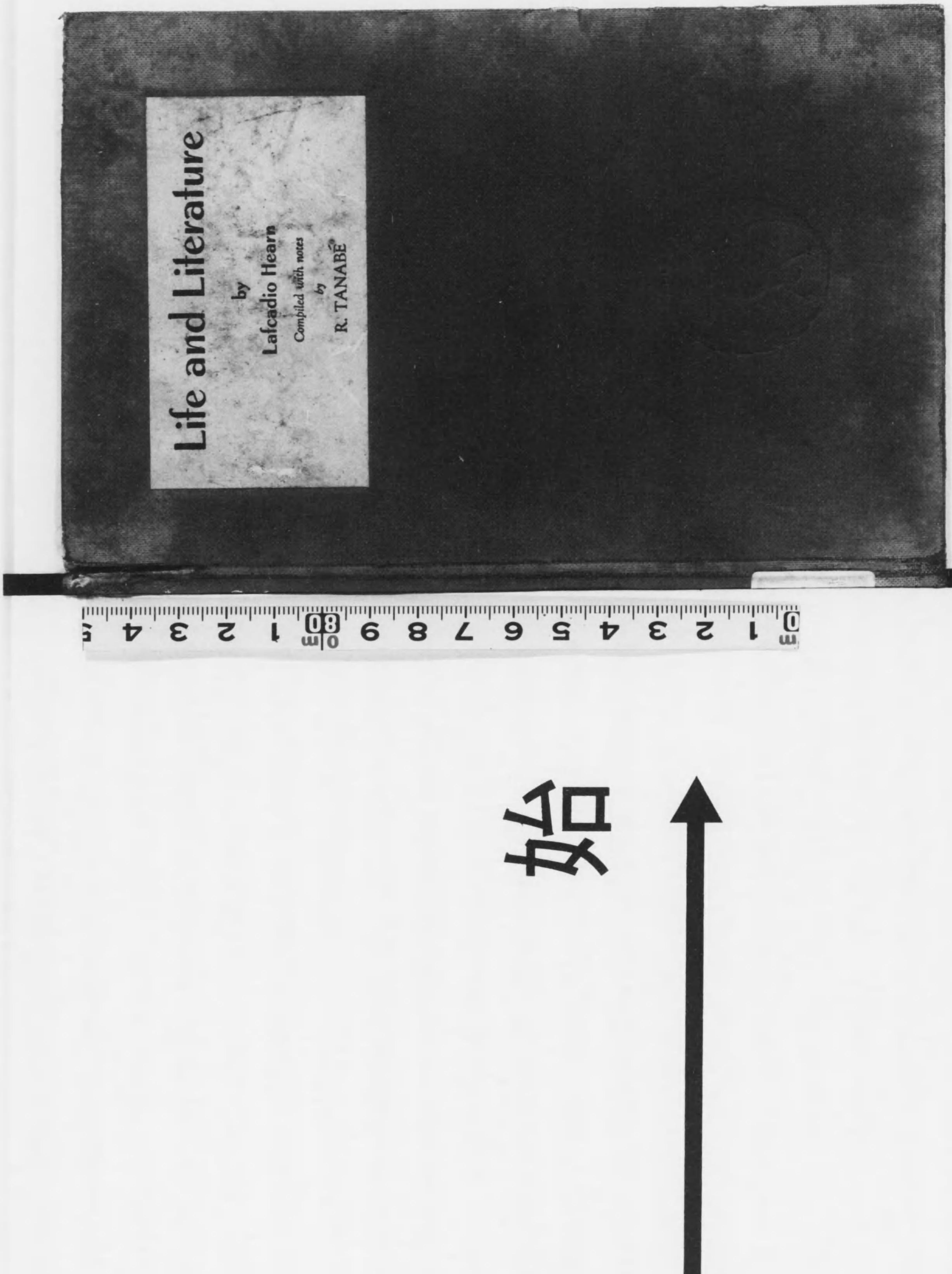
Life and Literature
by
Lafcadio Hearn
Compiled with notes
by
R. TANABE
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LIFE AND LITERATURE

Lafcadio Hearn
(Y. Koizumi)

Life and Literature

By

Lafcadio Hearn

Compiled with Notes

BY

R. TANABÉ

AUTHOR OF "LAFCADIO HEARN"

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PREFACE

Lafcadio Hearn was born at Leucadia (Santa Maura), Ionian Islands, June 27, 1850. His father was an Irish surgeon with the rank of major in the English army stationed there at that time, his mother a Greek. A few years after their return to Dublin, Ireland, his parents' union was dissolved by mutual consent and his mother returned to Greece. His vague memories of his mother were always tender and full of yearning affection and they caused him to love everything Oriental in after-life, as, according to him, he happened "to be an Oriental by birth and half by blood."

He was afterwards adopted by his grand-aunt, brought up and educated in Ireland, Wales, and England. While at St. Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, he lost the sight of his left eye while playing; in consequence of which the work thrown upon the other eye by the enormous labours of his later years exceedingly increased its natural short-sightedness. He was educated, for some time, in France, too. His grand-aunt losing her property, he went to America in 1869, to make his own way. He became a journalist in Cincinnati and stayed there for about eight years. Then he went to New Orleans, where he remained ten years as an editorial writer of the *Times-*

Democrat. In 1887 he went to Martinique, French West Indies, as a literary contributor for the publishing house of Harper Brothers. He returned to New York, and from there came to Japan in April, 1890, again as a contributor for the same firm,—never again to return.

After his arrival in Japan, he at first confined his attention to Yokohama, to Tokyo and to Kamakura, but as he wanted to see the interior, he got a position as English teacher in the Middle School at Matsue, by the help and influence of Mr. Hattori, Prof. Chamberlain, and Mr. Mitchell McDonald. It was in December of that year that he married there a Japanese lady, Miss Koizumi. In the fall of 1891, he went to Kumamoto and taught in the then Fifth Higher Middle School until 1894. Then he went to Kobe and acted for some time as editor of the *Kobe Chronicle*. In 1895 he became a Japanese citizen and took the name of Koizumi Yakumo. In 1896 he was kindly invited by the late Prof. Toyama, the then Dean of the Literary College of the Tokyo Imperial University, to the post of lecturer on English literature at that college, which he continued to hold until 1903. In the spring of 1904, he began to teach at the Waseda University. He died at Nishi-Okubo, Tokyo, September 26, 1904. His long list of works includes the following:—

1. One of Cleopatra's Knights, and Other Fantastic Romances by Théophile Gautier 1882.

2. Stray Leaves from Strange Literature. 1884.
3. Gombo Zhèbes. 1885.
4. The Temptation of St. Anthony (Translation). (1910.)
5. Some Chinese Ghosts. 1887.
6. Chita: A Memory of Last Island. 1889.
7. Karma. (1918.)
8. The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard (Translation). 1890.
9. Two Years in the French West Indies. 1890.
10. Youma. The Story of a West-Indian Slave. 1890.
11. Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist. (1911.)
12. Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan, 2 vols. 1894.
13. Out of the East. 1895.
14. Kokoro. 1896.
15. Gleanings in Buddha-Fields. 1897.
16. Exotics and Retrospectives. 1898.
17. In Ghostly Japan. 1899.
18. Shadowings. 1900.
19. A Japanese Miscellany. 1901.
20. Japanese Fairy Tales, 4 vols. 1898-1903.
21. Kotto. 1902.
22. Kwaidan. 1904.
23. Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation. 1904.
24. The Romance of the Milky Way and Other Studies and Stories. 1905.
25. Fantastics and Other Fancies. 1914.
26. Interpretations of Literature, 2 vols. 1915.
27. Appreciation of Poetry. 1916.
28. Life and Literature. 1917.
29. Essays in European and Oriental Literature. 1923.
30. An American Miscellany. 1924.
31. Saint Anthony and Other Stories by Guy de Maupassant. 1924.
32. Occidental Gleanings. 1925.
33. A History of English Literature, 2 vols. 1927.
34. Some Strange English Literary Figures. 1927.
35. Lectures on Shakespeare. 1928.

36. Essays on American Literature. 1929.
37. Lectures on Prosody. 1929.
38. The Adventures of Walter Schnaffs and Other Stories by Guy de Maupassant.
39. On Art, Literature and Philosophy. 1932.
40. On Poets. 1934.
41. On Poetry. 1934.
42. Stories from Pierre Loti. 1933.
43. Stories from Emile Zola. 1935.
44. Sketches and Tales from the French. 1935.
45. The New Radiance and Other Scientific Sketches. 1939.
46. Buying Christmas Toys and Other Essays. 1939.
47. Oriental Articles. 1939.
48. Literary Essays. 1939.
49. Barbarous Barbers and Other Stories. 1939.
50. Lectures on Tennyson. 1941.

After his death, four volumes of his letters were compiled and published,—one by Henry Watkin, the others by Elizabeth Bisland (Mrs. Wetmore).

Though his works include several translations, travels, novels, essays, and sketches, the material of the bulk of them is of Japan. She owes him a great deal, as her friends have mostly been made by the mighty pen of this great stylist, whose style was at once simple and ornate, and whose soul was full of warm sympathies and keen insight. On the occasion of the coronation of H.I.M. the Emperor, the memory of Koizumi Yakumo was therefore graciously honoured.

R. T.

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LIFE AND LITERATURE

LITERATURE AND POLITICAL OPINION

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

In order to explain very clearly what I mean, I must first ask you to think about the meaning of public opinion in national politics. Perhaps in Japan to-day public opinion may not seem to you of para-

mount importance in deciding matters of statecraft, though you will acknowledge that it is a force which statesmen have, and must always have, to deal with. But in Western countries, where the social conditions are very different, and where the middle classes represent the money power of the nation, public opinion may mean almost every thing. I need scarcely tell you that the greatest force in England is public opinion—that is to say, the general national opinion, or rather feeling, upon any subject of the moment. Sometimes this opinion may be wrong, but right or wrong is not here the question. It is the power that decides for or against war; it is the power that decides for or against reform; it is the power that to a very great degree influences English foreign policy. The same may be said regarding public opinion in France. And although Germany is, next to Russia, the most imperial of European Powers, and possesses the most tremendous military force that the world has ever seen, public opinion there also is still a great power in politics. But most of all, America offers the example of public opinion as government. There indeed the sentiment of the nation may be said to decide almost every question of great importance, whether domestic or foreign.

Now the whole force of such opinion in the West depends very much for its character upon knowledge. When people are correctly informed upon a subject, they are likely, in the mass, to think correctly in

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

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

that at all times its influence can be only of the moment. The real power that shapes opinion in regard to other nations and other civilizations is literature—fiction and poems. What one people in Europe knows about another people is largely obtained, not from serious volumes of statistics, or grave history, or learned books of travel, but from the literature of that people—the literature that is an expression of its emotional life.

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

I should say that English public feeling regarding many foreign countries has been very largely made by such literature. But I have time only to give you one striking example—the case of Russia. When I was a boy the public knew absolutely noth-

ing about Russia worth knowing, except that the Russian soldiers were very hard fighters. But fighting qualities, much as the English admired them, are to be found even among savages, and English experience with Russian troops did not give any reason for a higher kind of admiration. Indeed, up to the middle of the present century the Russians were scarcely considered in England as real human kindred. The little that was known of Russian customs and Russian Government was not of a kind to correct hostile feeling—quite the contrary. The cruelties of military law, the horrors of Siberian prisons,—these were often spoken of; and you will find even in the early poetry of Tennyson, even in the text of *The Princess*, references to Russia of a very grim kind.

All that was soon to be changed. Presently translations into French, into German, and into English, of the great Russian authors began to make their appearance. I believe the first remarkable work of this sort directly translated into English was Tolstoy's *Cossacks*, the translator being the American minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Schuyler. The great French writer Mérimée had already translated some of the best works of Gógol and Púshkin. These books began to excite extraordinary interest. But a much more extraordinary interest was aroused by the subsequent translations of the great novels of Turgénev, Dostöevsky, and others. Turgénev es-

pecially became a favourite in every cultured circle in Europe. He represented living Russia as it was —the heart of the people, and not only the heart of the people but the feelings and the manners of all classes in the great empire. His books quickly became world-books, nineteenth century classics, the reading of which was considered indispensable for literary culture. After him many other great works of Russian fiction were translated into nearly all the languages of Europe. Nor was this all. The great intellect of Russia, suddenly awakening, had begun to make itself heavily felt in the most profound branches of practical science. The most remarkable discovery of modern times in chemistry, concerning the law of atomic weights, was a Russian discovery; the most remarkable work of physiography accomplished in regard to Northern Asia was the work of Prince Kropotkin, who still lives, and writes wonderful books and memoirs. I am mentioning only two cases out of hundreds. In medicine, in linguistics, in many other scientific directions, the influence of Russian work and thought is now widely recognized. But however scientific men might find reason to respect the Russian intellect, it is not by intellect that a nation can make itself understood abroad. The great work of making Russia understood was accomplished chiefly by her novelists and story-tellers. After having read those wonderful books, written with a simple strength of which we have no

paralleled example in western literature, except the works of a few Scandinavian writers, the great nations of the West could no longer think of Russians as a people having no kinship with them. Those books proved that the human heart felt and loved and suffered in Russia just as in England, or France, or Germany; but they also taught something about the peculiar and very great virtues of the Russian people, the Russian masses—their infinite patience, their courage, their loyalty, and their great faith. For, though we could not call these pictures of life beautiful (many of them are very terrible, very cruel), there is much of what is beautiful in human nature to be read between the lines. The gloom of Turgénev and of his brothers in fiction only serves to make the light seem more beautiful by contrast. And what has been the result? A total change of Western feeling towards the Russian people. I do not mean that Western opinion has been at all changed as regards the Russian Government. Politically Russia remains the nightmare of Europe. But what the people are has been learned, and well learned, through Russian literature; and a general feeling of kindliness and of human sympathy has taken the place of the hatred and dislike that formerly used to tone popular utterances in regard to Russians in general.

Now you will see very clearly what I mean, what I am coming to. Vast and powerful as the Russian nation is, it has great faults, great deficiencies,

such as have not characterized the people of this country for thousands of years. So far as civilization signifies manners and morals, education and industry, I should certainly say that the Japanese even hundreds of years ago were more civilized as a nation than the Russians of to-day, than the Russians can be even for a long time to come. Yet what is known in Western countries about Japan? Almost nothing. I do not mean that there are not now hundreds of rich people who have seen Japan, and have learned something about it. Thousands of books about Japan have been written by such travellers. But these travellers and writers represent very little; certainly they do not represent national opinion in any way. The great Western peoples—the masses of them—know just as little about Japan to-day as was known about Russia at the beginning of this century. They know that Japan can fight well, and she has railroads, and ships of war; and that is about all that has made an impression upon the public mind. The intellectual classes of Europe know a great deal more, but as I have said, these do not make public opinion, which is largely a matter of feeling, not of thinking. National feeling can not be reached through the head; it must be reached through the heart. And there is but one class of men capable of doing this—your own men of letters. Ministers, diplomats, representatives of learned societies—none of these can do it. But a single great novelist, a single great poet, might very

well do it. No one foreign in blood and in speech could do it, by any manner of means. It can only be done by Japanese literature, thought by Japanese, written by Japanese, and totally uninfluenced by foreign thinking and foreign feeling.

Let me try to put this truth a little more plainly to you by way of illustration. At present the number of books written by foreigners about Japan reaches many thousands; every year at least a dozen new books appear on the subject; and nevertheless the Western reading public knows nothing about Japan. Nor could it be said that these books have even resulted in lessening the very strong prejudices that Western people feel towards all Oriental nations —prejudices partly the result of natural race-feeling, and partly the result of religious feeling. Huxley once observed that no man could imagine the power of religious prejudice until he tried to fight it. As a general rule the men who try to fight against Western prejudices in regard to the religions of other peoples, are abused whenever possible, and when not possible, they are either ignored or opposed by all possible means. Even the grand Oxford undertaking of the translations of the Sacred Books of the Eastern races was very strongly denounced in many quarters; and the translators are still accused of making Eastern religions seem more noble than they really could be. I mention this fact only as an illustration of one form of prejudice; and there are hundreds of others. At

the present time any person who attempts to oppose these, has no chance of being fairly heard. But the general opinion is that any good things said about the civilization, the ethics, the industry, or the faith of Japan, are said for selfish motives—for reasons of flattery or fear or personal gain; and that the unkind, untruthful, and stupid things said, are said by brave, frank, independent, and very wise people. And why is this? Because the good and bad alike have been said only by foreigners. What any foreigner now says about Japanese life and thought and character will have very little influence on the good side, though it may have considerable influence on the other side. This is inevitable. Moreover, remember that the work done by foreigners in the most appreciative and generous directions has not been of a kind that could reach the Western mass of readers. It could reach only small intellectual circles. You can not touch the minds of a great people by mere books of travel, or by essays, or by translations of literature having nothing in common with Western feeling. You can reach them only through more humane literature, fiction and poetry, novels and stories. If only foreigners had written about Russia, the English people would still think of the Russian upper classes as barbarians, and would scarcely think of the great nation itself as being humanly related to them. All prejudices are due to ignorance; ignorance can be dissipated best by appeals to the nobler emotions.

And the nobler emotions are best inspired by pure literature.

