, his greater self is blotted out, his truth is unrealised. The prayer that rises from his whole being is therefore, ‘ Thou who art the spirit of manifestation, manifest thyself in me.’ This longing for the perfect expression of his self is more deeply inherent in man than his hunger and thirst for bodily sustenance, his lust for wealth and distinction.

“ This prayer is not merely one born individually of him; it is in the depth of all things, it is the ceaseless urging in him of the *Ávih*, of the spirit of eternal manifestation. The revelation of the infinite in the finite, which is the motive of all creation, is not seen in its perfection in the starry heavens, in the beauty of the flowers. It is in the soul of man. For there Will seeks its manifestation in Will, and freedom turns to win its final prize in the freedom of surrender.”

I should like to end my paper by reading one of the *Gitanjali* hymns, for not only is it a beautiful expression of farewell, but it reveals in a striking manner that dignity and serenity

of the Eastern spirit which Tagore in his person and in his writings so noticeably typifies.

It is this superb detachment from the materialistic, pushing, greedy, arrogant attitude of so much that belongs to our so-called civilisation—sometimes termed Kultur—that constitutes one of Tagore's many claims on the careful attention of us English people. To walk by his side is to clear our minds of cant; to free ourselves from the trappings and the suits of convention and prejudice; to come forth into the light of day, and to enter into that "union with reality" which we are told is the supreme achievement of Mysticism.

"I have got my leave. Bid me farewell, my brothers! I bow to you all and take my departure.

"Here I give back the keys of my door—and I give up all claims to my house. I only ask for last kind words from you.

"We were neighbours for long, but I received more than I could give. Now the day has dawned and the lamp that lit my dark corner is out. A summons has come and I am ready for my journey.

"At this time of my parting, wish me good luck, my friends! The sky is flushed with the dawn and my path lies beautiful.

"Ask not what I have with me to take there. I start on my journey with empty hands and expectant heart.

"I shall put on my wedding garland. Mine is not the red-brown dress of the traveller, and though there are dangers on the way I have no fear in my mind.

"The evening star will come out when my voyage is done and the plaintive notes of the twilight melodies be struck up from the King's gateway."

"And because I love this life, I know I shall love death as well." (*Gitanjali*, Sections 93, 94, 95.)

FRANCIS THOMPSON <sup>1</sup>

*(Review reprinted by permission from "The Friend," 1913)*

ALL lovers of poetry will welcome with delight this edition of Thompson's Collected Works. We have too long had to subsist on extracts and volumes of selections. These at all times are exasperating, and in Thompson's case they are peculiarly so; for his genius is lyric, and one might almost say of lyric poetry, that we must have it all in all or not at all. Herein lies difficulty for the reviewer. Thompson is the despair of the quoter. To give extracts from him is almost against one's literary conscience. Not because he has not glorious purple patches, nor lines of enchanting music, nor striking apothegms, but because these gems can only be truly appreciated in their natural setting. Form, metre, thought, image, blend and fuse, and to pick a piece out here and there, is to destroy the perfection of the whole. If in the course of this article we are forced to trespass, and to quote in spite of ourselves, it must be with the hope that the specimen will not satisfy, and that the reader will turn to the poems, and study them in their completeness. Thompson has very much to offer, but it is hardly likely that he will ever be popular; for to be enjoyed he must be read with "an eager and intent imagination," <sup>2</sup> and if the heart of his mystery is to be reached some exercise of brains is called for. His constructions are sometimes far from easy of analysis; his figures so profuse that their meaning and beauty may easily be missed by a

<sup>1</sup> The Works of Francis Thompson. Vols. i. and ii. Poetry, Vol. iii. Prose. Burns & Oates.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Bradley.

careless reader. He tells us frankly that he would fain have in his song,

“ A smouldering core of mystery,  
Brimmed with nimbler meanings up  
Than hasty Gideons in their hands may sup.”

And truly if the Gideons are hasty they will lose much. Indeed there are times when even the thoughtful student is inclined to think that it were more appropriate for him than for the poet to exclaim,

“ Oh, but the heavenly grammar did I hold  
Of that high speech which angels' tongues turn gold,”

for strangely involved sentences meet us now and again, and we must be prepared for words used in unaccustomed ways. Thompson's vocabulary is that of a scholar, and if we miss his meaning we shall often find that it is our ignorance rather than his eccentricity that is at fault. Careful attention to his use of words will have its reward. To track down the full meaning of such an expression, for instance, as “cosmic metonymy” applied to man; or as “Pontifical Death,” wittily commented on by Chesterton, is a capital mental exercise. “The object of writing,” says Thompson, in one of his essays, “is to communicate individuality; the object of style, adequately to embody that individuality.” (Vol. iii. p. 102.) This is true, and we come to accept and even to love, these individual touches of our author, as we do the little tricks of manner of a friend.

One poet's criticism of another poet is often a revelation of the genius of both; when Thompson says of Shelley, “He plays truant from earth, slips through the wicket of fancy into heaven's meadows and goes gathering stars” (Vol. iii. p. 30), we recognise this to be true of Shelley and still more true of Thompson himself. He is at home in heaven's meadows, and for him the stars are never far away. Were we asked what is the pervading sense left on mind and spirit after reading

these poems, we should answer, the sense of space and light. In spite of much that is ineffably sad, nay, sometimes sombre, light arises, and even when clouds are lowering there is "a golden crevice in the sky." It is no idle boast when he says he is "the Sun's constant Magian." Like Milton's his spirit exults and his muse grows impassioned when light is his theme:

" Let there be light!  
 And there is light!  
 Light flagrant, manifest;  
 Light to the zenith, light from pole to pole;  
 Light from the East that waxeth to the West,  
 And with its puissant goings-forth  
 Encroaches on the South and on the North;  
 And with its great approaches does prevail  
 Upon the sullen fastness of the height,  
 And summoning its levied power  
 Crescent and confluent through the crescent hour,  
 Goes down with laughters on the subject vale."

In another poem he says of the sun,

" When thou did'st, bursting from the great void's husk,  
 Leap like a lion on the throat o' the dusk."

Again:—

" Though I the orient never more shall feel  
 Break like a clash of cymbals, and my heart  
 Clang through my shaken body like a gong."

Scores of such passages could be quoted; the difficulty is to leave off!

We have said that Thompson was at home in heaven's meadows, and no poet, as it seems to us, has ever shown such a childlike intimacy, if we may use the expression, with the hosts of heaven. In speaking of the Highest his words are sometimes startling by their directness. We need give no other instance than the title of his best known poem, *The Hound of Heaven*; he does not hesitate to pitch Jacob's ladder at Charing Cross. He can too gather inspiration alike from "Sinai and Castaly"; he blends Pagan myth,

Scripture story, and Christian parable without jarring or incongruity; the Nymphs glance here and there through his verse, and the Saints take no offence. This is felicitously expressed in his own words, when apostrophising his poet-mistress, his *Dian*, into whose lap he pours such matchless treasures:—

“ Ah! let the sweet birds of the Lord  
 With earth's waters make accord;  
 Teach how the crucifix may be  
 Carven from the laurel tree,  
 Fruit of the Hesperides  
 Burnish take on Eden trees,  
 The Muses' sacred grove be wet  
 With the red dew of Olivet,  
 And Sappho lay her burning brows  
 In white Cecilia's lap of snows.”

To say that Thompson has a consuming passion for beauty, is but to say he is a poet: “ Ever I knew me Beauty's eremite,” he says. In this he does not yield to Spenser or to Shelley. But not less consuming is his passion for holiness. He is the St. Francis of poets. Like him too he loves the humble and meek. *One* touch of tenderness, so marked in St. Francis, he indeed lacks. We cannot trace in his poems any very special note of sympathy with animals. But no poet has shown deeper love and understanding of children than Thompson. Indeed he is one of them, and for those who only know his poetry he must be “ for ever young.” We cannot, though we recognise so much that is infinitely sad in his life and in his art, connect the thought of old age or sickness with him. It is with something of a shock that we encounter the portrait of the poet in the second volume, and we almost wish it was not there. Never surely were children so divinely poetised as in *Sister Songs* and in the *Poems on Children*. These songs are like morning dew, and speak a heart of childlike purity. If ever poet enter the kingdom of heaven because he has become as one of these little ones, it is Francis Thompson. In one of



these incomparable poems he tells his godson how he may be looked for in heaven—

“ Turn not your tread along the Uranian sod  
Among the bearded counsellors of God;  
For if in Eden as on earth are we,  
I sure shall keep a younger company:

Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven:  
Look for me in the nurseries of Heaven.”

In this group of poems is *The Poppy*, a poem we may almost call a miracle, in its extraordinary beauty of form and thought; here too is *The Making of Viola*, a song for the angels to sing; here too is *Little Jesus*, which might have come straight from the great heart of Blake himself; it is a rare thing, for it is simple without being childish, quaint without being affected. It is in *Sister Songs* that he gives us the story of the child who ministered to him in his misery and loneliness, the incident which seems to have been the fount and source of his oneness with childhood. It is more beautiful, more tender, perhaps because dressed in the glamour of sweet verse, than even De Quincey's well known story of *Ann*, which it so strikingly resembles. Would we could quote the whole passage.

“ Then there came past  
A child; like thee, a spring-flower; but a flower  
Fallen from the budded coronal of spring,  
And through the city street blown withering.  
She passed,—O brave, sad, lovingest, tender thing!  
And of her own scant pittance did she give,  
That I might eat and live:  
Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive.  
Therefore I kissed in thee  
The heart of Childhood, so divine for me;  
And her, through what sore ways,  
And what unchildish days,  
Borne from me now, as then, a trackless fugitive.”

After the songs to the children come the hymns to the mother, and never since the days of Dante was woman so

gloriously berhymed! When we think of the songs and words of Dante on love, we hesitate to breathe the name of any other singer, so pure and intense is his flame; but even here Thompson can without apology take his place by the side of the great Italian. More could not be said. We may perhaps be allowed to indicate special favourites (it is, however, the last read that generally claims allegiance): *Before her Portrait in Youth*; *To a Poet Breaking Silence*, in which occur the exquisite lines:

“ Keep'st thou not yet that subtle grace?  
Yea, in the silent interspace,  
God sets His poems in thy face.”

*Her Portrait*:

“ How should I gauge what beauty is her dole,  
Who cannot see her countenance for her soul? ”

*The Hound of Heaven* has taken its place amongst the greatest of the world's poems. It is written in the white heat of personal experience, and must go straight to the heart of every reader who has known anything of spiritual struggle. The wrestle of God's spirit with man's spirit has never been more strikingly set forth since the ancient writer told of the night struggle by Jabbok's stream. The poem needs no word of explanation, but there is one passage in it which is extremely interesting as showing Thompson's attitude towards Nature. In the poem we read how the soul fleeing from the “ majestic instancy ” of God's spirit seeks refuge in the bosom of Nature:

“ Against the red throb of its sunset heart  
I laid my own to beat,  
And share commingling heat;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.  
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.  
For ah! we know not what each other says,  
These things and I; in sound I speak—  
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor step-dame, cannot slake my drouth.”

Many a sorrowful heart, perplexed and doubting, has felt this, perhaps only dumbly, but nevertheless keenly; and even in spite of Wordsworth, has cried with Coleridge:

“ I may not hope from outward forms to win  
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.”

How this passage in *The Hound of Heaven* may be justified is most interestingly shown in the essay entitled *Nature's Immortality*.

Some would place *The Ode to the Setting Sun* even higher than *The Hound of Heaven*. Certainly in this wonderful effort Thompson shows all his consummate art, all his poetic witchery. He sounds the key-note in the *Prelude* to the poem as he watches and meditates on the cross planted in the familiar field near his home; for it is the victory of which the cross is the symbol that is the central idea of the Ode, as it is of so many of his other poems:

“ Alpha and Omega, sadness and mirth,  
The springing music, and its wasting breath—  
The fairest things in life are Death and Birth,  
And of these two the fairer thing is Death.”

Though the “stately pageantry” of the sunset is sung in glowing, burning words, and though we join in the pæan to the sun-god “clad in the light of his immortal youth,” and join in the hymn of praise for all the life and beauty he bestows, slowly but inevitably the dusk closes upon us; every line adds its quiet shadow as we approach the end of the poem; a hush falls upon us; the last words sink with peace upon our spirits:

“ For there is nothing lives but something dies,  
And there is nothing dies but something lives.  
Till skies be fugitives,  
Till Time, the hidden root of change, updries,  
Are Birth and Death inseparable on earth;  
For they are twain yet one, and Death is Birth.”

The *After Strain* meets us like a quiet summer breeze as we

turn homewards with the poet. Thompson is very often compared with Crashaw. To us, at any rate in this Ode, he seems to have far closer affinity with Collins.

We have mentioned chiefly poems of "Sweetness and Light," but there are others which mark another aspect of Thompson's genius. *The Anthem of Earth*, for instance, is a solemn nocturne with *sic transit* as its theme. It is unspeakably sad, the message of one "singing with doom upon him," full of "strange sanctities of pathos," but even here "Though all the land of light be widowed" we catch the gleam of stars and hear a whisper of hope. No poem in the collection is more characteristic than the exquisitely melodious lyric *The Mistress of Vision*, in which Thompson sets forth the efficacy of renunciation and his recognition of the truth of Shelley's saying, "Men learn in suffering what they teach in song." In the poem the poet seeks the realm of the ideal. "The Lady of fair Weeping, At the garden's core" tells him how that realm may be won:

" From the full precipitant  
 These dim snatches of her chant  
 Only have remainéd mine;—  
 That from spear and thorn alone  
 May be grown  
 ¶¶For the front of saint or singer any divinizing twine."

*A Fallen Yew* is another characteristic poem, full of sublime mysticism, and in the verses *To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster* we come very near the heart of the poet. We cannot do more than mention these.

We are told that in this collection one-fourth of the Poems and nearly all the Essays are for the first time printed. Though undoubtedly we have already had the best in earlier editions, there are things in this fourth part we would not "willingly let die;" for instance, *All Flesh*; *The Singer Saith of His Song*; *At Lord's*. This last little piece gives us an unexpected glimpse of Thompson.

Thompson has "immortal longings;" he has inspiration; he has the necromancy which turns dull words to gold and gives to his lines a haunting music; in a word, he is a true poet. His poetry will live, and he knew that it would live.

"The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,  
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:  
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper  
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,  
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:  
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper  
Time shall reap, but after the reaper  
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper."

Of the three volumes, two are given to the Poems, and one to the prose Essays. Loving care and thought have been bestowed on the perfecting of their outward garb; and type, paper and binding leave nothing to be desired even by the most fastidious. The decoration on the covers, alone, indicates true and deep appreciation of the poet, for no symbol could have been found more appropriate for Thompson than the crown of laurel and thorn. The editing is of the cryptic order; hardly any notes are vouchsafed. Much enlightenment, however, is to be looked for from the life of Thompson, by Mr. Everard Meynell, which is shortly to be published. In the meantime an interesting and informing commentary on the poems may be found in the papers contained in the prose volume. No one who loves Thompson's poetry, and who wishes for sidelights upon it, can afford to neglect these essays. *Shelley* and *Health and Holiness* have been published before, but we are glad to meet with them again. They are full of excellent things.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE <sup>1</sup>

(Review reprinted by permission from "The Friend," 1913)

"I wish we had her at the War Office."—QUEEN VICTORIA.

THERE is little doubt that this Life of Florence Nightingale by Sir Edward Cook is destined to take its place with the great English Biographies. In form, and certainly in subject, it will rank with Boswell's Johnson and Lockhart's Scott. It is a great record. For more than half a century Florence Nightingale's name has been a household word, and yet the most interesting aspects of her character have been hidden, until now, from public knowledge. "It has been your fate," said Jowett to her, "to become a legend in your own lifetime." To Sir Edward Cook we owe it that Florence Nightingale now stands revealed to us; no longer a myth, but as an administrator of extraordinary powers, as a reformer of almost unbounded influence, as a philosophic thinker, as a mystic of the loftiest type. Nothing, however, of the beauty and romance are lost. "The Lady of the Lamp," "Sancta Filomena," still claims our love, but the woman is now even more to us. Her biographer has done his part with great skill and rare sympathy.

No prophet, no saint of old had a clearer call to the devout life than Florence Nightingale. And hers was no easy, primrose path. She was hampered and clogged by the trammels, not of poverty, but of riches and position. She had to face and quell the Dragon of Conventionality, that dragon which has paralysed the lives of so many women; she had to overcome the prejudices and disapproval of her nearest and dearest. Had she not had a very definite call indeed, had she not

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Florence Nightingale.* By Sir Edward Cook. Macmillan & Co.

had an extraordinary tenacity of purpose and singleness of aim, she must have succumbed. From a very early date she was filled with a desire for a fuller life, for some outlet for the powers she felt working within her. Her longings were looked upon by her family as fantastic and absurd. Every allurements that family life and society could offer was hers; foreign travel, study, pleasure were tried; but in vain. Her life was a misery to her. She herself dates back her longings for definite work to the time when she was six years old, though the moment of her actual dedication was not till 1837, when she was seventeen.

“The thoughts and feelings that I have now,” she wrote, “I can remember since I was six years old. It was not that I made them. A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me, I have always longed for, unconsciously or not. During the middle part of my life, college, education, acquirement, I longed for, but that was temporary. The first thought I can remember, and the last, was nursing work, and in the absence of this, education work, but more the education of the bad than of the young. . . . Everything has been tried, everything. . . . My God, what is to become of me? . . . In my thirty-first year I see nothing desirable but death. O weary days! O evenings that seem never to end! For how many years I have watched that drawing-room clock and thought it never could reach the ten. And for twenty or thirty more years to do this!” (Vol. i. p. 106.)

When the chances of marriage came she put them aside. Not that she despised marriage—but it was not for her, she thought. Her notion of the true marriage was indeed a lofty one. She complained in no measured terms of the poor and shabby standard of life as set forth in most novels; the poets, she thought, had as yet hardly touched the theme of true love,—“two in one, and one in God” as an incentive to heroic action was her ideal.

After many struggles and many disappointments, she did at last free herself, and she began her training as a nurse. She visited hospitals at home and abroad, and spent some time in training at Kaiserswerth, under Pastor Fliedner. She studied unceasingly; she noted and observed; she tabulated facts, recorded experiences; trained every faculty she had and kept a constant watch over herself, that she might be ready. What for, did not at first appear; but she would at any rate not be wanting should opportunity offer. It was not with her a case of restless activity, a fussy desire to be doing. Deep down there was the ever-present longing that she might be a fellow-worker with God, and through her work vivify her creed. In all her struggles for the betterment of men's bodily health, in all her passion for sanitation and improved conditions of life, she never lost sight of the fact that there could be no true progress even in the matter "of barley feeding and material ease," unless the sanitation of the soul went with it.

"We must beware," she says, "both of thinking that we can maintain the 'Kingdom of Heaven within,' under all circumstances,—because there are circumstances under which the human being cannot be good,—and also of thinking that the Kingdom of Heaven *without* will produce the Kingdom of Heaven within." (Vol. ii. 428.)