I should suppose that more than one of you would feel inclined to ask, "What need we care about the prejudices and the stupidities of ignorant people in Western countries?" Well, I have already told you that at the present time these relatively ignorant and stupid millions have a great deal to do with State-policy. It is the opinion of the ignorant, much more than the opinion of the wise, that regulates the policy of Western Governments with foreign nations. That would be a good reason of itself. But I will now go further, and say that I think the absence of a modern Japanese literature, such as I am advocating, is indirectly to be regretted also for commercial reasons. It is quite true that commerce and trade are not exactly moral occupations; they are conducted according to relative morality, perhaps, not according to positive morality. In short, business is not moral. It is a kind of competition; and all competitions are in the nature of war. But in this war, which is necessary, and which can not be escaped, a very great deal depends upon the feelings with which the antagonists regard each other. A very great deal depends upon sympathy, even in business, upon an understanding of the simplest feelings regarding right and wrong, pleasure and pain; for, at bottom, all human interests are based upon these. I am quite certain that a Japanese

literature capable of creating sympathy abroad would have a marked effect in ameliorating business conditions and in expanding commercial possibilities. The great mass of business is risk. Now men are more or less in the position of enemies, when they have to risk without perfect knowledge of all the conditions upon the other side. In short, people are afraid of what they do not understand. And there is no way by which the understanding could be so quickly imparted as through the labours of earnest men of letters. I might mention in this connection that I have seen lately letters written by merchants in a foreign country, asking for information in regard to conditions in this country, which proved the writers to know even less about Japan than they know about the moon. In ten years, two or three—nay, even one great book—would have the effect of educating whole business circles, whole millions of people in regard to what is true and good in this country.

Now I have put these thoughts before you in the roughest and simplest way possible, not because I think that they represent a complete argument on the subject, but because I trust they contain something which will provoke you to think very seriously about the matter. A man may do quite as great a service to his country by writing a book as by winning a battle. And you had proof of this fact the other day, when a young English writer fell sick,

with the result that all over the world the cables were set in motion to express to him the sympathy of millions and millions of people, while kings and emperors asked about his health. What had this young man done? Nothing except to write a few short stories and a few little songs that made all Englishmen understand each other's heart better than before, and that had made other nations better understand the English. Such a man is really worth to his country more than a king. If you will remember this, I believe the lecture I have given will bear good fruit at some future day.

ON THE RELATION OF LIFE AND CHARACTER TO LITERATURE

I

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

The first question is, "Have I creative power?" That is to say, "Am I able to produce either poetry, or fiction, or drama, by my own experience, out of my own mental operation, without following the ideas of other people, or being influenced, consciously or unconsciously, only by the opinions of others?" If you cannot answer this question with an honest "Yes," then you can only be an imitator.

But suppose that you can answer this first question in the affirmative, there remains another question almost equally important to ask. It is this:

"Can I devote my life—or at least the best part of my leisure time—to literary work?" If you cannot be sure of much time to spare, you should be sure, at least, of being able to give, every day of your existence, a short time to one sustained object. If you are not sure of being able to do this, you will find the way of literature very hard indeed.

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

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

II

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

Poetry is not one of those forms of literature

which require that the author shall mix a great deal with active life. On the contrary, poetry is especially the art of solitude. Poetry requires a great deal of time, a great deal of thought, a great deal of silent work, and all the sincerity of which a man's nature is capable. The less that a real poet mingles with social life, the better for his art. This is a well known fact in all countries. It is so well known that if a young poet allows himself to be flattered and petted and made much of by the rich and mighty, it is commonly said that he is going to be ruined. One cannot be perfectly sincere to oneself and become an object of fashionable attention. It is utterly impossible. The art of poetry requires that the poet be as solitary in his house as a priest. I do not mean that it should be necessary to be an ascetic, or anything of that kind, nor that he should not be troubled with family cares. It is very necessary that he should have a family, and know all that the family means, in order to be a good poet. But he must certainly renounce what are generally called social pleasures. In the same degree that he fails to do this, he is almost certain to fail in his poetry.

Let us here consider a few extraordinary facts about the poetical life. Of course you know that poetry does not mean merely writing verses, no matter how correct the verses may be. It means the power to move men's hearts and minds by verse. Now a Persian poet once observed that no bad man

could possibly become a poet. There is a good deal of truth in that statement, notwithstanding some apparent exceptions. You have doubtless read that many European poets were bad men. But you must take such statements with a great deal of reserve and qualification. I imagine, for example, that you will immediately think of Byron. But Byron was not fairly judged; and you must not allow yourselves to accept any mere religious or social declaration about the character of the poet. The real facts are that Byron was unjustly treated and goaded and irritated into immoral courses. Moreover, the deeper nature of Byron was essentially generous and sympathetic, and when he follows the inspiration of his deeper nature, he gives us the best of what he has. I might speak of many other poets; you will always find that there was something good and generous in the man, however great his faults may have appeared on the surface. Indeed, I knew only one or two exceptions to this Persian observation that no bad man can be a poet, and these exceptions are not satisfactory. We find in the time of the Italian Renaissance a few extraordinarily wicked men who made a reputation as poets. I might mention, for example, the name of Malatesta. But when we come to examine the literary work of this cruel and ferocious man, we find that its only merit is the perfect correctness of the verse. Perfectly correct verse was greatly esteemed in that age; but we are

much wiser to-day. We now know that no mere correctness qualifies verse as true poetry; and I do not think that the Persian poet would have found any poetry in the love verses of the wicked Malatesta.

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

So the fundamental truth of this whole matter is simply that a poet must be born a poet—as the English proverb says, "A poet is born, not made." No amount of education will make a man a poet. Every year in England two great Universities turn out about four thousand good men stuffed with all that systematic education can force into them. German Universities can do better than that. French Universities do quite as well. But out of these thousands and thousands, how many can become poets? Not half a dozen in all the countries of Europe together. Education will help a poet; it will greatly enrich his powers of language; it will train his ear to the charm of musical sound, and train his brain to perceive all possible laws of proportion and taste in form. But it cannot make him

a poet. I suppose there are to-day in England alone at least thirty thousand people capable of writing almost any form of correct verse. Yet perhaps not even two of them are poets; for poetry is a question of character and temperament. One must be born with a love of the beautiful, with great capacities for sympathy, with a certain gentleness of disposition, in order to be able to act upon the feelings of men through literature. The qualities that make the poet belong to the softer side of human nature—hence the proverb that the poet is a man who is half a woman. I think that you have all observed that certain admirable but hard kinds of mind are almost insensible to sentiment in literature. As a general rule—though exceptions have existed—mathematicians cannot be poets; the great Goethe, distinguished as he was in science by reason of his constructive imagination, was singularly deficient in mathematical capacity. It would appear that certain powers of the mind cannot be cultivated except at the expense of other faculties. Everywhere poets have been recognized as more or less unpractical in active life; they rarely make good business men; they never can do certain things requiring insensibility to the feelings of others. Essentially sympathetic, their conduct is ruled in all things by feelings rather than by cold reason, and that is why they very often make such unfortunate mistakes. But they should be thought of as representing in the highest degree

what is emotional in man. If the whole world were governed by hard and fast rules, it would become very much more difficult to live in than it now is because of the poets who help to keep alive the more generous impulses of human nature. That is why they have been called priests.

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

III

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

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

tion his literary strength is growing. If he feels that he can do better by imagination than by observation, then let him by all means cultivate romantic work. But if he feels sure that he can do better by using his senses—by observing, comparing—then he must, as a duty to himself, adopt a realistic method. And the conduct of his life in relation to literature must be decided according to which path he decides to take.

As I told you, the highest forms of fiction and drama have been the work of intuition, of imagination. Thackeray, for example, no more than Shakespeare, actually saw or experienced what he put into his novels. Yet those novels much surpassed the novels of Miss Brontë, who only wrote what she heard and saw and felt. If you did not know the real facts of the case, you would think that Thackeray was more realistic than Miss Brontë. Great imaginative work is more realistic than reality itself, more apparently objective than the result of objective study. But as I reminded you, it is only a genius who can reach this sort of realism through intuition. However, there are minor degrees of genius. You must have noticed some of these among yourselves. In any gathering of students there are always a few remarkable persons in whom the other students are willing to put their trust whenever any emergency arises. Suppose a thousand students are in a difficult position of some kind or anxious about something; presently out of that thousand, leaders

or guides or advisors would come forward. It is not necessary at all that they should be particularly strong or formidable persons; what is wanted in a time of embarrassment or danger is a good head, not a strong arm. You instinctively know, I presume, that he who has the best head among you is not necessarily the best scholar. It is not scholarship that is needed for difficult circumstances; it is what we call "mother-wit," strong common sense, that is what we commonly mean in England by "a good head." Persons of this kind do not often make mistakes. Notice how they act when they come in contact with strangers—they remain quite at ease, unembarrassed, and they know what to do and what to say on meeting extraordinary persons or extraordinary events. Now what is the power, this "mother-wit"? It is a kind of strong intuition. It is the best of all wits that a man can be born to. If a man have this gift in a very great degree, and if he happen at the same time to have a love of literature, he can be a great dramatist or a great novelist. There is the real subjective worker. He has no difficulty in creating imaginary persons, and making them perform their parts; he has been born with the knowledge of what most kinds of men and women would do under certain circumstances. But a high degree of genius is not often found in this direction; all that I want you to bear clearly in mind, is that for subjective work, imaginative work, you must

know yourselves to possess a certain amount of this intuition. Unless you have it, it were better to work in other directions.

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

to surf. I suppose you know that while almost everybody knows how to swim more or less, surf-swimmers are not very common. In America or other countries good surf-swimmers get high wages in the Government life-saving service; one must not only have learned from childhood, but must have great natural strength and skill. Now in the great sea of social life, where clumsy people are so easily drowned, the character of which I speak is like that of a strong surf-swimmer. He has nothing to fear from breakers. Observe also that men of this class, as the history of English literature especially shows, always find time to do what they want, and do not trouble themselves much about the "wear and tear" of social duty. Take, for example, the history of Victorian literature. Only one of the four great Victorian poets possessed the dramatic faculty in a high degree—Robert Browning. Tennyson, Rossetti, and Swinburne led lives of solitude and meditation; Browning on the other hand was constantly in society, studying human nature as well as obtaining enjoyment from social experience. Or take again the prose-writers. The great romantic novelists were all solitary men; the great dramatic novelists were essentially social men. Thackeray, for instance, was especially a man of society. Or to take a still later example, Meredith, the greatest of English psychological novelists, is of course a social figure. It was in the life of the upper classes that

he found the substance of his extraordinary novels. Not to multiply examples, which would require too much time, it may be said that as a general rule, solitude is of no use to men of creative genius.

IV

I think I have shown you, or suggested to you, that two great departments of literature — the emotional, as represented especially by poetry, and the creative, as especially represented by drama or the dramatic novels — depend altogether upon character, upon inheritance. You cannot make a great poet or a great dramatist by education, though education may help. And you have seen that the two kinds of character belonging respectively to romantic literature and to realistic literature are almost exactly opposed to each other. Both are rare. It is not likely in these days that many among us can hope to belong to either class. We generally know whether we belong to one or the other of them at an early period of life. The extraordinary faculties usually, though not always, manifest themselves in youth. It is true that, very rarely, a great talent only develops about middle age —this occurring chiefly in the case of prose-writers. But unless we have the very best of reasons to believe ourselves born to great things in literature, it is much better not to imagine that we have any special mission. Most students of literature are more likely

to belong to the third class than to either of the classes preceding, and it is of the third class especially that something useful may be said.

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

the provincial stage, unless he happens to have extraordinary chances, extraordinary tastes, and very much time to cultivate both.

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

play is but a short step. Or in the case of the English novelist and poet, we really find illustrations of only one and the same faculty both in his poetry and in his prose. The novels in one case are essentially psychological novels; the poetry is essentially psychological poetry. Again Browning's plays are scarcely more than the development in dramatic form of the ideas to be found in the dramatic poems. Or take the case of Kingsley—essentially a romantic—romantic of the very first class. He was great in poetry and great in prose; but there is an extraordinary resemblance between the poetry and the prose in his case, and he was wise enough to write very little poetry, for he knew where his chief strength lay. If you want to see and judge for yourself, observe the verse of Kingsley's poem on Edith of the Swan-Neck, and then read a page or two of the romance of *Hereward the Wake*. I could give you fifty examples of the same kind in English literature. Men have succeeded in two directions only when one of these naturally led into the other. But no student should make the serious mistake—a mistake which hundreds of trained English men of letters are making to-day—of trying to write in two entirely different and opposed directions—for example, in romantic poetry and realistic prose. It is very necessary to know in which way your tastes should be cultivated, in which way you are most strong. Mediocrity is the certain result of not knowing.

For after all, this last class of literature, like every other, depends for success upon character—upon inborn conditions, upon inheritance of tastes and feelings and tendencies. Once that you know these, the way becomes plain, though not smooth; everything thereafter depends upon hard work, constant effort.

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

All this leads to the subject of an extraordinary difficulty in the way of any new Japanese literature, a difficulty about which I wanted to talk to you from the first. I think you know that leisure is essential to the production of any art in any country —that is, any national art. I am not speaking of those extraordinary exceptions furnished by men able to produce wonderful things under any circumstances. Such exceptional men do not make national art; they produce a few inimitable works of genius.

An art grows into existence out of the slow labour and thought and feelings of thousands. In that sense, leisure is absolutely necessary to art. Need I remind you that every Japanese art has been the result of generations of leisurely life? Those who made the now famous arts of Japan—literature as well as ceramics or painting or metal work—were not men who did their work in a hurry. Nobody was in a hurry in ancient times. Those elaborate ceremonies, now known as tea-ceremonies, indicate the life of a very leisurely and very aesthetic period. I mention that as one illustration of many things. To-day, although some people try to insist that the arts of Japan are as flourishing as ever, the best judges frankly declare that the old arts are being destroyed. It is not only foreign influence in the shape of bad taste that is destroying them; it is the want of leisure. Every year the time formerly allowed for pleasure of any kind is becoming more and more curtailed. None of you who are here listening to me can fail to remember a period when people had much more time than they have now. And none of you will fail to see a period in which the want of time will become much more painful, much more terrible than at present. For your civilization is gradually but surely taking an industrial character; and in the time when it shall have become almost purely industrial there will be very little leisure indeed. Very possibly you are thinking that England,

Germany, and France are essentially industrial countries—though able to produce so much art. But the conditions are not the same. Industrialism in other countries has not rendered impossible the formation of wealthy leisure classes; those leisure classes still exist, and they have rendered possible, especially in England, the production of great literature. A very long time indeed must elapse before Japan can present an analogous condition.

The want of time you will feel every year more and more. And there are other and more serious difficulties to think about. Every few years young Japanese scholars who have been trained abroad in the Universities of Europe—who have been greatly praised there, and who show every promise—return to Japan. After their return, what a burden of obligations is thrust upon their shoulders! They have, to begin with, to assume the cares of a family; they have to become public officers, and to perform official duty for a much greater number of hours than would be asked of men in similar positions abroad; and under no circumstances can they hope for that right to dispose of their own time which is allowed to professors in foreign countries. No; they must at once accept onerous positions which involve hundreds of duties and which are very likely to keep a man occupied on many days of the year from sunrise until a late hour of the night. Even what are thought and what used really to be pleasurable

occasions, have ceased to be pleasing; time is lacking for the pleasure, but the fatigue and the pain remain. I need not particularize how many festivals, banquets, public and private celebrations, any public official is obliged to attend. At present this cannot be helped. It is the struggle between the old state and the new; and the readjustment will take many years to effect. But is it any wonder that these scholars do not produce great things in literature? It is common for foreigners to say that the best Japanese scholars do not seem to do anything after they return to Japan. The fact is that they do too much, but not of the kind that leaves a permanent work.

Most of you, whether rich or otherwise, will be asked after your University life is over to do a great deal too much. I imagine that most of you will have to do the work of at least three men. Trained teachers, trained officers, trained men of any kind, are still rare. There are not enough of them; there is too much to do, and too few men to do it. And in the face of these unquestionable facts, how can you hope to produce any literature? Assuredly it is very discouraging. It could not be more discouraging.

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

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

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

literature, who is also one of the busiest of English lawyers and statesmen. For forty or fifty years this man had never a single hour of leisure by day. All his books were produced, a page or two at a time, late in the evening after his household had gone to sleep. It is not really so much a question of time for this class of literature as a question of perfect regularity of habits. Even twenty minutes a day, or twenty minutes a night, represents a great deal in the course of a couple of years, and may be so used as to produce great results. The only thing is that this small space of time should be utilized regularly as the clock strikes—never interrupted except by unavoidable circumstances, such as sickness. To fatigue one's body, or to injure one's eyesight, by a useless strain is simply a crime. But that should not be necessary under any circumstances in good health. Nor is it necessary to waste time and effort in the production of exactly so much finished manuscript. Not at all. The work of literature should especially be a work of thinking and feeling; the end to be greatly insisted upon is the record of every experience of thought and feeling. Make the record even in pencil, in short hand, in the shape of little drawings—it matters not how, so long as the record is sufficient to keep fresh the memory when you turn to it again. I am quite sure that the man who loves literature and enjoys a normal amount of good health can make a good book within

a year or two, no matter how busy he may otherwise be, if he will follow systematic rules of work.

You may ask what kind of work is good to begin with. I have no hesitation in replying, translation. Translation is the best possible preparation for original work, and translations are vastly needed in Japan. No knowledge of Western literature can ever become really disseminated in Japan merely through the University and the school; it can be disseminated only through translations. The influence of French, or German, of Spanish, Italian, and Russian literature upon English literature has been very largely effected through translations. Scholarship alone cannot help the formation of a new national literature. Indeed, the scholar, by the very nature of his occupation, is too apt to remain unproductive. After some work of this kind, original work should be attempted. Instinctively some Japanese scholars have been doing this very thing; they have been translating steadily. But there they have mostly stopped. Yet, really, translation should be only the first step of the literary ladder.

As to original work, I have long wanted to say to you something about the real function of literature in relation not to the public, but to the author himself. That function should be moral. Literature ought to be especially a moral exercise. When I

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

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

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

Emerson has uttered very nearly the same idea with those famous verses in which he describes the moral

effect upon a strong mind of the great sorrow caused by the death of the woman beloved:

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

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

Remember, I do not mean that a literary man should write only to try and forget his suffering.