Florence Nightingale was a great reader. She read Greek, Latin, French, Italian and German; she had a minute and scholarly knowledge of the Bible; she studied with deep sympathy the writings of the Mystics, and she had a decided turn for philosophy; she had an original mind, humour and fancy, and she wielded a facile pen. Had she not been possessed by an overwhelming passion for the active service of God and humanity, she must have made her mark as a writer. Jowett, writing to her in 1871, said: "You have many original thoughts, but you either insert them in Blue Books or cast them before swine, that is me, and sometimes I insert



them in sermons." (Vol. ii. 215.) "You are my best critic," he says again. In this connection it is amusing to read Jowett's advice to her, the most retiring of women, to keep her incognito. "Though Deborah and Barak work together, Sisera the captain of the host must not suspect that he has been delivered into the hands of a woman." (Vol. ii. 97.)

The story of her skill as a child in binding up the broken leg of a dog, is often cited as characteristic, and certainly it is so; but not less characteristic is the fact recorded by Sir Edward Cook that, "a neatly printed manuscript-book is preserved in which Florence as quite a child made a catalogue of her collection of flowers, describing each with analytical accuracy and noting the particular spot where it was picked." This is characteristic, because throughout her long life she showed a genius for order and a passion for statistics. "The study of statistics," says Sir Edward Cook, "was for her a religious service. With her the true function of theology was to ascertain the character of God. Law was the Thought of God. It was by the aid of statistics that law in the social sphere might be ascertained and codified, and certain aspects of the character of God thereby revealed." (Vol. ii. 395.)

In her travels abroad, as well as at home, she made the acquaintance of many leading people of the time, from whom she had a curious power of extracting their best in knowledge and in help. They on their side were not slow to recognise her ability. This was especially the case with Sidney Herbert, who met her in Rome in 1847, and who was "much struck with her marked abilities." Mrs. Herbert noticed "the great kindness, the desire of love, the magnanimous generosity of Miss Nightingale." This acquaintance ripened into a perfect friendship and was productive of far-reaching results.

Through all these various channels was Florence Nightingale preparing for her great work, and when the Letters of the Correspondent of the *Times*, revealing hopeless muddle in the Crimea, filled all England with dismay, they came to her as

a trumpet call. She sprang into the breach. Without a moment's delay she wrote to Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War, offering her services. Her letter crossed one from him asking for her help. Her letter was written on October 14th, and on October 21st she sailed with her nurses for the Crimea. Surely nothing more dramatic ever happened in the life of woman!

The chapters on the Crimean War are full of deep interest, and are written with enthusiasm and yet with a moderation that gives confidence to the reader. What a chapter in History it is! And its greatest figure is that of this delicate woman of thirty-four, toiling day and night amongst the awful suffering, and into the ghastly confusion bringing order. The story of her work here is well known; but one reads with a fresh sense of shame and almost of incredulity of the prejudice, the red-tapeism, the incompetence in doctors and officials she had to encounter. Not less astounding is her imperturbably cheerful conquest of these unnecessary obstacles. But sometimes even she failed. Here is one instance:

“ It is safe to say that many lives were saved by the application by Miss Nightingale of the good housewife's care to the kitchen of the Hospitals. The woman's eye was not above distinguishing between bone, gristle and meat in the men's dinner, and she wanted her meat issued from the stores boned, so that one patient should not get all bone, another all gristle, and another all meat. But on this point she was beaten. The Inspector General informed her that it would require a new ‘ Regulation of the Service ’ to have the meat boned! ”

When her work in the Crimea was accomplished, the Government offered her a British man-of-war for the voyage home. The offer was declined. England was on tip-toe to give her a royal welcome, but she shrank from publicity, and no malefactor could have taken greater pains than she to escape all notice:

“ She lay for a night in London, and at 8 o'clock next

morning she presented herself, according to a promise given to the Bermondsey Nuns, at their convent door. It was the first day of their annual Retreat, and she rested with them for a few hours. Then taking the train, she reached her home on August 7th, 1856, after nearly two years' absence in the East, arriving at an unexpected hour, having walked up from the little country station. 'A little tinkle of the small church bell on the hills, and a thanksgiving prayer at the little chapel next day, were,' wrote her sister, 'all the innocent greeting.' "

She was shattered and broken in health, and friends expected her now to take a long rest. But there was more to do, and she set herself to it at once; she scarcely made a pause, and it is not an exaggeration to say that for forty years she never rested from her labours. To her quiet room in South Street came Cabinet Ministers, Viceroys, Commanders-in-Chief, princes, princesses, army officials of all ranks, hospital matrons and nurses innumerable. They came to seek guidance and help. She used to say that the work in the Crimea was child's play compared with the work she did in these years. Her first efforts were directed to secure the health of the soldiers. To this end she gathered volumes of information and statistics for the use of the War Office; she wrote endless Reports and made even Blue Books readable; she tabulated facts, inventing ingenious diagrams to make them more striking; she tried to open the eyes of the blind to the insanitary conditions of the barracks at home and in India; she pointed out the appalling mortality amongst soldiers in times of peace; she made valuable suggestions for better drainage and irrigation in India. It was the opinion of an expert that "of the sanitary improvements in India, three-fourths are due to Miss Nightingale."

"Was there ever another case," says her biographer, "in which nearly every vexed question of War Office administration (other than purely of a military nature), was referred

almost as a matter of course to a private lady, and that lady an invalid in her bed? ”

One paragraph may be quoted which gives some notion of the nature of her work:

“ I find in the correspondence during these years with the War Office, in addition to other matters, that her advice was asked upon such subjects as an Apothecaries’ Warrant, barracks for Ceylon, ‘ Fever Tinctures,’ the proposed amalgamation of the Home and Indian Medical Services, the organisation of hospitals for soldiers’ wives, Sanitary Instructions for New Zealand, revision of soldiers’ rations, staff appointments at Netley, appointment of West Indian staff surgeons, an outbreak of yellow fever in Bermuda, the relation of Commissariat barracks and purveying of foreign stations, victualling on transports and the Mhow Court Martial.”

It is not possible to speak of her correspondence, which was enormous; nor of her literary work, a fascinating subject. “ She did,” said Jowett, “ the work of ten women,” and everything she did had the stamp of perfection in execution. Her handwriting was clear and powerful, every letter well formed, and yet she wrote with great swiftness. Her house-keeping was of a rare order. “ Florence’s maids and dinners are perfect,” says one friend, and the Crown Princess pronounced one of her luncheons “ a work of art.” It was, however, in her view of Nursing that her ideal reached the highest point. She held it to be a progressive art, and she insisted with passionate earnestness that no amount of technical training, nor the most intimate knowledge of physiology could make a nurse; and that no diploma could guarantee efficiency. The unexaminable quality of “ character ” must be added to these. What she meant by character we learn from her own words:

“ Live your life while you have it. Life is a splendid gift. There is nothing small in it. For the greatest things grow by God’s law out of the smallest. But to live, you must

discipline it; you must not fritter it away in fair purpose, erring act, inconstant will, but must make your thought, your words, your acts all work to the same end, and that end not self, but God. That is what we call character." (Vol. ii. 434.)

Her last word to the Health Missioner was the same as to the Nurse: "The work that tells is the work of the skilful hand, directed by the cool head and inspired by the loving heart." (Vol. ii. 384.) It is an epitome of her own mode of work.

Though Miss Nightingale was in some ways a formidable person—Colonel Yule said she was worse than a Royal Commission to answer—yet she had many staunch friends, and those who were worthy she "grappled to her heart with hoops of steel." Her friendship with Sidney Herbert was deep and abiding; and in Arthur Hugh Clough, her cousin, she had a devoted friend. For thirty years she had close and intimate intercourse with Benjamin Jowett, and the letters that passed between them are as interesting as any in the book; they indicate her philosophic and mystic side and show her wide intellectual and spiritual interests. Of devoted women friends she had numbers. Of women she said some curious things. "Women have no sympathy," for instance. But as we find in the story of her life that many women showed the deepest and most understanding sympathy with her work and aims, and as she frequently acknowledges their help, this statement must not be made too much of. This was a generalisation, and she herself objected to generalisations, especially as to women, and greatly resented the habit of classifying them as a special order:

"I think it is a pity," she says, "that women should always look upon themselves (and men look upon them), as a curiosity, a peculiar, strange race, like the Aztecs; or rather like Dr. Howe's Idiots, whom after the unremitting exertions of two years 'he actually taught to eat with spoons.'"

Though she hated *talk* about "Women's Rights," she was

in favour of Woman Suffrage, and by her own life she raised the whole tone as to women's work and position. "I must strive after a better life for women, better in married as well as in single life," is a significant entry in her Diary. She was a pioneer, and all women are her debtors.

Florence Nightingale was a mystic, and by her life we are once more reminded that it is the mystics who are the practical reformers of the world. I may close with her own words: "The way to live with God is to live with Ideas—not to think about ideals, but to do and suffer for them. Those who have to work on men and women must above all things have their Spiritual Ideal, their purpose, ever present. The 'Mystical' State is the essence of common sense."

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY <sup>1</sup>

(Review reprinted by permission from "The Friends'  
Quarterly Examiner," 1905)

"IF we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators."

Thus spoke William Hazlitt, and many a student of the commentators of Shakespeare has echoed the words in bitterness of spirit. Nowadays we take up a criticism of Shakespeare's works with fear and trembling; some new theory or lunacy is to be advanced; some old notion demolished. We are tired of the conflict, and long to be allowed to come at the mind of our author and to escape the dust and pother made by opponents as they wrangle about him. Perhaps, however, if Hazlitt had seen Professor Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* he might have modified his view, and certainly *we* may read and be thankful. To the loving student of Shakespeare this book opens out wide fields of new thought and outlook, but I believe even for those who are not professed students of the great dramatist, and whose interests may lie in other directions, a study of Professor Bradley's *method* and *attitude* as a critic could not fail to be of deep and abiding interest.

These Lectures on the four great tragedies of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth* not only give us great light, and insight into Shakespeare's mind and work, but are a model of what exposition and criticism should be, for it may be said of them that they impel us to take down our Shakespeare from his shelf, and to read him; this is our only wisdom, but

<sup>1</sup> *Shakespearean Tragedy*. By Prof. Bradley. London: Macmillan and Co.

it is the last thing apparently that the ordinary commentator proposes for us. It seems a simple self-evident recipe, but any one who is versed in Shakespearean criticism knows that, to say the least, it is unusual. Again and again we are sent back to the text; again and again we are brought up sharp to correct our notions by scrutinising what is actually in the text, and we are made to acknowledge that Shakespeare really means what he says; probabilities or surmises for which there is not chapter and verse are discouraged. This is indeed a wholesome discipline; sometimes thoroughly humiliating, inasmuch as we find we have allowed ourselves either to read carelessly or with preconceived notions, so that the true meaning has escaped us. Any commentator who will thus force us face to face with our author, and such an author as Shakespeare; who will not let us evade or shirk, goes far to build up our intellectual character.

In his analysis of the four tragedies, Professor Bradley most sparingly avails himself of quotation from other commentators. The book deals with Shakespeare, and not with what has been said about him. We have, too, a plentiful lack of bewildering and groundless theories as to "Shakespeare as a man," ingenious dovetailing of his deeds and his theories of life; what we are invited to study is his meaning and his spirit.

It is refreshing and invigorating, and tends to cultivate our literary self-respect, to be assured, as we are here, that it is not only safe, but necessary, to allow ourselves to be guided by our own impressions in our reading; that it will make for a really practical understanding of a drama, to consult the impression left on our minds as we close the play; to let our feeling and natural instincts of criticism have full swing. We have throughout many helpful hints as to our attitude as readers or spectators, especially the former. In the early pages Professor Bradley makes an earnest appeal to students to read Shakespeare with "an eager mind" if they would



rightly understand him; he would have them to be part *actors* in the play, to be of the *dramatis personæ*; to use what he calls "the vivid and intent imagination"; and in a note full of suggestion he says:

"Actors have to ask themselves what was the precise state of mind expressed by the words they have to repeat. But many readers never think of asking such a question."

In the Lecture on *Othello* it is pointed out that there are scenes which shock and pain, and which make some, at any rate, question Shakespeare's art in admitting them. Upon this the remark is made:

"The issues thus raised ought not to be ignored or impatiently dismissed, but they cannot be decided, it seems to me, by argument. All we can profitably do is to consider narrowly our experience, and to ask ourselves this question: If we feel these objections, do we feel them when we are reading the play with all our force, or only when we are reading it in a half-hearted manner?"

This is a typical example of the author's mode of making us "eke out the performance with our mind."

It is part of the charm of this book that we find suggestions of such pith and moment, that we have to reconsider again and again our own settled convictions on one point or another; sometimes, however, we must confess that it is impossible even then to agree with the critic. For instance, I find it difficult wholly to accept his view as to Ophelia, charming and satisfying as his analysis of her character is on the whole. One agrees that Ophelia is a secondary character, that she is young and far from being in any way capable of understanding Hamlet; nevertheless I cannot bring myself to think that Shakespeare means us to believe that there was nothing for her to do but to obey her deluded old father, and tamely to give up Hamlet's letter, and to tell all that had passed between herself and Hamlet. According to her character, her conduct was perhaps natural and consistent, but Professor Bradley

goes farther than this, and maintains that in the circumstances she was right. Perhaps one of the most helpful things in Professor Bradley's method, so free from dogmatism and assumption of authority, is the constant appeal it makes to our sincerity as readers; without this sincerity, how little way we shall make in our reading or in any other department of our mental or spiritual life!

It is impossible in a short article such as this to do more than touch upon the treatment of the four tragedies. One must be content to mention one or two points only. Perhaps the masterly analysis of *King Lear* will appeal most strongly to the majority of readers. It is a play which taxes all the critical faculties, and calls not only for scholarly knowledge and intellectual acumen, but needs for its true interpretation experience of life and a deep spiritual insight, and these are here brought to bear. One passage I should like to cite from the lecture on this tragedy. The writer points out what must have been noticed often, that in this great play there are two groups of persons, set over against one another; on the one side Goneril, Regan, Edmund, and Oswald; on the other, Cordelia, Kent, Edgar, and the Fool. As we contemplate the first of these groups, we are filled, not only with horror and loathing, but with confusion and astonishment, and we ask, what can be the cause of so much wickedness; what is its origin; what can have made such hard hearts? Is human nature, then, capable of such depths of depravity? Whence do such creatures come? Bewilderment is the prevailing feeling as we watch their amazing doings.

"But," says Professor Bradley, "if here there is 'very Night herself,' she comes with stars in her raiment. Cordelia, Kent, Edgar, the Fool—these form a group not less remarkable than that which we have just left. There is in the world of *King Lear* the same abundance of extreme good as extreme evil. It generates in profusion selfless devotion and unconquerable love. And the strange thing is that neither Shake-

spere nor we are surprised. We approve these characters, admire them, love them, but we feel no mystery. We do not ask in bewilderment, Is there any cause in nature that makes these kind hearts? Such hardened optimists are we, and Shakespeare."

This is illuminating and vital comment, and numerous passages such as this could be quoted. Almost incidental touches here and there open up vistas of thought. For instance, in speaking of Edgar,

"His thoughts are more than patient, they are '*free*,' even joyous, in spite of the tender sympathies which strive in vain to overwhelm him. This ability to feel and offer great sympathy with distress, without losing through the sympathy any elasticity or strength, is a noble quality, sometimes found in souls like Edgar, naturally buoyant and also *religious*." (The italics are mine.)

It is hard to desist from giving many passages full of noble and lofty thought in the interpretation of the character of Cordelia, of all women in literature to my mind the most beautiful. A word or two must suffice. The great and good man dies, and in an outward sense seems to have failed;

"Yet," says Bradley, "in another sense he is superior to the world in which he appears; he is, in some way which we do not define, untouched by the doom that overcomes him, and he is rather set free from life than deprived of it."

This, he goes on to say, is especially the feeling that we experience upon the death of Cordelia:

"It is," he says, "simply the feeling that what happens to such a being does not matter; all that matters is what she is. . . . The gods, it seems, do *not* show their approval by defending their own from adversity or death, or by giving them power and prosperity. These, on the contrary, are worthless, or worse; it is not on them, but on the renunciation of them, that the gods throw incense. They breed lust, pride, hardness of heart, the insolence of office, cruelty, scorn,

hypocrisy, contention, war, murder, self-destruction. The whole story (of Lear) beats this indictment of prosperity into the brain. . . . Throughout that stupendous Third Act the good are seen growing better through suffering, and the bad worse through success. The warm castle is a room in hell, the storm-swept heath a sanctuary."

The whole impression of the play is to make us "feel that this world is so far at least a rational and a moral order, that there holds in it the law, not of proportionate requital, but of strict connection between act and consequence. It is, so far, the world of all Shakespeare's tragedies."

And summing up the play in a few words, he continues:

"Its final and total result is one in which pity and terror, carried perhaps to the extreme limits of art, are so blended with a sense of law and beauty that we feel at last, not depression and much less despair, but a consciousness of greatness in pain, and of solemnity in the mystery we cannot fathom."

The study of *Macbeth* will, I should imagine, next to that of *King Lear*, be found by many the most interesting. The powerful way in which the *atmosphere* of that lurid play is given is very striking. *Macbeth* is of all Shakespeare's tragedies the most rapid and vehement, and perhaps, with the exception of *King Lear*, the most awful. It is very short in comparison with other plays, and it hurries us on almost breathless; one terrible crime follows another, and the wrack and ruin of the soul of Macbeth give us no pause. This is all wonderfully described in the first Lecture on *Macbeth*. The darkness, the fitful glare, the sense of blood and death; the haunting spell of the witches and their incantations, are all gathered together for us in a few impressive, glowing passages. And at the outset we hear the warning voice as to our attitude in reading this stupendous drama:

"The way to be untrue to Shakespeare here, as always, is to relax the tension of imagination, to conventionalise, to

conceive Macbeth, for example, as a half-hearted, cowardly criminal, and Lady Macbeth as a whole-hearted fiend. . . . In reality Macbeth's courage is frightful. He strides from crime to crime, though his soul never ceases to bar his advance with shapes of terror, or to clamour in his ears that he is murdering his peace, and casting away his eternal jewel."

These words remind us that the great tragic element in the character of Macbeth lies, as Shakespeare so clearly shows, in the fact that Macbeth is no monster, no determined villain, no Iago, no Richard III. even. In the microcosm of his own soul a great tragedy is transacting itself; his vivid imagination, his keen conscience, his sense of justice and honour fight for his better manhood, and the conflict here is of the very essence of tragedy, and is an image of the great crash and turmoil of the powers of good and evil in the play itself and in the world at large.

After noticing the profound impression which readers generally carry away from a perusal of *Macbeth*, of the awful wreck of conscience and of a great soul, and the inevitable retribution following on crime, Bradley shows that what Shakespeare perhaps felt even more deeply when he wrote this play, was the *incalculability* of evil, that in meddling with it human beings do they know not what.

"The soul, Shakespeare seems to feel, is a thing of such inconceivable depth, complexity, and delicacy, that when you introduce into it, or suffer to develop in it, any change, and particularly the change called evil, you can form only the vaguest idea of the reaction you will provoke."

This he shows to be true, not only with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, but also with the secondary character Banquo. The character is a slight one, and he disappears in the Third Act, but Professor Bradley has much to say about him, and much that is new, and that hitherto, I believe, has been unnoticed. A careless reader might complete his reading of the play and be satisfied that Banquo remains the honest, honourable

gentleman he shows himself on his first appearances. It is interesting to notice how, by paying attention to apparently very slight indications, Bradley is able to prove that Banquo, even more than Macbeth, comes under the malign influence of the weird sisters, and is early in the play on the downward path, and only prevented from further degradation by his sudden and violent death.