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

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

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

Yet one more thing remains to be said, and it is not unimportant. It is this: A thing once written is not literature. The great difference between literature and every thing included under the name of journalism lies in this fact. No man can produce real literature at one writing. I know that there are a great many stories about famous men sitting down to write a wonderful book at one effort, and never even correcting the manuscript afterwards. But I must tell you that the consensus of literary experience declares nearly all these stories to be palpable lies. To produce even a single sentence of good literature requires that the text be written at least three times. But for one who is beginning, three times three were not too much. And I am not speaking of poetry at all—that may have to be written over as many as fifty times before the proper effect is attained. You will perhaps think this is a contradiction of what I told you before, about the great value of writing down, even in pencil, little notes of your thoughts and feelings. But the contradiction only seems; really there is no contradiction at all. The value of the first notes is very great—greater than the value of any intermediate form. But the writer should remember that such notes represent only the outline of the

foundation, the surveying and the clearing of the ground on which his literary structure is slowly and painfully to be raised. The first notes do not express the real thought or the real feeling, no matter how carefully you try to write them. They are only signs, ideographs, helping you to remember. And you will find that to reproduce the real thought faithfully in words will require a great deal of time. I am quite sure that few of you will try to do work in this way in the beginning; you will try every other way first, and have many disappointments. Only painful experience can assure you of the necessity of doing this. For literature more than for any other art, the all-necessary thing is patience. That is especially why I cannot recommend journalism as a medium of expression to literary students—at least, not as a regular occupation. For journalism cannot wait, and the best literature must wait.

I am not sure that these suggestions can have any immediate value; I only hope that you will try to remember them. But in order to test the worth of one of them, I very much hope that somebody will try the experiment of writing one little story or narrative poem, putting it in a drawer, writing it over again, and hiding it again, month after month, for the time of one year. The work need not take more than a few minutes every day after the first writing. After the last writing at the end of the

year, if you read it over again, you will find that the difference between the first form and the last is exactly like the difference of seeing a tree a mile off, first with the naked eye, and afterwards with a very powerful telescope.

ON COMPOSITION

I

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

what he does; but it is quite certain that you could learn something from him, because he has served an apprenticeship, and knows, by constant practice of hand and eye, how a carpenter's work should be done.

So much for my position in the matter. Now I want to begin my lecture by trying to disabuse your minds of two or three common errors in regard to literary composition. I do not say that you all indulge these errors; but I think it not improbable. The first error against which I wish to warn you is the very widespread error that the making of literature—that is to say, the writing of books or poems—is a matter that you can learn through education, through the reading of books, through the mastery of theories. I am going to be absolutely frank with you, but quite heterodox notwithstanding, by telling you that education will not help you to become a poet or a story-teller any more than it could help you to become a carpenter or a blacksmith. There are accessible to you, in libraries, any number of books and treatises about different kinds of woods, about different kinds of tools, and about the industry of woodwork. You might read all of these, and learn by heart every fact of importance that they contain; but that would not enable you to make with your own hands a good table or a good chair. So reading about writing will not teach you how to write. Literature is exactly like a trade in

this sense that it can only be acquired by practice. I know that such a statement will shock certain persons of much more learning than I could ever hope to acquire. But I believe this would be entirely due to what is called educational bias. The teachers who teach that literature as a practical art has anything to do with the mere study of books, seem to forget that much of the world's greatest literature was made before there were any books, that the poems of Homer were composed before there were any schools or grammars, that the sacred books of nearly all the great civilizations were written without rules, either grammatical or other—and yet these works remain our admiration for all time.

Another error to be considered, is that the structure of your own language is of such a kind that Western rules of literary art could not be applied to it. But if there be any truth in such a belief, it is truth of a most unimportant kind. As I have told you that a knowledge of literary technicalities, grammatical or prosodical, will not teach you how to write, you will already be able to guess how little I think of the importance to you of what are commonly called rules of composition. These foreign rules, indeed, are not applicable to your language; but they have no value whatever in the sense I mean. Let us for the time being throw all such rules overboard, and not even think about them. And now that the position is thus made clear, or at least clearer, let me say that the higher rules of literature are universal, and apply equally well to every language under the sun, no matter what its construction. For these universal rules have to do only with the truth; and truth is truth everywhere, no matter in what tongue it may be spoken. Presently we shall turn back to the subject of the universal rule—indeed it will form the principal part of this lecture.

The third error against which I wish to warn you is the foolish belief that great work, or even worthy work, can be done without pains—without very great pains. Nothing has been more productive of injury to young literary students than those stories, or legends, about great writers having written great books in a very short time. They suggest what must be in a million cases impossible, as a common possibility. You hear of Johnson having written *Rasselas* in a few weeks, or of Beckford having done a similar thing, of various other notables never correcting their manuscripts—and the youth who has much self-confidence imagines that he can do the same thing and produce literature. I do not believe those stories. I do not say exactly that they are not true; I only say that I do not believe them, and that the books, as we have them now, certainly represent much more than the work of a few weeks or even months. It is much more valuable to remember that Gray passed fourteen years in correct-

ing and improving a single poem, and that no great poem or book, as we now have the text, represents the first form of the text. Take, for example, the poets that we have been reading. It is commonly said that Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel* was written in his nineteenth year. This is true; but we have the text of the poem as it was written in his nineteenth year, and it is unlike the poem as we now have it; for it was changed and corrected and recorrected scores of times to bring it to its present state of perfection. Almost every thing composed by Tennyson was changed and changed and changed again, to such an extent that in almost every edition the text differed. Above all things do not imagine that any good work can be done without immense pains. When Dr. Max Müller told Froude, the historian, that he never corrected what he wrote, Froude immediately answered, "Unless you correct a great many times, you will never be able to write good English." Now there is good English and good English; and I am not sure that Froude was right. Froude was thinking, I believe, of literary English. Correct English can be written without correction, by dint of long practice in precise writing. Business letters and official documents and various compositions of a kindred sort must be correct English; they are written entirely according to forms and rules, exactly like legal papers in which the mistake of one word might cause unspeakable mischief. But all

this has nothing to do with literature. If the art of writing good English or good French or good Japanese were literature, then the lawyers and the bank clerks would represent the highest literature of their respective countries. So far, however, as Froude meant literary English, he is absolutely right. No literature can be produced without much correction. I have told you of primitive literature composed before the time of books and of grammars, which was and is, and will long continue to be, unrivalled literature. But do you suppose that it never was corrected and changed and re-made over and over and over again? Why, most assuredly it was, and corrected not by one only but by thousands and thousands of persons who had learned it by heart. Every generation improved it a little; and at last, when it came to be written down, it had been polished and perfected by the labour of hundreds of years.

Now I suppose all of you have at some time wanted to get books about how to write English. I suppose that you have all found them, and that the result was only disappointment. It would have been disappointment just the same if you had been looking for French books on how to write French, or German books on how to write German. No books yet exist that will teach you literary work, which will teach you the real secrets of composition. Some day, I trust, there will be such books; but at present there

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

I suppose that many of you will become authors, either by accident or by inclination; and if you produce literature, prose or verse, it is to be hoped that you will influence the future literature of your

country, by infusing into the work those new ideas which a University course must have forced upon you by thousands. But this alone, this imparting of new ideas, of larger knowledge, would not be literature. Literature is not scholarship, though it may contain scholarship. Literature means, as I have said before, the highest possible appeal of language to the higher emotions and the nobler sentiments. It is not learning, nor can it be made by any rules of learning.

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

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

throw his strength into the study of a part only, the part that is most natural to him. Even with this partial knowledge excellent literature is possible. But full knowledge will produce larger results in the case of large talent.

II

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

You might ask why I put the emotion before the sensation. Of course the sensation always precedes the emotion. The sensation means the first impression received from the senses, or the revival in memory of such an impression. The emotion is the feeling, very complex, that follows the sensation or impression. Do not forget this distinction; for it is very important indeed.

Now the reason why I am not going to say much to you about the sensation, is that if a sensation could be accurately described in words, the result would be something like a photograph, nothing more. You might say, a coloured photograph; and it is true that if we discover (as we shall certainly some day discover) the art of photographing in colours, such a coloured photograph would represent almost exactly a visual impression But this would

not be art. A photograph is not art; and the nearer that a painting resembles a photograph by its accuracy, the less it is likely to be worth much from the artistic point of view. To describe sensations would be no more literature in the higher sense, than a photograph could be called art in the higher sense. I shall therefore boldly take the position that literature is not a picture of sensations, but of emotions.

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

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

But we must explain this a little more. Every object, animate or inanimate, causes a certain feeling

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

Now suppose that I were to ask all of you to describe for me a certain tree in the garden of the University. I should expect that a majority among you would write very nearly the same thing. But would this be a proof that the tree had given to all of you the same kind of feeling? No, it would not mean anything of the sort. It would mean only that a majority among you had acquired habits of thinking and writing which are contrary to the principles of art. Most of you would describe the tree in nearly the same way, because, in the course of years of study, your minds have been filled with those forms of language commonly used to describe trees; you

would remember the words of some famous poet or story-teller, and would use them as expressing your own feelings. But it is perfectly certain that they would not express your own feelings. Education usually teaches us to use the ideas and the language of other men to describe our own feelings, and this habit is exactly contrary to every principle of art.

Now suppose there is one among you of a remarkably powerful talent of the poetical and artistic kind. His description of the tree would be startlingly different from that of the rest of you; it would surprise you all, so that you would have to look at the tree again in order to see whether the description was true. Then you would be still more astonished to find that it was much more true than any other; and then you would not only discover that he had enabled you to understand the tree in a new way, but also that the rest of you had but half seen it, and that your descriptions were all wrong. He would not have used the words of other men to describe the tree; he would have used his own, and they would be very simple words indeed, like the words of a child.

For the child is incomparably superior to the average man in seeing the character of things; and the artist sees like the child. If I were to ask twenty little children—say, five or six years old—to look at the same tree that we were talking about, and to tell me what they think of it, I am sure that many of

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

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

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

What happens when the feeling comes? You feel then a momentary thrill of pleasure or pain or fear or wonder; but this thrill passes away almost as suddenly as it comes. You cannot write it down as

fast as it vanishes. You are left then only with the sensation or first impression of the thing in your mind, and a mere memory of the feeling. In different natures the feeling is different, and it lasts longer in some than in others; but in all cases it passes away as rapidly as smoke, or perfume blown by a wind. If you think that anybody can put down on paper this feeling exactly as it is received, immediately upon receiving it, you are much mistaken. This can be accomplished only by arduous labour. The labour is to revive the feeling.

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

Reading over these quick notes, you will perceive that the feeling is faintly revived by them, especially by certain parts of them. But of course,

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

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

I imagine that some of you might ask: "Is there no other way of expressing emotion or sentiment than that which you have been trying to describe to us? You say that the highest literature

is emotional expression; but there is nothing more difficult than the work you have suggested; is there no other way?"

Yes, there is another way, and a way which I sometimes imagine is more in harmony with the character of the Japanese genius, and perhaps with the character of the Japanese language. But it is just as difficult; and it has this further disadvantage that it requires immense experience, as well as a very special talent. It is what has been called the impersonal method, though I am not sure that this title is a good one. Very few great writers have been able to succeed at it; and I think that these few have mostly been Frenchmen. And it is a method suitable only for prose.

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

this method—that was Guy de Maupassant.

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

one name only in relation to this kind of work, but I should also call your attention to such stories as those of Prosper Mérimée—*Carmen, Mateo Falcone.* Occasionally you will find stories by Daudet, especially the little stories of the war between France and Germany, showing the method in question. But in these the style is usually somewhat fixed; there is some description attempted, showing a personal feeling. In the best work of Maupassant and of Mérimée, the personal element entirely disappears. There is no description, except in some conversational passages put into the mouth of another person; there are only facts, but they are facts that "take you by the throat," to use a familiar expression.

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

the true sense." But you will say, "The public calls it literature, accepts it as literature, pays for it as literature—what more do you want?"

I can best explain by an illustration. Next to the Greeks, the Arabs were perhaps the most skilful of poets and artists in describing beauty in words. Every part of the body had a beauty of a special kind; and this special beauty had a special name. Furthermore all beauty was classified, ranked. If a woman belonged to the first rank of beauty, she was called by a particular name, signifying that when you saw her the first time you were startled, and that every time that you looked at her again after that, she seemed to become more and more and more beautiful until you doubted the reality of your own senses. A woman who belonged only to the second class of beauty would charm you quite as much the first time that you saw her; but after that, when you looked at her again you would find that she was not so beautiful as you had thought at first. As for women of the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh classes of beauty, it is only necessary to say that the same rule held good; more and more defects would show themselves, according to the class, upon familiarity. Now the difference between cheap emotional literature of the journalistic sort and true literature, is exactly of the same kind. Cheap literature pays best for the time being, and great literature scarcely pays at all. But a great story written by a master

seems more and more beautiful every time that you read it over again; and through generations and centuries it seems to be more and more beautiful to those who read it. But cheap literature, although it pleases even more the first time that it was read, shows defects upon a second reading, and more defects upon a third reading, and still more upon a fourth reading, until the appearance of the defects spoils all the pleasure of the reader, and he throws away the book or the story in disgust. So do the public act in the long run. What pleases them to-day they throw away to-morrow; and they are right in throwing it away, because it does not represent careful work.

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

III

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

The most common difficulty of literary work is how to begin. Everybody, all over the world, is

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

What means?

By not beginning at all.

This may require a little explanation. In the old days there were rules for beginning, just as there were rules for every thing else. Literature was subjected to the same imposition of rhetoric as were other compositions. We shall have more to say about this when we come to the subject of style. In history, in the critical essay, above all in philosophy, a beginning is very necessary. Scope and plan must be determined beforehand. You must know what you want to say, and how you intend to say it, and how much space will be required for saying it. Serious and solid work of the purely intellectual kind must be done according to a fixed and logical method. I am sure that I need not explain why. But it is quite otherwise in regard to poetry and other forms of emotional and imaginative literature. The poet or the story-teller never gets the whole of his inspiration at once; it comes to him

only by degrees, while he is perfecting the work. His first inspiration is only a sudden flash of emotion, or the sudden shock of a new idea, which at once awakens and sets into motion many confused trains of other interrelated emotions and ideas. It ought to be obvious, therefore, that the first inspiration might represent not the beginning of anything, but the middle of it, or the end.

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

begin at the tail—that is to say, you will write the end of the story before you have even thought of the beginning.

The working rule is this: Develop the first idea or emotion that comes to you before you allow yourself to think about the second. The second will suggest itself, even too much, while you are working at the first. If two or three or four valuable emotions or ideas come to you about the same time, take the most vigorous of them, or the one that most attracts you to begin with, unless it happens to be also the most difficult. For the greater number of young writers I should say: Follow the line of least resistance, and take the easiest work first. It does not matter at all whether it is to belong to the middle or to the end or to the beginning of a story or poem. By developing the different parts or verses separately from each other, you will soon discover this astonishing fact, that they have a tendency to grow together of themselves, and into a form different from that which you first intended, but much better. This is the inspiration of form as construction. And if you try always to begin at the beginning, you are very likely to miss this inspiration. The literary law is, let the poem or the story shape itself. Do not try to shape it before it is nearly done. The most wonderful work is not the work that the author shapes and plans; it is the work that shapes itself, the work that obliges him,

when it is nearly done, to change it all from beginning to end, and to give it a construction which he had never imagined at the time of beginning it.

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

That is all that I have to say about construction. You may think this is very little. I reply that it is quite enough. Instinct and habit will teach all the rest; and they are better masters than all grammarians and rhetoricians. What a man cannot learn by literary instinct, and cannot acquire by literary habit, he will never, never be able to obtain from rules or books. I am afraid that some of these opinions may seem very heretical, but I must now be guilty of a much greater heresy, when I introduce you to my ideas about style. I think—in fact I feel quite sure—that everything which has been written upon the subject of style is absolute nonsense, because it mistakes results for causes. I hold that such writing has done immense injury to the literary student

in every part of the world; and I propose to prove to you that there is no such thing as style.

IV

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

If you look at the dictionary you will find various definitions of the word "style," but all these can be reduced to two. The first, or general style, is simply rhetorical; it means the construction of sentences according to a complete set of rules, governing the form and proportion of every part of the sentence. This once was style. There was a time when everybody was supposed to write according to the same rules, and in almost exactly the same way. We might expect that work done by different individuals according to such rules would be all very much alike; and as a matter of fact, there was a great likeness in the styles of French and English writers

during the time that classical rules of composition were in force. I suppose you know that by classical I mean rules obtained from study of the Greek and Latin writers. The effort of Western men of letters during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was to imitate the old classics. So they had rules and measures for every thing, for every part of a sentence, and for the position of every word. Therefore the styles did greatly resemble each other. In France the similarity I refer to was greater than in England, the French being a more perfect language, and much closer to Latin than English. For example, you would find it very hard to distinguish the style of a story written by Diderot from the style of a story written by Voltaire. The Encyclopædists, as they are called, wrote very much after the same fashion. But a fine critic could detect differences, nevertheless. For no matter how exact the rules might be, the way of obeying them would differ according to differences of character, mental character; I need scarcely tell you that no two minds think and feel in exactly the same way. These differences of individual thinking and feeling necessarily give a slightly different tone to the work of each writer, even in the most rigid period of classical style. And this difference of tone is what we call style to-day—after the old classical rules have been given up. But there is still much popular error upon the subject of individual style. People think still with the ideas of

the eighteenth century. They think that there are rules for individual style, because there are rules for classical style. They think that when we talk of the style of Macaulay or Froude, of Arnold or of De Quincey, we mean certain rules of composition by which the literary method of one man can be known from that of another. I should like to see any man living attempt to define these rules. The authors themselves could not define them. There are no such rules. This is altogether an error—and a very serious error. The differences are not due to any definable rules at all; they are due entirely to individual differences of character. And therefore I say that style, in the modern meaning of the word, is character.

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

1. By a certain metrical form of sentence peculiar to the writer.

2. By a certain quality of sound—sonority—in the sentence, not due merely to measure, but to a sense of the musical value of words.

3. By choice of words giving particular impressions of force or colour.

Now how can we define and illustrate these

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

poetry. How many times Tennyson uses the adjective "red" and how many times Swinburne uses the adjective "red" may be interesting to know; but it will not help us in the least to understand why the value of the same adjective as Tennyson uses it is quite different from the value it obtains as used by Swinburne. All such differences must be due to psychological differences: therefore again I say that style is character.

And here let me utter a word of warning as to the uselessness of trying to study "style" in modern English authors. I have often been asked by students whom they should read for the study of style—and other questions of that kind, showing that they did not understand what style really is. I must even venture to say that no Japanese student who has not spent a great many years away from Japan, can possibly understand differences of foreign style. The reason must be obvious. To appreciate differences of style in foreign authors, you must have an absolutely perfect knowledge of the foreign language; you must know all its capacities of rhythm, accent, sonority, and colour. You must know the comparative values of one hundred thousand words—and that for you is impossible. Therefore, so far as foreign literature is concerned, do not trouble yourselves trying to understand anything about style which does not depend upon old forms of rhetoric. And even if you should learn enough of the old rules to

understand all the rules and sub-rules for the construction of an eighteenth century sentence, the want of training in Greek and Latin would make that knowledge almost useless to you. Style can be studied by you only in a very vague way. But I hold that way to be the most important, because it means character. What I have just said is, of course, a digression, because it is of Japanese and not of English composition that I am now going to speak.

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

there will be less evidence of character, therefore less style. The work of many clumsy people will be found to have a general family resemblance. The work of the truly energetic and painstaking will be found to differ prodigiously. The greater the earnestness and the labour, the more marked the style. And now you will see what I am coming at—that style is the outcome of character developed through hard work. Style is nothing else than that in any country.

Here observe another fact. In the general history of literature, wherever we find a uniformity of style, we find no progress, and no very great literary achievements. The classic period of the English eighteenth century is an example. But the reverse is the case when general style disappears and individual style develops. That means high development, originality, new ideas, every thing that signifies literary progress. Now one bad sign in the English literature of the close of the present century—that is, the English literature of to-day—is that style has almost disappeared. There is a general style again, as there was in the first part of the eighteenth century. Out of a hundred English novels published this month, you would scarcely be able to tell the difference between one author's writing and another's. The great stylists are dead, except Ruskin, and he has ceased to write. The world of fiction is again governed by a set of rules which everybody follows;

and novel writing, as well as essay writing (with rare exceptions), has become a trade instead of an art. Therefore nothing great appears, and nothing great is likely to appear until a reaction acts in. There is of course the extraordinary genius of Kipling, who keeps aloof from all conventions, and has made new styles of his own in almost every department of pure literature. But there is no other to place beside him, and he probably owes his development quite as much to the fact that he was born in India as to his really astonishing talent.

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

V

I now hope that you will have a little patience with me, as I am going to speak against conventions. I believe that Japanese literature is still to a great extent in its classic state, that it has not yet freed itself from the conventions of other centuries, and

that the full capacities of the language are not expressed in its modern productions. I believe that to write in the vernacular, the every day speech of conversation and of the people, is still considered vulgar. And I must venture to express the hope that you will eventually fight boldly against these convictions. I think that it is absolutely essential. I do not believe that any new Japanese literature can come into existence, and influence life and thought and national character, and create for Japan what she very much needs, literary sympathy, until Japan has authors who will not be afraid to write in the true tongue of the people. One thing is certain, that the change must come. Whoever helps it to come will be doing his country an inestimable service, for so long as literature is shaped only to the understanding of a special class of educated persons, it cannot influence the nation at all. The educated classes of any country represent but a very small portion of the great whole. They must be the teachers; yet they cannot teach in the language of the academy. They must teach in the language of the people, just as Wyclif, and Chaucer, and other great English men of letters once found it necessary to do in order to create a new public opinion. Japan will certainly need a new popular literature; and although you may say that a certain class of popular literature is furnished by a certain class of writers, I would answer that a great popular literature cannot be

furnished by uneducated persons, or by persons without a large range of knowledge; it must be furnished by scholars, or at least by men of taste, who are willing to speak to the masses in their mother tongue, and who care to touch the hearts of the millions. This is the true object of literature in any country. And so far as literary expression is power, think of what is lost by allowing that power to be cramped in the same way that English literature was cramped a hundred years ago. Here is a man who can delight ten or twenty thousand readers of culture, but who cannot be more than a name to the nation at large. Here is another man who can speak to forty millions of people at once, making himself equally well understood by the Minister in his office and by the peasant in his rice-field. Who is the greatest force? Who is able to do most for the future of his country? Who represents the greatest power? Certainly it is not the man who pleases only twenty thousand people. It is the man who, like the young English poet already mentioned, can speak to all his countrymen in the world at the same time, and with such power that everybody both feels and understands. Recently when the Russian Emperor proposed disarmament of the European Powers, our young poet sent to the London *Times* a little poem about a bear—a treacherous bear. There is no part of the English speaking world in which the poem was not read; and I am quite sure that it had

much more effect on English public opinion than the message of the Emperor of Russia. That is power. The man who can speak to a hundred millions of people may be stronger than a king. But he must not speak in the language of the academy.

STUDIES OF EXTRAORDINARY PROSE

I

THE ART OF SIMPLE POWER: THE NORSE WRITERS

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

Now there are two ways of writing artistic prose (of course there are many different methods, but all can be grouped under two heads), both depending a good deal upon the character of the writer. There is a kind of work of which the merit is altogether due to vivid and powerful senses, well trained in observation. The man who sees keenly and hears keenly, who has been well disciplined how

to use his eyes and ears both with quickness and caution, who has been taught by experience the value of accuracy and the danger of exaggeration (exaggeration being, after all, only an incorrect way of observing and thinking),—such a man, if he can write at all, is apt to write interestingly. The very best examples of strong simple prose are pages written by the old Norsemen who passed most of their lives in fighting and hunting. We have here the result of that training which I have above indicated. The man who knows that at any hour of the day a mistake may cost his life and the lives of his children, is apt to be a man of exact observation. He is also apt to be a man with excellent senses and good judgment; for the near-sighted or deaf or stupid could scarcely have existed in the sort of society to which the Norse writers belonged. And I imagine, so far as it is in my power to judge, that some of the old Japanese writers have given in their work evidence of the same faculties of perception and discrimination. To-day we have some living examples of European writers whose power depends entirely upon the same qualities. Modern writers of this kind are much less simple, it is true, than the writers whom we are about to consider; they have been educated in modern technical schools or Universities, and their education has given to their work a certain colour never to be found in the ancient literature. But one or two writers have preserved

in a most extraordinary way the best qualities of the old Norse writers,—modern Norsemen, or at least Scandinavians. I think that perhaps the best is Björnstjerne Björnson. We shall have occasion to speak of him again at another time.

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

Now let us take an example of the old Norse style of narrative. It dates back to the early part of the thirteenth century; and the subject is a fight in a little island on the coast of Iceland. There was trouble at the time about a Christian bishop called Gudmund, who had been sent out there. Some determined to kill him, others resolved to stand by him,—and among the latter were two brave friends, Eyjolf and Aron. The summary opens at the point where the bishop's party had been badly handled, and nearly everybody killed except the two friends. Aron, who was the weaker of the two, wanted to stay

on the ground and fight until he died. Eyjolf was determined that he should not, so he played a trick upon him in order to save him. The whole story is told in the Sturlunga Saga. I hope you will be interested by this; because it seems to me remarkably like some incidents in old Japanese histories.

> Eyjolf took his way to the place where Aron and Sturla had met, and there he found Aron sitting with his weapons, and all about were lying dead men, and wounded. Eyjolf asks his cousin whether he can move at all. Aron says that he can, and stands on his feet; and now they both go together for a while by the shore, till they come to a hidden bay;—there they saw a boat ready floating, with five or six men at the oars, and the bow to sea. This was Eyjolf's arrangement, in case of sudden need. Now Eyjolf tells Aron that he means the boat for both of them, giving out that he sees no hope of doing more for the Bishop at that time.
>
> "But I look for better days to come," says Eyjolf.
>
> "It seems a strange plan to me," says Aron; "for I thought that we should never part from Bishop Gudmund in this distress. There is something behind this, and I vow that I will not go, unless you go first on board."
>
> "That I will not, Cousin," says Eyjolf, "for it is shoal water here, and I will not have any of the oarsmen leave his oar to shove her off; and it is far too much for you to go about with wounds like yours. You will have to go on board."
>
> "Well, put your weapons in the boat," says Aron, "and I will believe you."

> Aron now goes on board, and Eyjolf did as Aron asked him. Eyjolf waded after, pushing the boat, for the shallows went far out. And when he saw the right time come, Eyjolf caught up a battle-axe out of the stern of the boat, and gave a shove to the boat with all his might.
>
> "Good-bye, Aron," says Eyjolf; "we shall meet again when God pleases."
>
> And since Aron was disabled with wounds and weary with loss of blood, it had to be even so; and this parting was a grief to Aron, for they saw each other no more.
>
> Now Eyjolf spoke to the oarsmen, and told them to row hard, and not let Aron come back again to Grimsey that day, and not for many a day, if they could help it.
>
> They row away with Aron in their boat; but Eyjolf turns to the shore again, and to a boat-house with a large ferry-boat in it that belonged to the goodman (farmer) Gnup. And at the same nick of time he sees the Sturlung company come tearing down from the garth, having finished their mischief there. Eyjolf takes to the boat-house, with his mind made up to defend it, as long as his doom would let him. There were double doors to the boat-house, and he puts heavy stones against them.
>
> Brand, one of Siglwat's followers, a man of good condition, caught a glimpse of a man moving, and said to his companions that he thought he had made out Eyjolf Karrson there, and that they ought to go after him. Sturla was not on the spot. There were nine to ten together. So they come to the boat-house. Brand asks who is there, and Eyjolf says that it is he.
>
> "Then you will please to come out, and come

before Sturla," says Brand.

"Will you promise me grace?" says Eyjolf.

"There will be little of that," says Brand.

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

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

Now they came at him, and he made a good and brave defence; he cut their pike-shafts through —there were stout blows on both sides. And in that bout Eyjolf broke his axe-shaft, and caught up an oar, and then another, and both broke with his blows. And in the bout Eyjolf got a thrust under his arm, and it came home. Some say that he broke the shaft from the spearhead, and let it stay in the wound. He saw now that his defence was ended. Then he made a dash out, and got through them, before they knew. They were not expecting this; still, they kept their heads, and a man named Mar cut at him and caught his ankle, so that his foot hung crippled. With that he rolled down the beach and the sea was at the flood. In such plight as he was in, Eyjolf set to and swam, and swimming he came twelve fathoms from shore to a shelf of rock, and knelt there; and then he fell full length upon the earth, and spread his hands from him, turning to the East, as if to pray.

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

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

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

Next, observe that there is no description—not a particle of description. Houses are mentioned and rocks and boats, and a fight is narrated in the most masterly way; yet nothing is described. And nevertheless how well we see everything—that cold bay of the North Sea with the boat floating upon it, and the brave man helping his wounded

cousin on board, and the unequal struggle at the boat-house, during which we can actually hear the noise of the oars breaking. There is no picture of a face; yet I am quite sure that you can see the face of that brave man in every episode of the struggle. The Norse people were perhaps not the first to discover that description was unnecessary in great writing. They loved it in their poetry; they avoided it in their prose. But it requires no little skill to neglect description in this way,—to make the actions and incidents themselves create the picture. At first reading this might seem to you simple as a schoolboy's composition; but there is nothing in the world so hard to do.

Thirdly, observe that there is no emotion, no partiality, no sympathy expressed. It is true that in one place Eyjolf is spoken of as having made "a good and brave defence," but the Norsemen never spoke badly of their enemies; and if their greatest enemy could fight well, they gave him credit for it, not as a matter of sympathy but as a matter of truth. Certainly the end of the narration shows us that the adjectives "good" and "brave" do not imply any sympathy at all; for the lord of the men who killed Eyjolf was pleased to hear of the strong fight that he made. Notice this point carefully. Such men found no pleasure in killing cowards; they thought it glorious only to kill a good fighter in a good fight. The lord is glad because his men killed somebody

well worth killing. So, as I have already said, there is not one particle of personal emotion in the whole story. Nevertheless what emotion it makes within the reader! And what a wonderful art this is to create emotion in the reader's mind by suppressing it altogether in the narration! This is the supreme art of realism,—about which you may have heard a great deal in these last few years. I know of only one writer of the nineteenth century who had this same realistic power,—the late French story-teller de Maupassant. In the days before his brain weakened and madness destroyed his astonishing faculties, he also could create the most powerful emotion without the use of a single emotional word or suggestion. Some day I shall try to give you in English a short specimen of his power.

Now if you will consider these three things—the scarcity of adjectives, the absence of description, and the suppression of emotion, I think that you will be able to see what a wonderful bit of writing that was. But it is no more than a single example out of a possible hundred. And in a certain way the secret of it is the same which gave such surprise and delight in modern times to the readers of Hans Andersen. This matchless teller of fairy tales and "wonder-stories" full of deep philosophical meanings, was, as you know, a Norseman,—even by blood a descendant of those same men who could write about the story of Eyjolf in the thirteenth century. I want to give

you now another little story of the same kind from the old Icelandic saga of Njal. You will discover all the same qualities in it. The story told might almost be Japanese,—an incident of the old fierce custom of vengeance. Among the Norsemen, as among the men of old Japan, the brother was bound to avenge the death of the brother; the father had to avenge his son; everybody killed had some blood relative to avenge him. If there was no man to do this, there would often appear a brave woman willing and capable of doing it, and in the wars of *katakiuchi* there were many brave things done on both sides, even by the little boys and girls. In this case the victims are a little boy and his grandparents. They are locked in a wooden house that has been surrounded by their enemies and set on fire. There are many people in the house, and they all are about to be destroyed without pity,—for this is a fight between two clans, and there are many deaths to be avenged. But suddenly the leader of the conquering party remembers that the old man inside used to be his teacher (I think there is a Japanese incident of almost exactly the same kind in the story of a castle siege). Now we will make the old northern story-teller relate the rest.

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

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said—

"I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out,

for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

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

Then Flosi said to Bergthora—

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

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

After that they both went back into the house.

"What council shall we now take?" said Bergthora.

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

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

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

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

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

He said that he would do so.

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

So there they lay down both of them in their

bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the sign of the cross, and gave over their souls unto God's hand; and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

There are about four adjectives in all this; and, as in the former case, there is no description and no sympathy,—no sentiment. Very possibly this is an absolutely true incident, the steward, who was allowed to go out, having been afterward able to make a faithful report of what the old people and the boy said in the house. The young men said other things, full of fierce mockery,—things that manifest a spirit totally unlike anything in modern times. They stood up to be burned or to break their way out if a chance offered. One of the sons seeing the father lying down in the bed sarcastically observed, "Our father goes early to bed,—and that is what was to be looked for, as he is an old man." This grewsome joke shows that the young man would have preferred the father to die fighting. But the old folks were busy enough in preparing the little boy for death. It is a terrible story,—an atrociously cruel one; but it shows great nobility of character in the victims, and the reader is moved in spite of himself by this most simple relation of fact.

Now perhaps you will think that this simple style can only produce such effects when the subject matter of the narrative is itself of a terrible or star-

tling or extraordinary character. I am quite sure that this is not true, because I find exactly the same style in such a modern novel as *Synnövé Solbakken* by Björnson, and I find it in such fairy tales of Andersen as *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Little Mermaid*. These simplest subjects are full of wonder and beauty for the eyes that can see and the mind that can think; and with such an eye and such a mind, the simple style is quite enough. How trifling at times are the subjects of Andersen's stories—a child's toy, a plant growing in the field, a snow image, made by children somewhat as we make a snow *daruma* in the farmyard, a rose-bush under the window. It would be nonsense to say that here the interest depends upon the subject matter! In such a story as *The Little Tin Soldier* we are really affected almost as much as by the story of Eyjolf in the old saga—simply because the old saga-teller and the modern story-teller wrote and thought very much in the same way. Or take another subject, of a more complicated character, the story of *The Nightingale of the Emperor of China and the Nightingale of the Emperor of Japan*. There is a great deal more meaning here than the pretty narrative itself shows upon the surface. The whole idea is the history of our human life,—the life of the artist, and his inability to obtain just recognition, and the power of the humbug to ignore him. It is a very profound story indeed; and there are pages in it which one can

scarcely read with dry eyes. It affects us both intellectually and emotionally to an extraordinary degree; but the style is still the style of the old sagas. Of course I must acknowledge that Andersen uses a few more adjectives than the Icelandic writers did, but you will find, on examining him closely, that he does not use them when he can help it. Now the other style that I was telling you about,—the modern artistic style, uses adjectives almost as profusely as in poetry. I do not wish to speak badly of it; but scarcely any writer who uses it has been able to give so powerful an impression as the Norse writers who never used it all.

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

with Japanese genius than ever could the more elaborate forms of literature, based upon the old classic studies.