The extremely painful and distressing story of *Othello* is dealt with, it is needless to say, with skill and great analytical power, but the chapters on this play seem to me the least stirring and convincing in the book. Perhaps this arises from the very nature of the story. The whole range of *Othello* is less lofty, less enlarging, if one may use the expression, than that of the other three plays. The sphere of the passion of jealousy is after all contracted; jealousy is narrowing, selfish, personal. Love, it may be said, is personal, but its essence is expansive, and even when to some extent misdirected has an ennobling and elevating influence, and such, I submit, jealousy cannot have. Take, for instance, the case of Cleopatra. Frail and faulty as the great queen is, her love for Antony raises her into regions of sublimity, and at her death we feel it true when she says, "I have immortal longings in me." The figure of the Moor is grand and imposing; his death is noble, and yet something is lacking, and the impression at the end of the play has, at any rate for some, less of the sense of greatness and conquest, even in failure, than other tragedies leave with us; pain and distress are the prevailing feeling, and this impression is not altogether removed even by the thoughtful and sympathetic view of our critic.

There is, however, nothing finer in the whole book than the analysis of the character of Iago, surely one of the most remarkable and mysterious figures in the whole Shakespearean gallery.

There is no space to speak of the loving comment on Hamlet, who evidently is very near the heart of Professor Bradley. It

is full of the most subtle appreciation of that marvellous mind, and after all that has been said about *Hamlet*, has yet light to throw on many difficult points in the play and on problems in the hero's character and destiny; though whether we can accept the main contention as to melancholia being the cause of Hamlet's tragic fate is a question. Nor can we speak of the illuminating suggestions in the introductory Lectures as to Shakespeare's tragedy in general, of his art, and of the construction of his plays.

In these Lectures the writer has amply fulfilled the object which in the early pages he declares to be his:

“Our one object may be called dramatic appreciation; to increase our understanding and enjoyment of these works as dramas; to encourage that close familiarity with the plays, that native strength and justice of perception, and that habit of reading with an eager mind, which make many an unscholarly lover of Shakespeare a far better critic than many a Shakespearean scholar.”

Professor Bradley, like Prospero, “bears free and patient thoughts,” and in this work of his he shows himself worthy to be the interpreter of Shakespeare, and more one could not say.





ADDRESSES GIVEN AT THE MOUNT  
SCHOOL, YORK



## LEISURE HOUR PURSUITS

AN ADDRESS AT THE EXHIBITION OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL  
WORK AT THE MOUNT SCHOOL, YORK

DECEMBER 15, 1913

I NEED hardly say that it is a great pleasure to me to be at The Mount once more, and it is particularly interesting to be here at this time, when the work done in your leisure hours is to be seen. I have had the privilege of a private view, and have also been allowed to read the judges' Reports. From these Reports I learn that you are to be warmly congratulated on your work; there is high commendation for many, and the general standard attained is considered excellent. These Reports will, I know, be read to you, and I feel that I need not say much therefore as to the exhibits; indeed I do not consider myself as competent to do much in the way of criticism. I am very doubtful as to my capacity to address you on this occasion, for I am a hopelessly unscientific person; I cannot give you a single scientific tip, certainly no scrap of instruction. But you may sometimes see in the paper a notice of some concert or entertainment, "By Command." Well, I am here "by command," and I really think that your Headmistress must share some of the responsibility of my ineptitudes—she knows them well.

But if I may treat the subject from my own point of view, I shall like, as the orators say, "to make a few remarks," not so much upon the exhibits as upon the exhibitors. I will try not to be personal!

In early days this exhibition used to be called "The Natural History Exhibition," and Natural History is such an extensive field of study, it is so important, that I suppose we should give it the first place. It is important because it is the

story of that strangely fascinating *something* that we are forever seeking to put our finger on, and which is forever evading our search, I mean Life, life in plant and animal. It is important because it requires many great gifts in its student—the quick eye, the nimble hand, the alert memory, the habit of accuracy, and the good old moral “stand-by”—patience. Besides all these, it needs the exercise of one of the greatest of men’s powers, the exercise of the Imagination. To define Imagination is an extremely difficult matter, but one may say this of it at any rate—it is that which enables us to see beyond the body and material of the object we are studying into its inner meaning; to identify it with something beyond itself; to see what it symbolises (and you will find that these natural objects are all symbols)—in a word to get to its true significance. Perhaps I may make my meaning clearer by saying that we all know there are three kinds of primroses:

There is the primrose of the Botanist;

There is the primrose of Peter Bell;

There is the primrose of the Poet or the Seer.

The primrose of the Botanist is the *Primula vulgaris*, belonging to the Order *Primulaceæ*; in his hands it is an extremely interesting thing—he can analyse it; tell you of all its parts; tell you their functions; tell you its habitat—where you can find it, and all his information is useful and a distinct gain for any one. This you are getting week by week as you watch the flowers and note them in your Diaries.

Then there is the primrose of Peter Bell, the man who, if you show him a primrose, says: “Ah yes, a primrose; well, what of it? I don’t think it’s up to much—I could get you thousands of it any day, and if you send it to the market you won’t get much for it.” Of such a man Wordsworth says:

“In vain, through all the changeful year,  
Did Nature lead him as before;  
A primrose by a river’s brim,  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.”

Now what *more* ought it to be to us? To find this out I think we ordinary mortals must go to the Poets, to the Seers. Take down your Wordsworth and read the poem called *The Primrose of the Rock*, or at any rate the first three verses, and you will see what the *something more* is. We learn from the poem how Wordsworth had watched the primrose near his own home at Rydal Mount from day to day, clinging to the rock; how through the varying seasons he had "marked it as his own," and how to him it grew to be

" A lasting link in Nature's chain,  
From highest Heaven let down "—

or if you are tired of Wordsworth (and one has heard of people getting tired of Wordsworth), turn to the slender volume of priceless poems by Alice Meynell and read her sonnet *To a Daisy*. There I think you will find something about the daisy that you have never thought of before, though you have loved it from babyhood, have gathered it, drawn it, thought of it, and have known it in almost all its aspects. She will tell you something not only about the daisy but about your own mind and about the universe. I have been delighted in looking through some of your Diaries to notice with what loving skill many of you have drawn and painted flowers and animals. It is charming to find you turning your artistic powers to use in your scientific work. There is nothing you will find more important in your education than learning thus to correlate and connect your studies—and I should like, if I may, to suggest that you should in the same way lay your reading under contribution here; that when you meet in prose or verse with any description you think good of flower or animal you are studying, that you should put it down with careful reference to poet and poem in your Diary—you would find it an illumination to your record, and it will give an added interest and point to your reading.

Then there is Astronomy, that great science, the science

which gives us a glimpse into the mysteries of Time and Space and Law—the most unattached of the sciences. When you are studying Natural History you have your object close under your eye, you can handle and preserve it. When you study the heavenly bodies you must send your mind voyaging through æons of time and through countless millions of miles. And it is curious to notice that to him who watches the heavens and the motion of the stars there seems always to come in a special way the sense of harmony and Law, and this in its turn suggests the moral Law. If we look at Psalm xix. we see how David seems almost overwhelmed with the grandeur of the Heavens and can hardly find words to express his wonder and admiration, and he turns almost instinctively to explain it by referring to the great moral Law of righteousness, the Law of the Lord in his own soul. We may remember how Kant was accustomed to say: “The starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me, are the perpetual wonders of my soul.” And here I should like, if I may, to tell you a story which may not be known to all here. It is told of our great artist Watts that he was once asked to dine at the house of a man he had no great respect for, a worldly-minded man and very conventional. Watts had no wish to go, and especially because he knew he should meet there the eldest son of the house who was then living a dissipated and foolish life. However, he went, and when he was coming away and was putting his coat on in the hall, he was somewhat taken aback by the son of the house coming to him and saying he would walk with him to his home. The night was fine and they walked through the Park. Many years afterwards they met again, and the young man came to Watts and said: “Do you remember my walking home with you once after a dinner at my father’s and our talk as we went?” Watts said he remembered quite well. “You said things then,” said the young man, “that made me *think*, and I owe it to you that I am now living a decent life.” Watts’s wife, to whom he was telling the story, said,

“ And what did you talk about? ” “ We talked of the stars,” said Watts. So you see, perhaps the old astrologers were not so far wrong when they taught that the stars influenced the lives of men; and perhaps sometimes when you are in the garden watching the stars, or in your Observatory looking through your telescope, thoughts will come to you, you won't know where they come from, which will remain with you, and perhaps in some distant time they will turn to beautiful deeds.