II

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

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

I have said that the influence of this style has been very great upon English literature. Before we go any further, allow me to explain this influence. Sir Thomas Browne was the first great English writer who made an original classic style. By classic

style I mean an English prose style founded upon a profound study of the ancient classic writers, Greek and Latin, and largely coloured and made melodious by a skilful use of many-syllabled words derived from the antique tongues. There were original styles before. Sir Thomas Malory made a charming innovation in style. Lyly made a new style, too—a style imitated from Spanish writers, extravagantly ornamented, extravagantly complicated, fantastic, artificial, tiresome, — the famous style called Euphuism. We shall have to speak of Euphuism at another time. It also was a great influence during a short period. But neither the delightful prose poetry of Sir Thomas Malory nor the extravagant and factitious style of Lyly has anything in common with the style of Sir Thomas Browne. Sir Thomas Browne imitated nobody except the best Latin and Greek writers, and he imitated them with an art that no other Englishman ever approached. Moreover, he did not imitate them slavishly; he managed always to remain supremely original, and because he was a true prose poet, much more than because he imitated the beauties of the antique writers, he was able to influence English prose for considerably more than two hundred years. Indeed, I think we may say that his influence still continues; and that if he does not affect style to-day as markedly as he did a hundred years ago, it is only because one must be a very good scholar to do anything in the same direction as that

followed by Sir Thomas Browne, and our very good scholars of to-day do not write very much in the way of essays or of poetry. The first person of great eminence powerfully affected by Sir Thomas Browne was Samuel Johnson. You know that Johnson affected the literature of the eighteenth century most powerfully, and even a good deal of the literature of the early nineteenth century. But Johnson was a pupil of Browne, and a rather clumsy pupil at that. He was not nearly so great a scholar as Sir Thomas Browne; he was much less broad-minded—that is to say, capable of liberal and generous tolerance, and he did not have that sense of beauty and of poetry which distinguished Sir Thomas Browne. He made only a very bad imitation of Sir Thomas, exaggerating the eccentricities and missing the rare and delicate beauties. But the literary links between Browne and the eighteenth century are very easily established, and it is certain that Browne indirectly helped to form the literary prose of that period. Thus you will perceive how large a figure in the history of English literature he must be.

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

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

again within the next fifty years.

The book about urn-burial really gives the student the best idea of Sir Thomas Browne. No other of his works so well displays his learning and his sense of poetry. Indeed, even in these days of more advanced scholarship, the learning of Sir Thomas Browne astonishes the most learned. He quotes from a multitude of authors, scarcely known to the ordinary student, as well as from almost every classic author known; likewise from German, Italian, Spanish and Danish writers; likewise from hosts of the philosophers of the Middle Ages and the fathers of the church. Everything that had been written about science from antiquity up to the middle of the seventeenth century he would appear to have read,—botany, anatomy, medicine, alchemy, astrology; and the mere list of authorities cited by him is appalling. But to discover a man of the seventeenth century who had read all the books in the Western world is a much less surprising fact than to find that the omnivorous reader remembered what he read, digested it, organized it, and everywere discovered in it beauties that others had not noticed. Scholarship in itself is not, however, particularly interesting; and the charge of pedantry, of a needless display of learning, might have been brought against Sir Thomas Browne more than once. To-day, you know, it is considered a little vulgar for a good scholar to make quotations from Greek and Latin authors when

writing an English book. He is at once accused of trying to show off his knowledge. But even to-day, and while this is the rule, no great critic will charge Sir Thomas Browne of pedantry. He quotes classical authors extensively only while he is writing upon classical subjects; and even then, he never quotes a name or a fact without producing some unexpected and surprising effect. Moreover, he very seldom cites a Latin or Greek text, but puts the Latin or Greek thought into English. Later on I shall try to show you what are the intrinsic demerits of this style, as well as its merits; but for the present let us study a few quotations. They will serve better than anything else to show what a curious writer he is.

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

> Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the original of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist relentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in the composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus; and therefore heaped up large piles, more actively to waft them toward that element, whereby they also declined a visible degeneration into worms, and left a lasting parcel of their composition. . . . .
>
> But the Chaldeans, the great idolators of fire, abhorred the burning of their carcasses, as a pollution of that deity. The Persian magi declined it upon the like scruple, and being only solicitous about their bones, exposed their flesh to the prey of birds and dogs. And the Parsees now in India, which expose their bodies unto vultures, and endure not so much as *feretra* or biers of wood, the proper fuel of fire, are led on with such niceties. But whether the ancient Germans, who burned their dead, held any such fear to pollute their deity of Herthus, or the Earth, we have no authentic conjecture.
>
> The Egyptians were afraid of fire, not as a deity, but a devouring element, mercilessly consuming their bodies, and leaving too little of them; and therefore by precious embalmments, depositure in dry earths, or handsome enclosure in glasses, contrived the notablest ways of integral conservation. And from such Egyptian scruples, imbibed by Pythagoras, it may be conjectured that Numa and the Pythagorical sect first waved (modern *waived*) the fiery solution.
>
> The Scythians, who swore by wind and sword, that is, by life and death, were so far from burning their bodies, that they declined all interment, and made their graves in the air; and the Icthyophagi, or fish-eating nations about Egypt, affected the sea for their grave, thereby declining visible corruption, and restoring the debt of their bodies,

> Whereas the old heroes, in Homer, dreaded nothing more than water or drowning; probably upon the old opinion of the fiery substance of the soul, only extinguishable by that element; and therefore the poet emphatically implieth the total destruction in this kind of death, which happened to Ajax Oileus.

So on, page after page crammed with facts and comments. He mentions even the Chinese burial customs—so little known to Europeans of the seventeenth century; and his remarks upon them are tolerably correct, considering all the circumstances. You will acknowledge that a dry subject is here most interestingly treated; this is the art that can give life to old bones. But the main thing is the style,—remember we are still early in the seventeenth century, in the year 1658; see how dignified, how sonorous, how finely polished are these rolling sentences, all of which rise and fall with wave-like regularity and roundness. You feel that this is the scholar who writes,—the scholar whose ear has been trained to the long music of Greek and Latin sentences. And even when he uses words now obsolete or changed in meaning, you can generally know very well from the context what is meant. For instance, "relentment," which now has no such meaning, is used in the sense of dissolution, and "conclude," of which the meaning is now most commonly to finish in the literary sense, this old doctor uses in the meaning of to end life, to finish existence.

But you do not need to look at the glossary at the end of the book in order to know this.

We might look to such a writer for all the arts of finished prose known to the best masters of today; and we should find them in the most elaborate perfection. The use of antithesis, long afterwards made so famous by Macaulay, was used by Browne with quite as much art, and perhaps with even better taste. Certainly his similes are quite as startling:

> Though the funeral pyre of Patroclus took up an hundred foot, a piece of an old boat burnt Pompey; and if the burthen of Isaac were sufficient for an holocaust, a man may carry his own pyre.

The subject is always made interesting, whether the writer be speaking of mathematics or of gardens, of graves or of stars. Hear him when he begins on the subject of ghosts—how curious the accumulation of facts, and how effective the contrasts:

> The dead seem all alive in the human Hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophesy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules made a noise but like a flock of birds.
>
> The departed spirits know things past and to come; yet are ignorant of things present. Agamemnon foretells what should happen unto Ulysses; yet ignorantly enquires what is become of his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in

> Homer; yet Sibylla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies, and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell; yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses; and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts, yet we meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.

But these examples do not show Browne at his very best; they merely serve to illustrate his ordinary style. To show him at his best through quotation is a very difficult thing, as Professor Saintsbury recently pointed out. His splendours are in rare sentences which somehow or other light up the whole page in which they occur. Every student should know the wonderful passage about the use of Egyptian mummies for medicine,—mummy-flesh being a drug known to English medicine up to the year 1721. I should like to read the whole passage to you in which this sentence occurs, but this would require too much time; suffice to quote the conclusion:

> Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

If Sir Thomas Browne had lived in modern

times he might have added that mummies were used on the steamboats of the Nile instead of coal—even within our own day. The bodies of common people were preserved mostly by the use of cheap resinous substances, such as pitch; therefore, as soon as it was found by the steamboat companies that they would burn very well indeed, they were burned by tens of thousands to make steam! Also I suppose that you may have heard how mummy dust was sold for manure, until English laws were passed to prevent the custom. Sir Thomas Browne's object in these pages is only to point out the folly of funeral pomp, or of seeking to maintain a great fame among men after death, because all things are impermanent and pass away; and his illustrations are always strikingly forcible. On the subject of human impermanency the book is full of splendid sentences, many of which are worth learning by heart. But let us turn to a less sombre subject—to a beautiful paragraph in the fourth chapter of the "Garden of Cyrus":

> Light that makes things seen, makes some things invisible; were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of the creation had remained unseen, and the stars in heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, or there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types, we find the cherubims shadowing the mercy-seat. Life

itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadow of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark *simulacrum*, and light but the shadow of God.

The little essay from which I have made this quotation, usually bound up with the work on urn-burial and called *The Garden of Cyrus* is a most curious thing. It is a dissertation upon the Quincunx, or, to use simpler language, a dissertation upon the mathematical, geometrical and mystical values of the number Five. The doctor, beginning his subject with some remarks about the merit of arranging trees in a garden by groups of five, is led on to consider the signification of five in all its relations to the universe. He discourses upon that number in the heavens and upon the earth and even in the waters which are beneath the earth. He has remarked that not only in the human hand and foot do we find the divisions of five fingers and five toes, but we find like divisions in the limbs of countless animals and in the petals of flowers. He was very near a great discovery in these observations; you know that botany to-day recognizes the meaning of fives and sixes in floral division; and you know that modern physiology has established beyond any question the fact that even in the hoofs of a horse or of a cow we have the rudiments of five toes that anciently existed. If the doctor had lived a little later—say in the time of that country doctor, Erasmus Darwin, he might have

been able to forecast many discoveries of Charles Darwin. Anyhow, his little essay is delightful to read; and if he did not anticipate some general laws of modern science, he was none the less able to establish his declaration that "all things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the ordainer of order and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven."

It would be wrong to call Sir Thomas Browne a mystic outside of the Christian sense. He was really a religious man, and he would not have ventured to put out theories which he believed the church would condemn. But no writer ever felt the poetry of mysticism more than he, or expressed its aspirations better without actually sharing them. Therefore his books have been classed with mystical literature, and are much admired and studied by mystics. It is impossible to read him and not be occasionally astonished by suggestions and thoughts that seem much too large for orthodox Christianity, but which would excellently illustrate the teaching of older eastern religions.

I shall be glad if these notes upon Sir Thomas Browne should serve to interest you in some of his best writings. But I think that his value for you will be chiefly in the suggestive direction. He is a great teacher in certain arts of style—in the art of contrast, in the art of compression, in the art of rhythm, and of melody. I do not think that you could, however,

learn the latter from him. What you would learn would be the value of contrasts of metaphor, and of a certain fine economy of words; the rest is altogether too classical for you to apprehend the secret of it. Indeed, it is only a Greek and Latin training that can give full apprehension of what the beauties of his style are. But, like all true style, there is much there that means only character, personality,—the charm of the man himself, the grace of his mind; and all that, you can very well understand. I think you could scarcely read the book and not feel strange retrospective affection for the man who wrote it.

Now the great thing for you to remember about his place in English literature is that he was the father and founder of English classic prose. He was the source from which Dr. Johnson obtained inspiration; he was the first also to show those capacities of majesty and sonority in English prose which Gibbon afterwards displayed on so vast a scale; he was also the first to use effectively that art of contrast and of antithesis which was to make so great a part of the wonderful style of Macaulay. And even to-day no student can read Sir Thomas Browne without some profit. He is incomparably superior to Bacon and to not a few others who are much more widely known. I do not think that the study of Bacon's essays can be at all profitable to the student in the matter of style—rather the reverse. The value of Bacon is chiefly in his thinking. But Sir Thomas

Browne offers you both thoughts and style in the very finest form.

Nevertheless I must utter a final word of disfavour. There is one drawback to all such style as that which we have been considering—not excepting the styles of Gibbon or Macaulay. It is the necessarily limited range of their power. You cannot appeal to the largest possible audience with a scholarly style. And what is worse, every such style, being artificial more than natural, contains within itself certain elements of corruption and dissolution. We have to read Sir Thomas Browne with a glossary to-day—that is, if we wish to be very exact in our renderings of his thoughts; you will find an extensive glossary attached to his work. This you will not find in Gibbon or Macaulay, but this is only because they are still near to us in time. For all that, the language of the former is now found to be decidedly old-fashioned, notwithstanding its beauty; and the style of the latter will probably become old-fashioned during the present century. It is quite otherwise in the case of that simple northern style, of which I gave you specimens in a former lecture. That never can become old-fashioned, even though the language die in which it was originally written. Containing nothing artificial, it also contains no element of decay. It can impress equally well the most learned and the most ignorant minds, and if we have to make a choice at all between their per-

fectly plain style and the gorgeous music and colours of Sir Thomas Browne, I should not hesitate for a moment to tell you that the simple style is much the better. However, that is not a reason for refusing to give to the classic writers the praise and admiration which they have so justly earned.

III

BJÖRNSON

Before studying some further wonderful prose I want to speak to you about what I believe to be a wide-spread and very harmful delusion in Japan. I mean the delusion that students of English literature ought to study in English only the books originally written in English;—not English translations from other languages. Of course, in these times, I acknowledge that there is some reason for distrust of translations. Translations are made very quickly and very badly, only for the purpose of gaining money, and a vast amount of modern translation is absolute trash, but it is very different in the case of foreign works which have been long adopted into the English language, and which have become practically a common possession of Englishmen,—such as the translation of *The Arabian Nights*, the grand prose translation of Goethe's *Faust*, the translation of *Wilhelm Meister* by Carlyle, the translation of *Undine* which every boy reads, to mention only a few things at random. So with the translations of

the great Italian and Spanish and Russian writers,—not to speak of French writers. In fact, if Englishmen had studied only English literature, English literature would never have become developed as it is now. And if Englishmen had studied foreign literature only in the original tongue, English literature would still have made very little progress. It has been through thousands of translations, not through scholarly study, that the best of our poetry, the best of our fiction, the best of our prose has been modified and improved by foreign influence. As I once before told you, the development of literature is only in a very limited degree the work of the scholars. The great scholars are seldom producers of enduring literature. The men who make that must be men of natural genius, which has nothing to do with scholarship; and the majority of them are not, as a rule, even educated beyond the ordinary. To furnish these men with the stimulus of exotic ideas, those ideas should be placed before them in their own tongue. Now it may seem to you very strange that foreign influence should operate chiefly through translations, but the history of nearly every European literature proves that such is the case. And I am quite sure that if Japan is to produce an extensive new literature in the future, it will not be until after fresh ideas have become widely assimilated by the nation through thousands of translations. For these reasons, I think it is a very unfortunate notion that the study of

English literature should be confined to the study of books originally written in English, or even written by Englishmen.

How is the mind of the English boy formed? If you think about that, you will discover that English literature really represents but a part and a small part of world influences on him. After the age of the nursery songs, most of which are really of English origin, comes the age of fairy tales, of which very few can be traced to English sources. Indeed I believe that *Jack the Giant Killer* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* are quite exceptional in the fact that they are truly English. *Puss in Boots* is not English, but French; *Cinderella* is French; *The Sleeping Beauty* is French; *The White Cat* is French; and *Bluebeard* is French. In fact, the great mass of our fairy tales are translations from French authors such as Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy, to mention only two. When the little boy has feasted himself to repletion upon this imaginative diet, what is the next course of reading? Other fairy tales, of a deeper character—half pure story, half moral teaching; and where do these stories come from? Well, they are not English at all; they are translations from other languages, chiefly German and Swedish. The most important of all works of this kind are those of Hans Andersen. Every child must read them and learn from them, and they have now become so much a part of English child life that we

cannot help wondering what children did before Andersen was born. The best German work of this sort is the work of Grimm. Everybody knows something about that. After this reading, stories of adventure are generally taken up, or slight romances of some kind. There is *Robinson Crusoe*, of course, which is English, and *Gulliver's Travels*; but excepting these two, I believe that most of the first class of juvenile romance consists of translations. For example, in my boyhood the romances of Henry Conscience were read by all boys; and they are translated from the Dutch. And even when a lad has come to delight in Sir Walter Scott, he has still foreign literary influences of even greater power working upon his imagination—such as the magic of the elder Alexandre Dumas. The wonderful stories of *Monte Cristo* and of *The Three Musketeers* have become indispensable reading for the young, and their influence upon modern English fiction has been very great. Still later one has to read the extraordinary novels of Victor Hugo; and there is no time at which the English student is not directly or indirectly affected by French masters as well as by the German masters. Of course you will say that I am mentioning modern authors when I speak of Dumas and Hugo. Yes, they are almost contemporaries. But when we look back to the times before these great men were heard of, we still find that foreign literature influenced Elizabethans quite

as much as contemporary English literature. In the eighteenth century the influence was French, and other foreign influences were at work. Then everybody had to read the classic French authors, but even these were not dull; there were story-tellers among them who supplied what the authors of the romantic time supplied to the English youth of the nineteenth century. Also in the seventeenth century there was some French influence, mixed with Italian and Spanish. In the Elizabethan Age, education was not so widely diffused, but we know that the young people of those times used to read Spanish novels and stories, and that no less than one hundred and seventy Spanish books were then translated.

I think you will see from all this that English literature actually depends for its vitality upon translations, and that the minds of English youth are by no means formed through purely English influences. Observe that I have not said anything about the study of Greek and Latin, which are more than foreign influences; they are actually influences from another vanished world. Nor have I said anything about the influence of religious literature, vast as it is—Hebrew literature, literature of the Bible, on which are based the prayers that children learn at their mother's knee. Really, instead of being the principal factor in English education, English literature occupies quite a small place. If an Englishman only knew English literature, he

would know very little indeed. The best of his literature may be in English; he has Shakespeare, for example; but the greater part of it is certainly not English, and even to-day its yearly production is being more and more affected by the ideas of France and Italy and Russia and Sweden and Norway—without mentioning the new influences from many Oriental countries.

No: you should think of any foreign language that you are able to acquire, not as the medium for expressing only the thoughts of one people, but as a medium through which you can obtain the best thought of the world. If you cannot read Russian, why not read the Russian novelists in English or French? Perhaps you cannot read Italian or Spanish; but that is no reason why you should not know the poems of Petrarch and Ariosto, or the dramas of Calderon. If you do not know Portuguese, there is a good English translation of Camoens. I suppose that in Tokyo very few persons know Finnish; but the wonderful epic of the *Kalevala* can be read to-day in English, French and in German. It is not necessary to have studied Sanskrit in order to know the gigantic epics of India; there are many European translations of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* —indeed, there are English and French translations of most of the great Sanskrit writers, though the Germans have been perhaps the greatest workers in this field. You can read the Arabian and the

Persian poets also in English; and there are Oriental classics that everybody should know something about—such as the *Shāhnāma*, or "Book of Kings," of Firdusi; the *Gulistan* of Saadi; and the *Diwan* of Hafiz. And speaking of English translations only, both the written and the unwritten literatures of almost every people under the sun can be read in English—even the songs and the proverbs of the most savage tribes. There is one great defect in English work of this kind,—a great deal of such translation has been made in bad verse. For this reason the French translators who keep to prose are generally to be preferred. But you have certainly learned how great some English translators have proved themselves, even in verse,—for example, Fitzgerald; and scarcely less interesting and sympathetic than Fitzgerald is Palmer's volume of translation from the ancient Arabian poets. However, what I am anxious to impress upon you is this,—that the English language can give you not only some knowledge of the productions of one race, but the intellectual wealth of the entire world. In England there are many thousands of persons who cannot read German, but there are no educated persons who have not read the German poets in English, and who cannot quote to you some verses of Heine.

Now if you are satisfied that the study of English means for you infinitely more than the study of English authors, you will know why I am not

attempting to confine these lectures to original English prose. I shall take only the best examples that I can find in any kind of European prose for illustration; because everything depends upon the idea and the form, and neither the idea nor the form of prose (it is not the same in the case of poetry) can be restricted by the boundaries of language. In the last two lectures of this series I gave you two extremely different examples of style—one representing the old Norse or saga style; the other the elaborate, fantastic, almost pedantic, but matchlessly beautiful prose of Sir Thomas Browne. Both of these refer to the past; and the contrast was about as strong as it could be made. Now let us turn to modern times, to the nineteenth century, and again take two striking examples of the most simple and the most ornamental varieties of prose. The simple style will again be Norse; for the genius of the race, which showed itself so markedly in those quotations from the sagas which I gave you, again shows itself to-day in the nineteenth century prose of the very same people. Let us now talk about that.

You must not suppose that Norse literature remained unaffected by change through all the centuries—I am not speaking of language (that is not at all the same), but of method. On the contrary, the Norwegians and Swedes and Danes went through very much the same kind of literary experiences as the English and the French, the Italians and the

Germans. They had also their romantic and classic periods; even they became for a while artificial, especially the Danes; and the Danish culture remained very conservative in its classicism until well into the nineteenth century. And at that time it was Danish culture that especially affected education in Norway and Sweden. But in 1832 there was born a man destined to revive the ancient saga literature in modern times, and so make a new literature unlike anything that had been before it. That man was Björnstjerne Björnson. He went through the usual course of University education, and did not prove himself a good scholar. He was always dreaming about other things than Greek or Latin or mathematics, and instead of trying to compete for any University honours, he gave all his spare time to the reading of books having nothing to do with the University course. The ancient Norse literature especially interested him; he read everything relating to it that he could lay hands upon. He had hard work to pass his examinations, and his fellow-students never imagined that he would be able to do anything great in the world. But presently, after leaving the University, this dreaming young man suddenly developed an immense amount of unsuspected intellectual energy. He became a journalist, which, of all professions, is the worst for a man of letters to undertake; and in spite of it he produced a wonderful novel, within quite a short time, which attracted the

attention of all Europe and has been translated into most European languages. This novel was *Synnövé Solbakken*, a story of Norwegian peasant life. Björnson himself was a peasant's son, and he had lived and seen that which he described in this novel. But the wonder of the book was not in the story, not in the plot; it was in the astonishing method of the telling. The book reads as if it had been written by a saga man of the ninth or tenth century; the life described is indeed modern, but the art of telling it is art a thousand years old, which scholars imagined could never be revived again. Björnson revived it; and by so doing he has affected almost every literature in Europe. Perhaps he has especially affected some of the great French realists; at all events, he gave everybody interested in literature something new to think about. But this first novel was only the beginning of a surprising series of productions,—poetical, romantic, historical and political. Björnson went into politics, became a statesman, did honour to his country, did a great many wonderful things. But his chief merit is that he is the father and founder of a new literature, which we may call modern Norse. The study of the modern Norse writers ought to be of great service to Japanese students, for this strong and simple style accords remarkably well with the best traditions of Japanese prose. Moreover, the works of these writers have been put into English by scholarly men—masters of clear and pure English,

who have been able to preserve the values of the original. This is easy to do in the case of Northern dialects proper, which are very close to English—much closer than French, much closer even than German. The simpler the style, the less it loses by translation.

Moreover, you will find in the work of this man the most perfect pictures possible to make of the society and the character of a people. The people ought to interest you—ought to interest any student of English literature; for it was out of this far north that came the best element in the English race, the strongest and a good deal of the best feeling that expresses itself in English literature. You will find in these stories, or studies from real life, that the race has remained very much the same from ancient times. It is true that to-day in all the schools of Norway the students learn English and French; that modern science and modern philosophy are most diligently acquired; that Norway has produced poets, dramatists, men of science, and men of art, well worthy of being compared with those of almost any other country. It is true that writers like Björnson and Ibsen (the only other Norwegian man of letters of to-day who can be compared with Björnson) have been actually able to influence English literature and European drama in general. But it is not in the cities nor in the most highly cultivated classes that the national distinctiveness in the character of a people

can be judged. You must go into the country to study that; you must know the peasantry, who really form the body and strength of any nation. Björnson well knew this; and his University training did not blind him to the literary importance of such studies. The best of his fiction, and the bulk of it, treats of peasant life; and this life he portrayed in a way that has no parallel in European literature, with the possible exception of the Russian work done by Turgénev and others. He has also given us studies of Norwegian character among the middle class, among the clergymen, and among the highly cultivated University people, who discuss the philosophy of Spencer and the ethics of Kant. But these studies are interesting only to the degree that they show the real Norse character, such as the peasant best exemplifies, in spite of modern education. It is a very stern, strong and terrible character; but it is also both lovable and admirable. Brutal at moments, it is the most formidable temperament that we can imagine; but in steadfastness and affection and depth of emotional power, it is very grand. At first you will think that these terrible fathers who beat their children, and these terrible young men who fight with demons on occasion, or who climb precipices to court the maiden of their choice, are still savage. But after the shock of the strange has passed, you will see that they are after all very human and very affectionate; and that if they are

rougher than we in their ways, it is because they are stronger and better able to endure and to benefit by pain. Well, as I said, every kind of northern society is depicted in Björnson's tables, but the greatest of all is the story of *Synnövé Solbakken*. It is a very simple story of peasant life. It describes the lives of a boy and a girl in the country up to the time of their marriage to each other, and it treats especially of the inner life of these two—their thoughts, their troubles, their affections. There is nothing unusual about it except the truth of the delineation. This delineation is done very much as the old Norse writers of whom I spoke to you before would have done it.

I shall quote only a little bit,—because the ancient extracts which I gave you from the saga must have served to show you what I mean. The scene described is that where the boy is taken to church for the first time, and there sees a little girl whom he is to marry many years later.

> There was a little girl kneeling on the bench, and looking over the railing. She was still fairer than the man—so fair that he had never seen her equal. She had a red streamer to her cap, and yellow hair beneath this, and she smiled at him—so that for a long time he could not see anything but her white teeth. She held a hymn-book in one hand, and a folded handkerchief in the other, and was now amusing hereself by striking the handkerchief on the hymn-book. The more he stared the more she smiled; and now he chose also to kneel on the bench just as she was doing. Then she nodded. He looked gravely at her a moment; then he nodded. She smiled and nodded once more; he nodded again, and once more, and still once more. She smiled, but did not nod any more for a little while, until he had quite forgotten; then she nodded.

No more natural description was ever given of the manner in which two little children, still untrained, act upon seeing each other for the first time, without being able to get close enough to talk. They tried to talk by nods and smiles, when they like each other's looks. There is a very fine study of conversation when these two do come together—the random conversation of children, full of affection, also full of innocent vanity and innocent desire to please. But before they come together the little boy has a fight with another little boy, which is also admirably told. You feel that the writer of the book must have had this fight himself. Later on the hero is to have a very terrible fight, with a jealous and powerful man—a fight that almost takes the reader's breath away; and this is told just as a saga man would have told it a thousand years ago. I am not going to attempt to quote it now, for it is too long; and one part cannot be extracted from the rest without injuring the effect of the whole. But some day when you read it, please to notice that quality in it by which northern writers surpass all others—I mean exactness in relating the succession of incidents. This is a quality to which Professor Ker has but lately called attention.

I told you, when we were talking about the sagas, that I believed the style of these men depended upon the perfection of their senses—quickness of eye, accuracy of perception; and what Professor Ker has said in his lectures upon this very style would seem to confirm this. For example, he remarks that a writer of to-day might write in English such a statement as "he felt the king come behind him and put both hands over his eyes." Professor Ker observes that a Norseman never could have written such a statement, because it is inaccurate in regard to the succession of incidents. The Norse writer would have said, "he felt some one touching him from behind; and before he could turn his head to look, a hand was placed over his eyes; and he knew, by the ring upon the hand, that it was the king." That is the proper way to relate the fact accurately. He could not know, when he first felt himself touched behind, that the king was touching him, nor could he know that the king's hands were placed before his eyes, until he saw something about or upon the hands, by which he could identify them. Seeing the king's ring upon a finger of the hand, he knew that he was being held by the king. In reality all this would happen in a second, and modern writers are not in the habit of studying the succession of the events within so short a time as a second. But the Norseman was obliged to do so; if he could not measure with his eye what took place within even

the fraction of a second, he might lose his life at any moment. Now you will find in the description of this fight in *Synnövé Solbakken* exactly the same faultless accuracy as to succession of incidents. One man is drunk, and undertakes to fight because he is drunk; the other man, who is sober, does not wish to fight, nevertheless the fight is forced upon him by a succession of little circumstances, all of which could not have occupied more than five or ten minutes. An English story-writer of to-day would probably have compressed the ten minutes into two lines of prose. But Björnson gives three pages to those ten minutes, and by so doing he thrills you with all the excitement and passion of the moment as no English writer can do. Still, you must not think that he is prolix. Really he never describes anything which is not absolutely necessary. But he knows what is necessary much better than other writers. He does not avoid little details because they happen to be very difficult to recount. If any of you have been forced into a quarrel of a dangerous kind, I am sure you will remember that all the little details of those moments before the quarrel, although not remarked perhaps by others present, were extremely clear to your own perception. Danger sharpens the senses, quite independently of the fact that the person is brave or not brave. At any such time you can hear and you can see better that at ordinary times. Björnson knew this. That is what makes his account of the

fight between two peasants one of the greatest things in modern fiction.

Now I want to interest you in Björnson as the founder of a school,—to make you remember his name, to tempt you to read his wonderful story. But I shall not talk more about him now. Enough to say that he has done in Norway what I hope some future Japanese writer will do in Japan. You know what I mean by Norse style both in ancient ages and in our own day—that is, you must be able after these lectures to have a general idea about it. And now for a contrast. Nothing is more strongly contrasted with this sharply cut hard short style of the Norse than the prose of the modern romantic movement. The romantic movement in prose did not reach its greatest height in England. The English language is not perfect enough in its prose form for the supreme possibilities of prose. It was in France that romantic prose became most highly perfected; there were so many masters of style that it is hard to make choice among them. But only one conceived the idea of what we call poetical prose—that was Baudelaire; he was, you know, a great and strange poet who wrote a volume of splendid but very terrible verse called *Les Fleurs de Mal*, or "Flowers of Evil,"—perhaps "venomous or poisonous flowers" would better express the real meaning of the title. He also translated the stories of Poe into French; and he was in all things an exquisite artist.

IV

BAUDELAIRE

Baudelaire believed that prose could be made quite as poetical as verse or even more so, for a prose that could preserve the rhythm of poetry without its monotony, and the melody of poetry without rhythm, might become in the hands of the master even more effective than verse. I do not know whether this is really true. I am inclined to think that it is; but I do not feel sufficiently learned in certain matters related to the question to venture a definite opinion. Enough to say that Baudelaire thought it possible, and he tried to make a new kind of prose; and the book containing these attempts entitled *Little Poems in Prose* is a wonderful treasure. But Baudelaire did not say anything very extravagant in its preface. He only expressed the conviction that a poetical prose might be used with good effects for certain particular subjects,—dreams, reveries, the thoughts that men think in solitude, when the life of the world is not about them to disturb their meditations; his prose essays are all reveries, dreams, fantasies. I want to give you a specimen of one of these; and I am going to choose that one which Professor Saintsbury selected as the best. But let me tell you in advance that the English language cannot reproduce the real values of Baudelaire's prose. I am not going to attempt an artistic translation for you, but only

such a translation as may help to show you in a vague way what poetical prose means. The piece I am going to turn into English is called *Les Bienfaits de la Lune*,—that is to say, freely rendered, the Gifts of the Moon,—the word "Bienfaits" (literally, benefit) being here used in the meaning of the present or gift given to a child by a fairy godmother.

> The Moon, who is caprice itself, looked through the window while thou went sleeping in thy cradle, and exclaimed: "That child pleases me!" And she softly descended her stairway of clouds, and passed without sound through the panes of glass; then she stretched herself above thee, with a mother's supple tenderness, and she put her own colours upon thy face. Wherefore thine eyes have always remained green and thy cheeks extraordinarily pale. It was while contemplating this visitor that thine eyes first became so fantastically large; and she compressed thy throat so tenderly that since that time thou hast always felt a constant desire to weep.
>
> Meanwhile, in the expansion of her joy, the Moon filled the whole room, like a phosphoric atmosphere, like a luminous poison; and all that living light thought and spoke: "Thou shalt eternally endure the influence of my kiss; thou shalt be beautiful after my fashion; thou shalt love all I love, and all that love me—water, the clouds, the silence, and the night; the waters formless and multiform; the place where thou shalt never be; the lover thou shalt never know; monstrous flowers; the perfumes that give delirium; the cats that stretch themselves upon pianos, and moan like women, with a hoarse sweet voice.
>
> And thou shalt be loved by my lovers, courted by my courtiers. Thou shalt be the queen of green-eyed men, whose throats I have also pressed in my nocturnal caress,—those who love the sea, the immense, tumultuous green sea-water, formless and multiform, the place in which they are not, the woman they know not, the sinister flowers that resemble the censers of some unknown religion, the perfumes that confuse the will, the wild and voluptuous animals that are the emblems of their madness."

Of course in the French this is incomparably more musical and more strange. You will see that it has the qualities of poetry, although not poetry; it has the same resonance, the same groupings of vowel sounds, the same alliteration, the same cadences. It is very strange, and it is also really beautiful. Probably Baudelaire's poetical prose is the most perfect attempt of the kind ever made; and there is a good deal of it. But being a very great artist, he saw, as I have told you before, that this kind of prose is suitable only for reveries, dreams, philosophical fancies. And thereby comes the question as to whether a book of that kind should be written only in one style.

Now this may seen to you a queer question, but I think that it is a very important one. The French have solved it; the English have not. Everything depends upon the character of the book.

If the book be composed of different kinds of material, it seems to me quite proper that it should be written in different styles to suit the differences of subjects. You cannot do this, however, except in a book which is a miscellany, a mixture of reflection and fact. Combinations of the latter kind are chiefly possible in works of travel. In a book of travel you cannot keep up the tone of poetical prose while describing simple facts; but when you come to reflect upon the facts, you can then vary the style. French books of travel are much superior to English in point of literary execution, because the writers of them do this. They do it so naturally that you are apt to overlook the fact that there are two styles in the same book. I know of only one really great English book of travel which has the charm of poetical prose, —that is the *Eothen* of Kinglake. But in this case the entire book is written in one dream tone. The author has not attempted to deal with details to any extent. Beautiful as the book is, it does not show the versatility which French writers of equal ability often display. While on this subject, it occurs to me to show you an example of the difference in English and French methods, as shown by two contemporary writers in describing Tokyo. The English writer is Kipling. He is certainly the most talented English writer now living in descriptive and narrative work. The greatest living prose writer among the French is Pierre Loti (Julien Viaud), a

French naval officer, and you know a member of the Academy. I hope that you have not been prejudiced against him by the stupid criticisms of very shallow men; and that you do not make the mistake of blaming the writer for certain observations regarding Japan, which were made during a stay of only some weeks in this country. Although he was here only for some weeks, and could only describe exactly what he saw, knowing nothing about Japan except through his eyes, yet his sketches of Japan are incomparably finer and truer than anything which has been done by any other living writer. His comments, his inferences may be entirely wrong (they often are); but that has nothing really to do with the merit of his descriptions. When he describes exactly what he sees, then he is like a wonderful magician. There is nobody else living who could do the same thing. I suppose you know that his reputation does not depend upon his Japanese work, however, but upon some twenty volumes of travel containing the finest prose that has ever been written. However, let us first take a few lines from the English traveller's letter. It is very simply phrased, and yet very effective.

> Some folks say that Tokyo covers an area equal to London. Some folks say that it is not more than ten miles long and eight miles broad. There are a good many ways of solving the question. I found a tea-garden situated on a green

plateau far up a flight of steps, with pretty girls smiling on every step. From this elevation I looked forth over the city, and it stretched away from the sea, as far as the eye could reach—one grey expanse of packed house-roof, the perspective marked by numberless factory chimneys. Then I went several miles away and found a park, another eminence, and some more tea-girls prettier than the last; and, looking again, the city stretched out in a new direction as far as the eye could reach. Taking the scope of an eye on a clear day at eighteen miles, I make Tokyo thirty-six miles long by thirty-six miles broad exactly; and there may be some more which I missed. The place roared with life through all its quarters.