Then we come to Archæology. Though, of course, it is only a branch of Archæology, we may take as our example Architecture—a charming study, that of the record of men's thought in stone. What a pleasure it is to learn the different styles, their names, their characteristics—how interesting when one enters a building to be able to date it from its style—to recognise the Early English, for instance, by the water-hollows or the stiff-leaved foliage, and so on; to make notes in drawing of the details. All this is delightful, but let me ask you not to allow this to swamp your sense of the beauty of the thing. When you first go to the Minster, for instance, go first and foremost for the joy of it. Enter by the South door and then look up at that miracle of a window before you. Don't be in too great a hurry to say, “ Oh, that is Early English,” and to make notes in your Diary. Just wait a few moments, and ask what it is the window has to tell you. Well, one thing I fancy it will tell you—as it has told me many a time—it will whisper to you of the wonder and the power of *reserve*. Notice the quiet colour of the glass, how delicate, how subdued, and yet how it *glows*; and then notice how this colour and glow rest at home, as it were, between the stern grey shafts of stone which carry your eye upwards and your thoughts you know not where. It is always a pleasure to me to think that tradition, at any rate, associates this window with the work of women, and that we call it *The Five Sisters Window*. Then turn into the nave and look at

that magnificent avenue of splendid pillars and let your eye rest on the flowing tracery of the West window and on the flood of light that passes in; and try to reconstruct the life of the men and women who passed in and out as that nave was a-building, and try to enter into the thought and aim and spirit of the men who carved the stone and set the glass. Ask yourselves what it was in their life that made such work possible, work for you and me to enjoy, work worthy to offer to the Almighty. I hardly think their thought would dwell much upon the wages they were to receive, or on the need for an eight-hours' day. I am sure it must seem to you, as it did to me when I lived in York, that we enjoy a great privilege in being near such a monument of Beauty, in having such a standard of perfection so constantly before us. To have learnt something of its meaning should teach us to turn instinctively from all that is base and ugly in art or life. I was much struck in reading the short and very sad life of Anne Brontë, the sister of the great Charlotte, to find that in her diary she enters as two great events in her life: "I have seen the sea, and I have seen York Minster."

Then there are your handicrafts. How delightful these are! Here you have not the collection of objects, the noting of finds, etc., but you have the joy of production, almost of creation. And in the present day when so many clever appliances are offered us to save labour, is it not a good thing that we should be reminded that after all we have two hands? And it is particularly good that these handicrafts should be encouraged in a girls' school, for I sometimes think women do not sufficiently understand the pleasure of using tools. We have, of course, one supreme tool which we have put to good purpose in life and in art, the Needle, and that you are adepts in the use of this tool, your needlework in this Exhibition shows clearly enough. But speaking generally, women do not seem to know much about tools. I have often found that a woman does not know a screw-driver from a chisel,



and as to which way a screw goes in or out, she has no idea. This is a pity because it is a good thing to be able to do little jobs in the house; and if one lives in the country, where, if a handle comes off the door, it takes the carpenter three weeks to make up his mind to come and mend it, one is thankful to be independent of him. Then I would ask you when you have a few moments' leisure to look at your own hand and to see what a marvel you carry about with you, a *perfect* piece of Nature's work. Notice the arrangement which is so simple that we hardly recognise it—the arrangement which makes it possible for the thumb to meet the tip of each finger in succession. I suppose it is no exaggeration to say that if our thumb were not "opposable," if instead of four fingers and a thumb we had only five fingers, we should not be sitting here this afternoon; at any rate we should be on another level of civilisation.

My time is limited as is, I am sure, your patience—otherwise I would fain speak of other industries and studies of your leisure hours—your gardening, the most health-giving of employments, the most innocent and primeval of pleasures, and one in which your Headmistress takes such kindly interest; your photography which may be made such a helpful handmaid to your other pursuits; your observations in meteorology which has sometimes been called dull—this it need not be if you do not confine yourselves to mere *tabulation*. Would you know how much more it may be, talk to any weatherwise shepherd of the Yorkshire fells, or read two *Essays* by Alice Meynell, the one called *Cloud*, the other *The Winds of the World*. There you may see, especially in *Cloud*, how the watching of the clouds and the mists may teach you not only of coming shower and storm but of the secrets of light and colour, of the mysteries of space and of the landscape of the skies.

And now one word as to the values of these studies. To me one of their greatest values lies in the fact that these are

*voluntary* studies; through them you may learn to strengthen your will-power, you may gain self-mastery; through them you may be helped to throw off the insidious temptings to indolence and the snare of vacuity of mind. And again, what a preparation they are for service and helpfulness hereafter! When you come in contact with children, and every one of us comes in contact with children (if we don't we are much to blame), what a help is even a slight knowledge of flower and animal, of stars or even of tools! And socially it is a great thing to have a hobby (if we don't ride it to death), for, as Walter Pater says, "To have an interest oneself, is to be interesting to other people."

Finally, I would give you one piece of advice—if your Society should do you the honour to ask you to be treasurer or secretary or other official, seize the opportunity with avidity; be thankful that you have the chance of learning to be *business-like*. I have for the last three or four weeks been living with a great woman, and as is always the case when one is with great people, one refers everything to their standard, and I have been struck, in reading the *Life of Florence Nightingale*, to see what a high value that remarkable woman put upon the business faculty. She tells us of how she has met again and again with people, enthusiastic, eager to help, kind-hearted, excellent, whose work was made worse than futile by their lack of the business faculty, how, to be a secretary to any purpose, one must learn to exercise this business power; a good secretary may be the making of a society; a bad one, an unbusinesslike one, may be its ruin.

And now I have only to wish you "God Speed" in your good work and earnestly to ask you to let nothing prevent your joining one of these Societies, and having chosen, to put your very best work into it. I believe you will in the future have your reward—I believe you are to have some rewards at once, and I have been keeping you too long from receiving them.

ADDRESS ON THE OPENING OF THE MOUNT  
SCHOOL LIBRARY

WHIT-MONDAY 1903

LUCY HARRISON replied on behalf of the School. She said: During my connection with The Mount I always felt it an honour to speak, when occasion arose, for the School, and to be asked this afternoon to receive in the name of the School this beautiful gift of a Library seems to me not only an honour, but a "crowning mercy." In my Easter holidays I spent some time in two of the finest libraries, I suppose, in the world, that of the British Museum and the Bodleian. As I sat in the great Oxford library surrounded by the priceless treasures of MSS. and books, gathered together generation after generation by lovers of books and lovers of their University; as I looked at the fine old building, consecrated by the thought and study of countless scholars; as I turned my eyes to the peaceful quiet of the garden below, I thought of The Mount School Library rising day by day, and I rejoiced to think that, though comparatively small and unpretending, yet The Mount Library had about it almost all the elements which we admire so much in the Bodleian. For in this library we may see the books suitable for the School, which year by year have been collected, some by those who have passed from us for ever; we may trace the recognition of the wants of the School on the part of the Committee, and their untiring labour in the superintendence of the building; we may remember the generous gifts of parents and friends of the School; the professional and artistic skill of the architect, which have brought beauty into every detail of the room and furniture; we may notice the painstaking care of the librarian, no small matter; and last, and not least, we may see the love of *alma mater* in the old scholars

which prompted them to give the furniture and fittings. All these have united to produce a room which we must all, I think, feel is likely to be a worthy and inspiring centre of the intellectual life of the School; a room which might almost be described in the enthusiastic language of an old writer of the fourteenth century who, in speaking of a library, says: "Forthwith boards of cedar with shelves of gopher-wood are most skilfully planed; inscriptions in gold and ivory are designed for the several compartments to which the volumes themselves are reverently brought and pleasantly arranged, so that no one hinders the entrance of another or injures his brother by excessive crowding"; a room which must be an inspiration to generations of Mount girls, who in it may feel the power and influence of letters and of beauty as they could perhaps by no other means. Just as in Oxford one feels that the Bodleian embodies in beautiful form the ideal of the scholarship and culture of the whole University, so one hopes that the kindling spirit of learning and love of student life may be fostered in this library of ours. And not only so. For in this room have been happily combined the two vivifying motives of our intellectual being; for turning from the fine proportions of the room and its dignified furniture, we may look down into the fresh green and peace of the garden, and realise how the love of books and the love of nature may go hand in hand, nay, how they ought never to be separated. We are sometimes told that we are making our School luxurious. Well, I can only say that in an institution such as this, I do not think that a library, and even a beautiful library, should ever be looked upon as a luxury. One of the essentials of education is to develop not only the love of learning but also the love of beauty, for the love of letters and the love of beauty are very closely allied. Some one says, "The passion for beauty *made* literature, as the hunger for bread made the plough." Those who have in one way or another contributed to this gift have offered no luxury to the School, but, on the other hand, have provided

a seed-ground for the natural and therefore wholesome development of that happy and by no means common character, the studious and thoughtful reader; and I am proud indeed to thank them in the name of the School I love so well for their noble and enduring gift. In conclusion, I should like, in the words of a great and good man, a maker of books and lover of nature, to leave a wish for the future readers in this library:

“ Simplicity in habits, truth in speech,  
Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds:  
May books and nature be their early joy,  
And knowledge rightly honoured by that name,  
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power.”

WORDSWORTH.

## ADDRESS TO OLD SCHOLARS

ON WHIT-SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 1905

## FELLOWSHIP

It is very often remarked on the occasion of our meeting here at Whitsuntide, that the more regular we are in our attendance and the fewer gaps we allow to intervene between meeting and meeting, the more we can enter into the spirit of the time and enjoy the various functions, and the more significant the meetings become to us. I have tested the truth of this, for I may, I think, claim to be a good attender, though there are no doubt some who can beat my record,—perhaps Mabel Spence Richardson, whom I remember so well as our able secretary when I first knew the Association. I have attended every meeting since 1890 except one, when I was away through illness. So I have had *some* experience of their interest.

I shall never forget my first "Old Scholars." How out of it all I felt; how few people I knew; how little I understood what it really meant. What strange blunders I made; introducing bosom friends who had slept in the same bedroom; daughters to mothers, and nieces to aunts, and so on. These, like many other mistakes I may have made during my time at The Mount, have been forgiven and forgotten, I hope, by kind friends, but *I* remember them very well.

Many things struck me as strange when I first came to this great School, now as it seems to me so long ago. I had had experience of High School and Day School life in plenty, but I had never been in an English Boarding School as an inmate before. Only once when I was quite a small child did I go to a Boarding School in England and then only as that melancholy and amphibious creature known as an *outsider*. The best thing I learnt at that School was to know our President that was to

be, Miss Thompson, and this you will all agree was an excellent thing to do! I did go to a French Roman Catholic Boarding School for a time, but if I were to tell you some of my experiences there you would hardly think them calculated to give me *much* insight into the tone and working of a Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting School for Girls.

Being used when I came to The Mount to High School ways, I remember being amazed, for one thing, to find that when the end of the session came there was no preparation for breaking-up day. At the school I knew in London, a day at the end of July was looked forward to as a glorious consummation of things; a day when parents and relations of the girls attended in their fifties; when the pupils acted some French or German play, or recited some English masterpiece, and gave examples of their musical skill on the piano or violin; when Reports were read; when some Educational Authority spoke on the novel and engaging subject of Women's Education, or some kindred matter of equal interest; when the Head of the School discoursed concerning the condition and progress of the Institution during the past year—a general show day and day of reckoning. Well, when the end of the session came here at The Mount, we certainly had a Scripture examination, when York friends kindly came and heard the pupils examined in that subject. But nothing more! The girls packed up and vanished, and when I was first at The Mount they did not even take Reports away with them. This seemed to me strange indeed, and I wondered and waited.

When I had attended my second or third Mount Old Scholars' Meeting, it flashed upon me as I sat at one of our Saturday evening gatherings—Why, here it is! This is Breaking-up day, Speech day, Founders' day, Report day, Day of Reckoning all in one; all indeed that heart (or Head) of School could desire. Here was in concrete form a revelation of Mount School aims and achievements; here was the gathering together of all the School interests; here were

represented all the actual, living school elements; here were Committee members, themselves old scholars, glad to learn something of the inner life of the place; here were parents, old scholars too; here were old scholars anxious to know how it might be with the School since their day, and making acquaintance with present pupils, who in their turn were bubbling over with interest in the proceedings; here were teachers coming back to renew far-away associations, to exchange scholastic experiences and to shake old colleagues by the hand. Here, in one word, were gathered together, in peculiarly happy circumstances, all those who make up the life and being of the great growing organism called The Mount School; here indeed was The Mount School Fellowship. Then little by little I began to understand the significance of the various meetings and functions; of the days so full of activities, pleasures, business and duties.

First, the Saturday evening meeting, where the interest centred in Mount School matters, and which partook of the character of a *close* Society; a meeting where the love of the old School and loyalty to it took form, as it were, and found expression in the persons of those who had come inspired with the life-giving power that lies in the longing to render practical help; a meeting where the various needs of the School, from scholarships to tennis racquets, could be discussed, and where the kindly and executive powers of the Old Scholars could be exercised, and where the gracious and able presidency of Miss Thompson dignified our proceedings.

When I was Head of the School I always felt this Saturday evening meeting as peculiarly interesting, and I for one hope its character will never be greatly changed, for it embodies the corporate feeling of the M.O.S. Association and should be an inspiration and an example to its younger members, as well as to the present pupils in the School; an initiation for them into what one may perhaps fairly call the mysteries of



loyalty to a great ideal; and as the Old Scholars should represent the outcome of the education of The Mount and the product of its training, we cannot but look with intense interest on this executive meeting, representing as it does the Association generally, whose influence must be felt not only in the School but in the Society at large. Nor can we doubt that the Association feels the responsibility that this representative character brings with it.

When Monday came another vista opened out for us, when Bootham was united in our thoughts with The Mount, and interest in the brother institution, far from lessening, deepened our feeling for our own school; and all this interest culminated when in the afternoon, after watching their cricket match in the morning, we could welcome the Bootham Old Scholars and Boys on our own ground and could enjoy "the cup that cheers but not inebriates" along with talk, tennis and music, in the open-air.

Then the evening meeting at Clifford Street, when we Mountites enjoyed the hospitality and good fellowship of Bootham. Free from anxieties as to speech making, conduct of business or arrangement of programme, and though deeply grateful for our entertainment, not having even a proposal of a vote of thanks to disturb our tranquillity, we could appreciate with quiet mind the fun and enthusiasm of the brother school, and could enter into the manifestation of that splendid public spirit which is always such a marked feature of those Monday evening meetings, and might gather inspiration from the genial spirit who year by year has presided over that meeting and given it weight and character.<sup>1</sup>

On the Tuesday, one saw how the Association wisely recognised that one of the binding, enduring elements of Fellowship is to be found in the common enjoyment of the beauty of moor and stream, valley and wood; when open air and limitless sky and boundless animal life speak with strange power of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Spence Watson.

the infinite meaning of that great paradox the *Law of Liberty*.

And then it dawned upon me last of all what a good and blessed thing it was that Whit-Monday did not fall on Tuesday or Wednesday or any other day,—that in a word *Sunday* was part of this holiday programme. For it was on the Sunday that one began to realise that these Schools of the Mount and Bootham were not isolated scholastic institutions, but part and parcel of a wider and larger fellowship, namely, living members of the Society of Friends; and it was at these Sunday meetings that one felt a voice could be given, as it were, to the Educational training that had been our charge in the Schools. The aim of this was, one always felt, the building up of character, the character not only of the scholar, of the man or of the woman, but of the citizen, and that of no mean city, and it was at these Sunday meetings that we enjoyed the profoundest sense of union and fellowship of heart. When we met in the evening of Sunday in our own Lecture Room, with memories of old days; of friendships made; of joys and sorrows experienced together; of failures and successes known, it may be, only to the individual; with thoughts of some who had perhaps passed from our little company since we last met there; then it was for me that our M.O.S. Association had most to teach. At that quiet time of meeting something of a truer knowledge of our life and school came; a clearer vision as to the joy and inspiration of the present; a deeper and tenderer understanding of the past; and a purer and loftier hope for the future;—when comradeship partook of the nature of the Communion of Spirits and our earthly dwelling place seemed to catch something of the light of the Heavenly Kingdom.

And now, when we ask ourselves, as I am sure we must do at such times, what is the something which causes us year after year to be “together with one accord in one place,” what is the constraining motive, the active combining power? surely we may see that here, as in everything that concerns

our truest and highest being, it is the intangible, incalculable, invisible forces that are actuating our doings—memory of the past, sentiment, romance, loyalty to an ideal, belief in the power of fellowship. What are these? Names, fancies, visionary, airy nothings. Yes, perhaps, but they are such stuff as we are made of. They are the *essentials*, and it is well for us that we should sometimes recognise them, and at the moments when we are most open to their gentle influence. The daily task, the bustling business, the material things that we can see and handle often seem to us all-important. But it is the memories of the past which mould our present and perhaps shape our future. Memory is a great factor in our life, and if we are wise we shall shrink from forgetfulness, even of pain and sorrow. We shall all remember the fine allegory told by one of the great imaginative geniuses of our time, whom it is now somewhat fashionable to neglect. In his story of the "Haunted Man," Charles Dickens shows up one who wrecks his life and loses all sense of comradeship, all touch with humanity and brings a curse wherever he comes, because he has chosen to accept the gift of forgetfulness of the past. The present loses all its charms; the future becomes a meaningless blank, and the man is practically lost.

Yes, "we look before and after," and the remembrance of "the days that are no more," the memory of those we have loved, the recollections even of our own selves of long ago, keep our human interests pure and sweet.

There are people who try to live without sentiment, who would strike it out of their lives altogether, who scoff at it and call themselves "good plain people with no nonsense about them;" people who tell you they cannot understand poetry and have a very indifferent opinion of those who suppose they can. Well, these are not the persons one would choose for one's companions, still less for one's friends. They remind us of the matter-of-fact person who in a life-crisis was willing and anxious to pray, and found he could not remember any-

thing but the multiplication table. It has been said of that marvellous character, Falstaff, that he is a creature devoid of sentiment; and a study of his ideal, his aims and his achievements, his notion of virtue and of honour, shows pretty clearly what that amounts to.

Again, we may, I think, see that such a union as ours, which recognises the truth, if it has not actually adopted the motto, *each for all and all for each*, may help to combat and to lay that spirit of scholastic egoism, that intellectual Pharisaism with which culture and the Higher Education are too often, perhaps justly charged. There is nothing that so effectually shakes our self-complacency in exclusiveness as practical hand to hand work, and heart to heart sympathy with men and women; and just so far as the fellowship of our association is true and genuine will all barriers which are limiting and narrowing be weakened.

So our memories of the past, our gratitude and our love, our sentiment, our loyalty, are all stimulated and braced by these gatherings, and all who have the well-being of the Schools, and I may say of our Society at heart, will not only be grateful for these annual meetings, but will do their best to keep them on a high level.

It is well for us to try to see their real significance now and here, and not to wait till they are past and gone. One of the things that one learns as one grows older, one of the compensations for old age, strange as it may sound to the younger people, is that our life gets fuller of romance and poetry as we go along the journey; that as we grow older we begin to see that every day, every hour is a miracle of wonders; and as we look back we grieve that we have understood so little, that we have only so partially grasped the meaning of the vision as it passed; and surely one of the greatest marvels of our lives is our communion one with another; the happiness that comes from help given and received; the glories of friendship, the uplifting and thrill of

true Fellowship. And at times of this kind, at any rate, crowded as they are with meaning and life, one longs to make their spirit our own and to be sensible of what they are doing for us, in enlarging our earthly paradise and teaching us that its borders are very near the Heavenly region.

It is doubtless good to entertain angels unawares—it is a glorious experience to know them as they sit at meat with us and before they vanish from our view.

## ADDRESS TO OLD SCHOLARS

ON WHIT-SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1912

“ Let every Christian, as much as in him lies, engage himself openly and publicly before all the world in some mental pursuit for the Building up of Jerusalem.”—BLAKE'S *Jerusalem*.

SPEAKING a while ago at the opening of some college or school, Lord Morley remarked that it was hardly possible nowadays to make a speech, to read a newspaper, to attend a committee, to listen to a sermon, to peruse a novel without coming, sooner or later, upon the word Democracy.