Here is the work of a practical man with a practical eye—interested in facts above all things, though not indifferent at any time to what is beautiful. Now, anybody who reads that paragraph will have an idea of the size of Tokyo such as pages of description could not give. There is only one half line of description to note, but it is very strong; and the use of house-roof in the singular gives a particular force to it. That is quite enough to satisfy the average mind. But the Frenchman is an infinitely finer artist. He also gives you a description of Tokyo seen as a wilderness of roofs; but he first chooses a beautiful place from which to look and a beautiful time of the day in which to see it. Let me translate a few sentences for you:

Uyeno,—a very large park, wide avenues, well

gravelled,—bordered with magnificent old trees, and tufts of bamboos.

I halt upon an elevation at a point overlooking the Lotos-lake,—which reflects the evening, like a slightly tarnished mirror, all the gold of sunset. Yedo is beyond those still waters; Yedo is over there, half-lost in the reddish mist of the Autumn evening: a myriad of infinite little greyish roofs all alike,—the furthest, almost indistinguishable in the vague horizon, giving nevertheless an impression that that is not all,—that there are more of them, much more, in distances beyond the view. You can distinguish, amidst the uniformity of the low small houses, certain larger buildings with the angles of their roofs turned up. These are the temples. If it were not for them, you might imagine that you were looking at almost any great city quite as well as you could imagine that you were looking at Yedo. Indeed, it requires the effects of distance and of a particular light to make Yedo appear charming; at this moment, for example, I must confess that it is exquisite to see.

It is dimly outlined in the faintest colours; it has the look of not really existing,—of being only a mirage. Then it seems as if long bands of pink cotton were slowly unrolling over the world,—drawing this chimerical city in their soft undulations. Now one can no longer distinguish the interval between the lake and the further high land upon which all those myriads of far-away shapes are built. One even doubts whether that really is a lake, or only a very smooth level, reflecting the diffused light of the sky, or simply a stretch of vapour; nevertheless, some few long rosy gleams, still showing upon the surface, almost suffice to assure you that it is really water, and that Lotos-

beds here and there make black patches against the reflecting surface.

Although this rapid translation does not give you the colour and charm of the original French, you must be able to see even through it how very accurate and fine the description is—an effect of evening sunlight and rosy mist. I think that most of you have enjoyed the same view, and have noticed how black the lotos leaves really do seem, when the surface of the water is turned to gold by sunset. And then the description of the coming of the mists like long cloud bands of pink cotton is surely as beautiful as it is true. That is the way that a Japanese painter would paint a picture of Tokyo as seen from the same place at the same time. The Englishman would not have noticed all those delicate and dreamy colours, or if he did, would not trouble himself to try to paint them. Really it is a most difficult thing to do.

Now after this little digression let me come back to the subject of variety in style. Loti knows the art of it; so does many another French writer; but very few Englishmen do. What I am going to say is this, that an author ought to be able to choose a different style for different kinds of work,—that is, a great author. But it is so much trouble to master even one style perfectly well, that very few authors attempt this. However, I think it can be laid down

as a true axiom that the style ought to vary with the subject in certain cases; and I think that the great writers of the future will so vary it. The poetical prose, of which I gave you an example from Loti, is admirably suited for particular kinds of composition —short and dreamy things. It is very exhausting to write much in such a style; it is quite as much labour as to write the same thing in verse. But a whole book upon one subject could not be written in this way. The simple naked style, on the other hand, is particularly adapted to story-telling, to narrative. even to certain forms of history. The rhetorical style, ornamental without being exactly poetical, has also a special value; it is in such a style that logical argument and philosophical work in the form of essays can perhaps be most effectively presented. I think that some day this will be generally done. But once it becomes a fashion to do it, there will be danger ahead,—the danger of the custom hardening into conventionalism. Conventionalism kills style. The best way, I think, to meet the difficulty suggested will be to persuade oneself that sentiment, artistic feeling, absolute sincerity of the emotion and of the thought will guide the writer better than any rules as to what style ought to be used. If you try to imitate a model, you will probably go wrong. All literary imitation means weakness. But if you simply follow your own feeling and tastes, trying to be true to them, and to develop them as much as you can—then

I think that your style will form itself and will naturally, without direction, take at last the particular form and tone best adapted to the subject.

NAKED POETRY

Before beginning the regular course of literary lectures this year, I want to make a little discourse about what we may call Naked Poetry,—that is, poetry without any dress, without any ornament, the very essence or body of poetry unveiled by artifice of any kind. I use the word artistically, of course—comparing poetry to an artistic object representing either a figure or a fact in itself, without any accessories.

Now for a few words about poetry in general. All the myriad forms of verse can be classed in three divisions, without respect to subject or method. The highest class is the poetry in which both the words, or form, and the emotion expressed are equally admirable and super-excellent. The second division in importance is that kind of poetry in which the emotion or sentiment is the chief thing, and the form is only a secondary consideration. The third and least important class of poetry is that in which the form is everything, and the emotion or sentiment is always subordinated to it. Now scarcely any modern poem of great length entirely fulfils the highest condition. We have to go back to the old Greek poetry to find such fulfilment. But the second class of poetry includes such wonderful work as the poetry of Shakespeare. The third class of poetry is very fairly represented in English literature by the

work of Pope and the dead classic school. To-day —I mean at this moment in England—the tendency is bad: it is again setting in the direction of form rather than of sentiment or thought.

This will be sufficient to explain to you what I shall mean in future lectures by speaking of perfect poetry, or second class poetry, or inferior poetry, independently of other qualifications. But I must also ask you to accept my definition of the word poetry—though it is somewhat arbitrary. By poetry, true poetry, I mean, above all, that kind of composition in verse which deeply stirs the mind and moves the heart—in another word, the poetry of feeling. This is the true literary signification of poetry; and this is why you will hear some kinds of prose spoken of as great poetry,—although it is not in any way like verse—an important difference of the kind above referred to has been recognized, I am told, by Japanese poets.

They have, at all events, declared that a perfect poem should leave something in the mind,—something not said, but suggested,—something that makes a thrill in you after reading the composition. You will therefore be very well able to see the beauty of any foreign verses which can fulfil this condition with very simple words. Of course, when academic language, learned words, words known only to Greek or Latin scholars are used, such poetry is almost out of the question. Popular language, in English at

least, is the best medium for emotional poetry of certain kinds. But even without going to dialect, or descending to colloquialisms, great effects can be produced with very plain common English—provided that the poet sincerely feels. Here is a tiny but very famous little verse, which I would call an example of naked poetry—pure poetry without any kind of ornament at all. It has only rhymes of one syllable; but even if it had no rhymes at all it would still be a great poetry. And what is more, I should call it something very much resembling in quality the spirit of Japanese poetry. However, you can judge for yourselves:—

FOUR DUCKS ON A POND

Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing:
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

It reads like nothing in particular until you get to the last line;—then the whole picture comes suddenly into your mind with a shock, and you understand. It is an exile's memory of home, one instant of childhood shining out in memory, after all the rest of memory has become dark. So it is very famous, and really wonderful—although there is no art in it

at all. It is simple as a song.

Now English poetry contains very few inspirations like that—which, by the way, was the work of an Irishman, William Allingham. The remarkable thing about it is the effect made by so small a thing. But we have a few English poets who touched the art of divine simplicity,—of pure emotion independent of form; and one of these was Kingsley. You know several of his songs which show this emotional power; but I am not sure whether you know *Airly Beacon*.

Airly Beacon is a little song; but it is the story of the tragedy of life—you never can forget it after once reading it. And you have no idea what you are reading until you come to the last line. I must tell you that the place for *Airly Beacon* is a high place in Scotland,—from the top of which a beautiful view can be obtained,—and it is called Airly Beacon, because in ancient times a signal-fire or beacon-fire used to be lighted upon it. Bearing this in mind you will be better able to judge the effect of the poem. I must also remind you that in England and America young girls are allowed a great deal of liberty in regard to what is called "courting," that is to say, being wooed, or made love to under promise of marriage. The idea is that a girl should have sufficient force of will to be able to take care of herself when alone with a man. If she has not—then she might have to sing the song of *Airly Beacon*.

But perhaps the girl in this case was not so unfortunate; we may imagine that she became a wife and very early a widow. The song does not say.

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  On the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
  While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
  Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
  Oh the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
  With his baby on my knee!

The great test as to whether verse contains real poetry, emotional poetry, is this:—can it be translated into the prose of another language and still make an appeal to emotion? If it can, then the true poetry is there. If it cannot, then it is not poetry, but only verse. Now a great deal of famous Western poetry will really bear this test. The little poem that I have just quoted to you will bear it. So will some of the best work of each of our greatest poets. Those of you who studied German know something about the wonderful poems of Heine. You know they are

very simple in form and musical. Well, the best foreign translation of them is a translation into French prose. Here, of course, the rhyme is gone, the music is gone, but the real essence of poetry—the power to touch the heart—remains. Do you remember the little poem in which the poet describes the soldier, the sentry on guard at the city-gate? He sees the soldier standing in the light of the evening sun, performing the military exercise all by himself, just to pass the time. He shoulders his gun as if in receiving invisible orders, presents, takes aim. Then the poet suddenly exclaims, "I wish he would shoot me dead!"

The whole power of the little composition is in that exclamation: it tells us all that he means, and all that he feels. To a person unhappy, profoundly unhappy, even the most common sights and sounds of life give him thoughts and wishes in relation to death. Now a little poem like that loses scarcely anything by literary translation: it is what I have called naked poetry;—it does not depend upon the ornaments of expression, or the decoration of rhyme, in order to produce its effect. Perhaps you will say that this essence of poetry may also be found occasionally in prose. That is true;—there is such a thing as poetry in prose, but it is also true that measure and rhyme greatly intensify the charm of emotional expression.

Suppose we now take something more elaborate

for an example—this celebrated little poem written many years ago by an Oxford student, and now known everywhere. I call it more elaborate only because the workmanship as to form is much more delicate:

The night has a thousand eyes
  And the day but one;
Yet the light of the whole world dies
  With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
  And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole like dies
  When love is done!

—*Francis Bourdillon.*

An ancient Greek might have written something like that; it has the absolute perfection of some of those immortal little pieces preserved to us in the Greek Anthology—two thousand and even three thousand years old. The comparison of stars to eyes is very old: in every Western literature the stars have been called the eyes of the night; and we still speak of the sun as the Eye of Day—just as the Greeks did. Innumerable as are the stars of the night, they cannot be seen at all when the sun has well risen. They are not able to make light and joy in the world; and when the sun sets, every thing becomes dark and colourless for us. Then the poet says that human love is to human life what the sun is to the world.

It is not by reason, but by feeling that we are made happy. The mind cannot make us happy as the heart can. Yet the mind, like the sky, "has a thousand eyes"—that is to say, a thousand different capacities of knowledge and perception. It does not matter. When the person that we love is dead the happiness of life ceases for us; emotionally our world becomes dark, as the physical world becomes when the sun has set.

Certainly the perfect verse and rhyme help the effect; but they are not at all necessary to the beauty of the thing. Translate that into your own language in prose; and you will see that very little is lost; for the first two lines of the first stanza exactly balance the first two lines of the second stanza; and the second two lines of the first stanza exactly balance the second two lines of the second stanza. Therefore even in prose the composition must assume a charming form, no matter in what language it is rendered.

But it does not follow at all that because a short composition in verse contains a great deal of meaning or happens to be very cleverly constructed, you can call it a real poem. Verses that only surprise by cleverness, by tricks, by good words, have a very little value. They may be pretty; they may give you the kind of pleasure that a small graceful object gives; but if they do not touch the heart as well as the head, I should never call them real poetry. For

example, there is a little French verse which has been translated into English more than a thousand times—always differently, and yet never successfully. *The English Journal of Education* of this year asked for translations of it, and more than five hundred were sent in. None of them were satisfactory, though some were very clever. Here is the little verse:

La vie est vaine:
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine,
Et puis—bonjour!

La vie est brève:
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis—bonsoir!

Meaning "Life is vain:
A little love,
A little hate,
And then—good-bye!

Life is brief:
A little hope,
A little dreaming,
And then—good-night!"

Of course this requires no explanation. The French word is astonishingly clear, simple as it looks: the

same thing cannot be done in the English tongue quite so well. As I have told you, at least a thousand English writers have tried to render it into English verse; so you see that it is very famous. But is it poetry? I should certainly say that it is not. It is not poetry, because it consists only of a few commonplaces stated in a mocking way—in the tone of a clever man trifling with a serious subject. They do not really touch us. And they do not bear the test of translation. Put it into English, what becomes of them? They simply dry up. The English reader might well exclaim, "We have heard all that before, in much better language." But let us take one verse of a Scotch song by Robert Burns which is known the whole world over, and which was written by a man who always wrote out of his heart:

(Original in Scotch dialect)

We two had paddled in the brook
From morning sun till noon,
But seas between us broad have roared
Since old lang syne!

When I put that into English, the music is gone, and the beauty of several dialect-words such as "dine" (meaning the dinner hour, therefore the midday), and the melody have disappeared. Still the poetry remains. Two men meet each other in some foreign country, after years of separation; and one reminds

the other of childhood days, when both played in the village brook from the sunrise until dinner-time—so much delighted by the water! Only a little brook, one says;—"but the breadth of oceans, the width of half the world, has been between us since that time." Now, anybody who, as a boy, loved to play or swim in the stream of his native village with other boys, can feel what the poet means: whether he be a Japanese or a Scotch man makes no difference at all. That is poetry.

And now, so much having been said on the subject of the emotional essence of poetry, I want to tell you that in the course of such lectures on poetry as we shall have in the course of the academic year, I shall try always to keep these facts before you, and to select for our readings only those things which contain the sort of poetry that will bear the test of translation. Much of our English poetry will not do this. I think, for example, that it is a great mistake to set before Japanese students such eighteenth century verse as the verse of Pope. As verse it is perhaps the most perfect in the English language; as poetry, it is nothing at all. The essence of poetry is not in his poetry, nor is it to be found in most of the eighteenth century school. That was an age in which it was the fashion to keep all emotion suppressed. But Pope is a useful study for English classes in England, because of what English students can take from it through the more study of form, of

compact and powerful expression with very few words. Here, the situation is exactly converse. The value of foreign poetry to you cannot be in the direction of form. Foreign form cannot be reproduced in Japanese any more than French can be reproduced in English. The value of foreign poetry to you must be in what makes the soul, the heart, the essence of all true poetry:—feeling and imagination. Foreign feeling and foreign imagination may help to add something to the beauty and the best quality of future Japanese poetry. There, I think, the worth of study may be very great. But when foreign poetry means nothing but correct verse, you might as well waste no time upon it; as there is much great poetry which has good form as well as strong feeling.

THE VALUE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN FICTION

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

And this introduces us to the consideration of a general and remarkable fact, a fact that I do not remember to have seen in any books, but which is of very great philosophical importance; there is something ghostly in all great art, whether of literature, music, sculpture, or architecture.

But now let me speak to you about this word "ghostly"; it is a much biggor word, perhaps, than some of you imagine. The old English had no other word for "spiritual" or "supernatural"—which two terms, you know, are not English but Latin. Every thing that religion to-day calls divine, holy, miraculous, was sufficiently explained for the old Anglo-Saxons by the term ghostly. They spoke of a man's ghost, instead of speaking of his spirit or soul; and every thing relating to religious knowledge they called ghostly. In the modern formula of the Catholic confession, which has remained almost unchanged for nearly two thousand years, you will find that the priest is always called a "ghostly" father—which means that his business is to take care of the ghosts or souls of men as a father does. In addressing the priest, the penitent really calls him "Father of my ghost." You will see, therefore, that a very large meaning really attaches to the adjective. It means every thing relating to the supernatural. It means to the Christian even God himself, for the Giver of Life is always called in English the Holy Ghost.

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

larger and longer and deeper. And this is why, in spite of all knowledge, the world still finds pleasure in the literature of the supernatural, and will continue to find pleasure in it for hundreds of years to come. The ghostly represents always some shadow of truth, and no amount of disbelief in what used to be called ghosts can ever diminish human interest in what relates to that truth.

So you will see that the subject is not altogether trifling. Certainly it is of very great moment in relation to great literature. The poet or the story-teller who cannot give the reader a little ghostly pleasure at times never can be either a really great writer or a great thinker. I have already said that I know of no exception to this rule in the whole of English literature. Take, for instance, Macaulay, the most practical, hard-headed, logical writer of the century, the last man in whom you would expect to find the least trace of superstition. Had you read only certain of his essays, you would scarcely think him capable of touching the chords of the supernatural. But he has done this in a masterly way in several of the *Lays of Ancient Rome*—for example, in speaking of the apparition of the Twin Brethren at the battle of Lake Regillus, and of Tarquin haunted by the phantom of his victim Lucretia. Both of these passages give the ghostly thrill in a strong way; and there is a fainter thrill of the same sort to be experienced from the reading of parts of

The Prophecy of Capys. It is because Macaulay had this power, though using it sparingly, that his work is so great. If he had not been able to write these lines of poetry which I referred to, he could not even have made his history of England the living history that it is. A man who has no ghostly feeling cannot make anything alive, not even a page of history or a page of oratory. To touch men's souls, you must know all that those souls can be made to feel by words; and to know that, you must yourself have a "ghost" in you that can be touched in the same way.