Certainly it is the word in vogue just now, as familiar as *evolution* or even *microbe*. Definitions of the word are as common as blackberries, and we are all, I suppose, under the impression that we have a clear notion of its meaning. It is laid under contribution in literary, as well as political criticism, and some aspects in which we meet with it are amusing enough. G. K. Chesterton, who is nothing if he is not making his readers “ jump out of their boots,” finds, for instance, the character of so innocent a creature as poor Kit Nubbles in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, nothing less than the personification of the Feudal System! (I *think* because it is recorded once or twice of him that he touched his hat.) While Trabb's Boy in *Great Expectations* we are assured represents in a curiously subtle way the sturdy spirit of the English democracy. To some, *democracy*, like *socialism*, means everything that is dark and wicked, and such thinkers may be content with the definition of the examinée who declared it to mean “ the government of demons.” But perhaps we may be satisfied with Lord Morley's definition.—With him democracy means:

“ Government by opinion of the members of the community, properly and wisely selected, if selected at all.”

If this be so, we must acknowledge that the formation of opinion is of vital importance, and it must come home to us when we meet, as we do to-night, in a scholastic institution, since the formation of sound opinion must be the aim of all who are the guides of thought in such a place. If we estimate the worth of a school or college by the body of opinion of those working in it, and for it, and of those Scholars who leave its walls for work outside, we shall not, I think, be far wrong.

Are the opinions such as will lead to sane and worthy conduct and action in those who hold them; are they of a kind to produce and encourage the qualities of self-restraint, love of duty and an honourable public spirit; and I would add, especially in the case of girls and women, the spirit of liberty and intellectual independence? Or on the other hand are they of such a flimsy description that they result in vanity and vexation of spirit, in love of comfort, luxury, self-indulgence and conventional ideas? In other words, are we to have a democracy of idealism, or a democracy of materialism? If the latter, better a thousand times told, feudalism in its most pronounced development.

Though I often think we make a mistake when considering such questions as these if we differentiate between the sexes, perhaps here to-night our thoughts naturally and properly turn to the matter as it may especially concern women.

There are three points with regard to the work and influence of women which just now are patent to every one:

*First*.—That never in the history of the world have women had such opportunities as at the present moment.

*Second* (and this follows on in consequence of the first).—That never was it more important for women to realise that it behoves them to think clearly, justly and independently.

*Third.*—That unless the body of opinion amongst women *generally* is at a high level in a community, little real progress will be made.

I read the papers; I sometimes glance at literature (save the mark) especially provided for those whom Mr. Collins would call "elegant females"; I read (for my sins) the modern novel; I hear some expressions of opinion in conversation; in the street, in places of worship or of entertainment, I meditate in wonder on the skirt and hat of the period, and on the fashions in general, and I occasionally say to myself: "If these things I read and hear and see, reflect the taste and thought of women, are we, in this day of so-called higher education, much better off than our grandmothers were?"

Well, I must confess, that looking beyond a certain limited circle, the prospect is a little discouraging. It seems to me, that *speaking generally*, women are losing golden opportunities. They have now, as I have said, a much wider outlook intellectually, a wider sphere of action than they have ever had; but instead of standing for wholesome simplicities of life, instead of protesting in words and in conduct against conventional thought, conformity to fashion, indulgence in senseless pleasures, and the insane worship of speed, we see vast numbers of women are the abettors of all these things.

Reading, studies, intellectual interests form our thoughts, and thoughts form character, and it is for this reason we must all feel grateful for the educational chances and advantages we have had either at The Mount or elsewhere. And at such a time as this we may perhaps find something of an answer to questions which sometimes rise in our minds when we try to gauge the meaning of the relationship of the school constituents and of her connection with the outside world and ourselves. "What has our School done? What is she doing? What is she going to do?"

Well, through our School we have had the chance, at any



rate, not only of learning to think rightly, but of gaining true notions as to character and conduct, for we have had through her the tradition of earnest and noble effort in the past; we see to-day our contemporaries, or in school phrase our "agesides" out in the world doing their part in one direction of usefulness or another; we see the present School taking a foremost place amongst the schools of England; we believe that greater developments are still before her. And so as visions of our School rise up constantly before us, is it fanciful to say that she assumes the aspect of an old and honoured friend? Though an institution made up of many elements, she has for us the qualities of individuality; she has to some extent moulded our being, she stands for us as a living exemplar. Surely for this we owe her much. For there is no factor in our lives more energising than the formative power of the living example. Look back! What is it that has given you your deepest, most lasting convictions? The answer will be in nine cases out of ten—"Not merely my studies, my intellectual training, but the example of some life." The youth who declared that the finest version of the Bible was that translated for him by the life of his mother, had a true view both of life and of literature. On the other hand, what can be expected from those who come under the influence of the brainless, pleasure-loving, selfish man or woman?

Never, I fancy, shall we be able to enter more intimately into the inner circle of our School's spiritual meaning than at this moment. Collected in this room is now the living membership of The Mount, and not only the living membership. As we sit here I seem to be aware of the presence of three phantom shapes, veiled and silent; each with her attendant crowd of followers; the first in sober colours, mysterious, distant, and leader of a company of "shining ones," some of whose faces we seem to recognise; some of whom we know only by hearsay. They linger a while, then pass on, but not quite to leave us. Their guide wafts a word to us: "Do not forget," she seems

to say, and we have felt the breath of another and a higher region. The second figure in gay and parti-coloured robe appears. Though veiled she is more distinct, more defined than her sister. For an instant the veil is raised and we catch a reflection of a smile; she is close to each one of us; she breathes an air of warmth and of comradeship; she points to those around us; we look into one another's eyes and *seem* to understand; but she too keeps her secret, and mystery is around her; if she speaks at all her words are enigmatic. Then, clear to some of us, almost within our touch, but far off and scarcely visible to the younger ones, stands a solemn figure, and beyond her moves a crowd of undefined and cloudy shapes, hard to distinguish, impossible to identify, but drawing our hearts with strong bands of interest. "These," whispers the figure, "are the souls who will fill your places, who will by-and-bye look upon you from a distance; who will perhaps wonder at your ways, who will perchance learn something from your lives and doings, who will praise you or condemn."

Past, Present, Future; how are we bound together in this place, how inextricably are we joined and held united; how impossible to cut ourselves off from one another, how impossible for us not to help or hinder, to make or mar!

Is it nothing that we find ourselves in such a company? Dull must be the heart which feels no glow of admiration, love and hope at such a moment as this; admiration for the past; love for the present; hope for the future! Poor the intellect untouched by the voice of such a democracy! Our being here, then, means something. We do not meet as critics, as spectators, not even only as friends and comrades, but as those whose meeting can have no meaning unless it bear fruit in the progress and life of the School, unless the quality of our thought and of our actions be worthy of our School's best traditions.

And now, dear friends, may I speak of what I am sure is very near the hearts of us all? It is that indeed which should give point to what I have been saying and upon which most of its

practical meaning depends. If the School itself may be said to stand to us as an exemplar, not less true is it that it has given us examples, personal and individual.

We meet to-night and are aware of a gap in our phalanx. How often on these occasions have we seen, at the far end of the room, coming in late, after busy doings, the kind, keen face of our friend Miss Feldwick! With her lay the marshalling of the complicated domestic arrangements which our big meeting always entails; and how perfectly these would be carried out we knew from long experience. We, and even the Headmistress, could sit at ease and know all would go well. At sight of Miss Feldwick, a vision would rise, too, in some of our minds of the kind and cheery nurse, passing from bed to bed in the subdued light of the nursery, bringing comfort and a sense of security, forgetful of no one's needs but her own. Well, she, who rarely took a holiday, has left us for a little time of leisure and rest. But indeed we cannot say that she has gone. She has not; for she has left a memory behind her which is living and ever present. It is not only the actual work she did for us all, but the *way* in which she did it that we must be grateful for. I think you will agree with me that in these times of luxury and pursuit of physical comforts, the man or woman who consistently, unfalteringly puts duty first, who "scorns delights and lives laborious days," is one we cannot prize too highly; and when such an example is found in a school, to be seen by young and old, day in, day out, year after year, surely we have cause to thank God. Honest work conscientiously carried on before children's eyes; unswerving fidelity in small things as well as great; neatness, order, system, which all mean self-denial on the part of the actor, and comfort and happiness to those around her; what teacher can be more potent, what influence more impressive?

Then what shall I say about the loss we are to have in the retirement of our President? Miss Thompson has for no less

than twenty-one years *stood* for our Association, and she has added weight and dignity to it by her Presidentship. It has not been her presence at our Whitsuntide Gatherings only, though these have indeed gained in every way by her guidance and influence, but we have all felt that Miss Thompson's name, her position in the Society, her abilities as a speaker, her important work in the cause of international peace, have been reason for pride as well as for gratitude on our part, and have tended to raise our standard of work and our ideals. It is difficult to say all one would, but I hope Miss Thompson will *feel* that we recognise how much she has done for us, that we are all deeply and truly grateful to her for her help; for her self-denying readiness to be at our meetings, when perhaps it was far from easy for her to come. We never can adequately express all we feel; can never perhaps hope to make her understand all we owe her, but I know that I shall express the thought of all here when I say that the example of her life and work is a personal gift to each one of us.

As a School, as an Association, and as individuals do not let us forget that to come into contact and near relation with such spirits as Miss Thompson and Miss Feldwick is not only a pleasure but a responsibility. I can myself imagine no more hopeful prospect for the democracy than the multiplication of such leaders and workers amongst women in our land, and the prayer of all Members of the present School, all Old Scholars, all Committee Members should be that the School may continue to send out many such, and that each Whitsuntide should be a season when, "It shall come to pass that God will pour out His Spirit upon us, and our sons and our daughters shall prophesy, and our young men shall see visions and our old men shall dream dreams."

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