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

No good writer—no great writer—ever makes a study of the supernatural according to anything which has been done before by other writers. This is one of those subjects upon which you cannot get real help from books. It is not from books, nor from traditions, nor from legends, nor from anything of that kind that you can learn how to give your reader a ghostly thrill. I do not mean that it is of no use for you to read what has been written upon the subject, so far as mere methods of expression, mere effects of literary workmanship, are concerned. On the contrary, it is very important that you should read all you can of what is good in literature upon these subjects; you will learn from them a great deal

about curious values of words, about compactness and power of sentences, about peculiarities of beliefs and of terrors relating to those beliefs. But you must never try to use another man's ideas or feelings, taken from a book, in order to make a supernatural effect. If you do, the work will never be sincere, and will never make a thrill. You must use your own ideas and feelings only, under all possible circumstances. And where are you to get these ideas and feelings from, if you do not believe in ghosts? From your dreams. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, all the artistic elements of ghostly literature exist in your dreams, and form a veritable treasury of literary material for the man that knows how to use them.

All the great effects obtained by poets and story-writers, and even by religious teachers, in the treatment of supernatural fear or mystery, have been obtained, directly or indirectly, through dreams. Study any great ghost story in any literature, and you will find that no matter how surprising or unfamiliar the incidents seem, a little patient examination will prove to you that every one of them has occurred, at different times, in different combinations, in dreams of your own. They give you a thrill. But why? Because they remind you of experiences, imaginative or emotional, which you had forgotten. There can be no exception to this rule—absolutely none. I was speaking to you the other day about a

short story by Bulwer-Lytton, as being the best ghost story in the English language. The reason why it is the best story of this kind is simply because it represents with astonishing faithfulness the experiences of nightmare. The terror of all great stories of the supernatural is really the terror of nightmare, projected into waking consciousness. And the beauty or tenderness of other ghost stories or fairy-stories, or even of certain famous and delightful religious legends, is the tenderness and beauty of dreams of a happier kind, dreams inspired by love or hope or regret. But in all cases where the supernatural is well treated in literature, dream experience is the source of the treatment. I know that I am now speaking to an audience acquainted with literature of which I know practically nothing. But I believe that there can be no exception to these rules even in the literature of the Far East. I do not mean to say that there may not be in Chinese and in Japanese literature many ghost stories which are not derived from dream-experience. But I will say that if there are any of this kind, they are not worth reading, and cannot belong to any good class of literature. I have read translations of a number of Chinese ghost stories in French, also a wonderful English translation of ghostly Chinese stories in two volumes, entitled *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* by Herbert Giles. These stories, translated by a great scholar, are very wonderful; but I noticed that in every suc-

cessful treatment of a supernatural subject, the incidents of the story invariably correspond with the phenomena of dreams. Therefore I think that I cannot be mistaken in my judgment of the matter. Such Japanese stories as I could get translations of, obeyed the same rule. The other day, in a story which I read for the first time, I was very much interested to find an exact parallel between the treatment of a supernatural idea by the Japanese author, and by the best English author of dream studies. The story was about a picture, painted upon a screen, representing a river and a landscape. In the Japanese story (perhaps it has a Chinese origin) the painter makes a sign to the screen; and a little boat begins to sail down the river, and sails out of the picture into the room, and the room becomes full of water, and the painter, or magician, or whoever he is, gets into the boat and sails away into the picture again, and disappears for ever. This is exactly, in every detail, a dream story, and the excellence of it is in its truth to dream experience. The same phenomena you will find, under another form, in *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Through the Looking Glass*.

But to return to the point where we left off. I was saying that all successful treatment of the ghostly or the impossible must be made to correspond as much as possible with the truth of dream experience, and that Bulwer-Lytton's story of the haunted house illustrates the rule. Let us now consider especially

the literary value of nightmare. Nightmare, the most awful form of dream, is also one of the most peculiar. It has probably furnished all the important elements of religious and supernatural terror which are to be found in really great literature. It is a mysterious thing in itself; and scientific psychology has not yet been able to explain many facts in regard to it. We can take the phenomena of nightmare separately, one by one, and show their curious relation to various kinds of superstitious fear and supernatural belief.

The first remarkable fact in nightmare is the beginning of it. It begins with a kind of suspicion, usually. You feel afraid without knowing why. Then you have the impression that something is acting upon you from a distance—something like fascination, yet not exactly fascination, for there may be no visible fascinator. But feeling uneasy, you wish to escape, to get away from the influence that is making you afraid. Then you find it is not easy to escape. You move with great difficulty. Presently the difficulty increases—you cannot move at all. You want to cry out, and you cannot; you have lost your voice. You are actually in a state of trance—seeing, hearing, feeling, but unable to move or speak. This is the beginning. It forms one of the most terrible emotions from which a man can suffer. If it continued more than a certain length of time, the mere fear might kill. Nightmare does sometimes

kill, in cases where the health has been very much affected by other causes.

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

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

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

The third and fourth stages have been artistically mixed together by Bulwer-Lytton. The phantom towers from floor to ceiling, vague and threatening; the man attempts to use a weapon, and at the same time receives a touch or shock that renders him absolutely powerless. He describes the feeling as resembling the sensation of some ghostly electricity. The study is exactly true to dream-experience. I need not here mention this story further, since from this point a great many other elements enter into it which, though not altogether foreign to our subject, do not illustrate that subject so well as some of the stories of Poe. Poe has given us other peculiar details of nightmare-experience, such as horrible sounds. Often we hear in such dreams terrible muffled noises, as of steps coming. This you will find very well studied in the story called *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Again in these dreams inanimate objects either become alive, or suggest to us, by their motion, the hiding of some horrible life behind them—curtains, for example, doors left half open, alcoves imperfectly closed. Poe has studied these in *Eleonora* and in some other sketches.

Dreams of the terrible have beyond question had a good deal to do with the inspiration both of religious and of superstitious literature. The returning of the dead, visions of heavenly or infernal beings,—these, when well described, are almost always exact reproductions of dream-experience. But occasionally

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

The sight of the faces in the water of the river, the changing of waterfalls and cataracts into ghostly people, the rising from the close well of the form of Undine herself, the rising of the flood behind her, and the way in which she "weeps her lover to death" —all this is pure dream; and it seems real because most of us have had some such experiences of fancy in our own dreams. But the other part of the story dealing with human emotions, fears, passions—these are of waking life, and the mixture is accomplished in a most artistic way. Speaking of Undine obliges me also to speak of Undine's predecessors in mediaeval literature—the mediaeval spirits, the *succubæ* and *incubi*, the sylphs and salamanders or salamandrines, the whole wonderful goblin population of water, air, forest, and fire. All the good stories about them are really dream studies. And coming down to the most romantic literature of our own day, the same thing must be said of those strange and delightful stories by Gautier, *La Morte Amoureuse*, *Arria Marcella*, *Le Pied de Momie*. The most remarkable is perhaps *La Morte Amoureuse;* but there is in this a study of double personality, which complicates it too much for purposes of present illustration. I shall therefore speak of *Arria Marcella* instead. Some young students visit the city of Pompeii, to study the ruins and the curiosities preserved in the museum of Naples, nearby. All of them are familiar with classic literature and classic history; moreover,

they are artists, able to appreciate the beauty of what they see. At the time of the Eruption, which occurred nearly two thousand years ago, many people perished by being smothered under the rain of ashes; but their bodies were encased in the deposit so that the form was perfectly preserved as in a mould. Some of these moulds are to be seen in the museum mentioned; and one is the mould of the body of a beautiful young woman. The younger of the three students sees this mould, and romantically wishes that he could see and love the real person, so many centuries dead. That night, while his companions are asleep, he leaves his room and wanders into the ruined city, for the pleasure of thinking all by himself. But presently, as he turns the corner of a street, he finds that the city looks quite different from what it had appeared by day; the houses seem to have grown taller; they look new, bright, clean. While he is thus wandering, suddenly the sun rises, and the streets fill with people—not the people of to-day, but the people of two thousand years ago, all dressed in the old Greek and Roman costumes. After a time a young Greek comes up to the student and speaks to him in Latin. He has learned enough Latin at the University to be able to answer, and a conversation begins, of which the result is that he is invited to the theatre of Pompeii to see the gladiators and other amusements of the time. While in this theatre, he suddenly sees the woman that he wanted

to see, the woman whose figure was preserved in the Naples museum. After the theatre, he is invited to her house; and every thing is very delightful until suddenly the girl's father appears on the scene. The old man is a Christian, and he is very angry that the ghost of his daughter should deceive a young man in this manner. He makes a sign of the cross, and immediately poor Arria crumbles into dust, and the young man finds himself alone in the ruins of Pompeii. Very beautiful this story is; but every detail in it is dream study. I have given so much mention to it only because it seems to me the very finest French example of this artistic use of dream experience. But how many other romances belong to the same category? I need only mention among others Irving's *Adelantado of the Seven Cities*, which is pure dream, so realistically told that it gives the reader the sensation of being asleep. Although such romances as *The Seven Sleepers*, *Rip Van Winkle*, and *Urashima*, are not, on the other hand, pure dreams, yet the charm of them is just in that part where dream experience is used. The true romance in all is in the old man's dream of being young, and waking up to cold and grave realities. By the way, in the old French lays of Marie de France, there is an almost precisely similar story to the Japanese one—similar, at least, at all points except the story of the tortoise. It is utterly impossible that the oriental and the occidental story-tellers

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

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

so represented in the poem.

Yet one thing more. Our dreams of heaven, what are they in literature but reflections in us of the more beautiful class of dreams? In the world of sleep all the dead people we loved meet us again; the father recovers his long-buried child, the husband his lost wife, separated lovers find the union that was impossible in this world, those whom we lost sight of in early years—dead sisters, brothers, friends—all come back to us just as they were then, just as loving, and as young, and perhaps even more beautiful than they could really have been. In the world of sleep there is no growing old; there is immortality, there is everlasting youth. And again how soft, how happy every thing is; even the persons unkind to us in waking life become affectionate to us in dreams. Well, what is heaven but this? Religion in painting perfect happiness for the good, only describes the best of our dream-life, which is also the best of our waking life; and I think you will find that the closer religion has kept to dream experience in these descriptions, the happier has been the result. Perhaps you will say that I have forgotten how religion teaches the apparition of supernatural powers of a very peculiar kind. But I think that you will find the suggestion for these powers also in dream-life. Do we not pass through the air in dreams, pass through solid substances, perform all kinds of miracles, achieve all sorts of impossible things? I think

we do. At all events, I am certain that when, as men of letters, you have to deal with any form of supernatural subject—whether terrible, or tender, or pathetic, or splendid—you will do well, if you have a good imagination, not to trust to books for your inspiration. Trust to your own dream-life; study it carefully, and draw your inspiration from that. For dreams are the primary source of almost every thing that is beautiful in the literature which treats of what lies beyond mere daily experience.

THE HÁVA-MÁL

OLD NORTHERN ETHICS OF LIFE

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

Perhaps many of you who read this little verse in Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf* have wished to know what was this wonderful song that the ghost of the god sang to the king. I am afraid that you would be very disappointed in some respects by the *Havamal*. There is indeed a magical song in it; and it is this magical song especially that Longfellow refers to, a song of charms. But most of the *Havamal* is a collection of ethical teaching. All that has been preserved by it has been published and translated by Professors Vigfusson and Powell. It is very old—perhaps the oldest northern literature that we have. I am going to attempt a short lecture upon it, because it is very closely related to the subject of northern character, and will help us, perhaps better than almost anything else, to understand how the ancestors of the English felt and thought before they became Christians. Nor is this all. I venture to say that the character of the modern English people still retains much more of the

quality indicated by the *Havamal* than of the quality implied by Christianity. The old northern gods are not dead; they rule a very great part of the world to-day.

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

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

those of the men of the still further north, with whom they mingled and intermarried freely, both before and after the Danish conquest, when for one moment England and Sweden were one kingdom.

Of course you must remember that northern society was a very terrible thing in some ways. Every man carried his life in his hands; every farmer kept sword and spear at his side even in his own fields; and every man expected to die fighting. In fact, among the men of the more savage north—the men of Norway in especial—it was considered a great disgrace to die of sickness, to die on one's bed. That was not to die like a man. Men would go out and get themselves killed, when they felt old age or sickness coming on. But these facts must not blind us to the other fact that there was even in that society a great force of moral cohesion, and sound principles of morality. If there had not been, it could not have existed; much less could the people who lived under it have become the masters of a great part of the world, which they are at the present day. There was, in spite of all that fierceness, much kindness and good nature among them; there were rules of conduct such as no man could find fault with—rules which still govern English society to some extent. And there was opportunity enough for social amusement, social enjoyment, and the winning of public esteem by a noble life.

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

> A man should never step a foot beyond his weapons; for he can never tell where, on his path without, he may need his spear.
>
> A man before he goes into a house, should look to and espy all the doorways (*so that he can find his way out quickly again*), for he can never know where foes may be sitting in another man's house.

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

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

One would think that men must have had very strong nerves to take comfort under such circumstances, but the poet tells us that the man who can

enjoy nothing must be both a coward and a fool. Although a man was to keep watch to protect his life, that was not a reason why he should be afraid of losing it. There were but three things of which a man should be particularly afraid. The first was drink—because drink often caused a man to lose control of his temper; the second was another man's wife—repeatedly the reader is warned never to make love to another man's wife; and the third was thieves—men who would pretend friendship for the purpose of killing and stealing. The man who could keep constant watch over himself and his surroundings was, of course, likely to have the longest life.

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

> He that is never silent talks much folly; a glib tongue, unless it be bridled, will often talk a man into trouble.
>
> Do not speak three angry words with a worse man; for often the better man falls by the worse man's sword.
>
> Smile thou in the face of the man thou trustest not, and speak against thy mind.

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

But all this caution about silence and about watchfulness did not mean that a man should be unable to speak to the purpose when speech was required. "A wise man," says the *Havamal*, "should be able both to ask and to answer." There is a proverb which you know, to the effect that you cannot shut the door upon another man's mouth. So says the Norse poet: "The sons of men can keep silence about nothing that passes among men;

therefore a man should be able to take his own part, prudently and strongly." Says the *Havamal:* "A fool thinks he knows every thing if he sits snug in his little corner; but he is at a loss for words if the people put to him a question." Elsewhere it is said: "Arch dunce is he who can speak nought, for that is the mark of a fool." And the sum of all this teaching about the tongue is that men should never speak without good reason, and then should speak to the point strongly and wisely.

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

> Open handed, bold-hearted men live most happily, they never feel care; but a fool troubles himself about every thing. The niggard pines for gifts.
>
> A fool is awake all night, worrying about every thing; when the morning comes he is worn out, and all his troubles are just the same as before.
>
> A fool thinks that all who smile upon him are his friends, not knowing, when he is with wise men, who there may be plotting against him.

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

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

Laughter was also condemned, if indulged in without very good cause. "The miserable man whose mind is warped laughs at every thing, not knowing what he ought to know, that he himself has no lack of faults." I need scarcely tell you that the English are still a very serious people, not disposed to laugh nearly so much as are the men of the more sympathetic Latin races. You will remember per-

haps Lord Chesterfield's saying that since he became a man no man had ever seen him laugh. I remember about twenty years ago that there was published by some Englishman a very learned and very interesting little book, called *The Philosophy of Laughter*, in which it was gravely asserted that all laughter was foolish. I must acknowledge, however, that no book ever made me laugh more than the volume in question.

The great virtue of the men of the North, according to the *Havamal*, was indeed the virtue which has given to the English race its present great position among nations,—the simplest of all virtues, common sense. But common sense means much more than the words might imply to the Japanese students, or to any one unfamiliar with English idioms. Common sense, or mother-wit, means natural intelligence, as opposed to, and independent of, cultivated or educated intelligence. It means inherited knowledge; and inherited knowledge may take even the form of genius. It means foresight. It means intuitive knowledge of other people's character. It means cunning as well as broad comprehension. And the modern Englishman, in all times and in all countries, trusts especially to this faculty, which is very largely developed in the race to which he belongs. No Englishman believes in working from book learning. He suspects all theories, philosophical or other. He suspects every

thing new, and dislikes it, unless he can be compelled by the force of circumstances to see that this new thing has advantages over the old. Race-experience is what he invariably depends upon, whenever he can, whether in India, in Egypt, or in Australia. His statesmen do not consult historical precedents in order to decide what to do: they first learn the facts as they are; then they depend upon their own common sense, not at all upon their University learning or upon philosophical theories. And in the case of the English nation, it must be acknowledged that this instinctive method has been eminently successful. When the *Havamal* speaks of wisdom it means mother-wit, and nothing else; indeed, there was no reading or writing to speak of in those times:

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

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

> No man is so good but there is a flaw in him, nor so bad as to be good for nothing.
>
> Middling wise should every man be; never overwise. Those who know many things rarely

lead the happiest life.

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

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

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

Interesting in another way, and altogether more agreeable, are the old sayings about friendship: "Know this, if thou hast a trusty friend, go and see

him often: because a road which is seldom trod gets choked with brambles and high grass."

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

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

Which means, of course, that a true friend is not afraid to find fault with his friend's course; indeed, that is his solemn duty. But these teachings about friendship are accompanied with many cautions; for one must be very careful in the making of friends. The ancient Greeks had a terrible proverb: "Treat your friend as if he should become some day your enemy; and treat your enemy as if he might some day become your friend." This proverb seems to me to indicate a certain amount of doubt in human nature. We do not find this doubt in the Norse teaching, but on the contrary, some very excellent advice. The first thing to remember is that friendship is sacred: "He that opens his heart to another mixes blood with him." Therefore one should be very careful either about forming or about breaking a friendship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This means that we must not impose on our

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

also about praise.

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

If there is anything noteworthy in English character to-day it is the exemplification of this very kind of teaching. This is essentially northern. The last people from whom praise can be expected, even for what is worthy of all praise, are the English. A new friendship, a new ideal, a reform, a noble action, a wonderful poet, an exquisite painting—any of these things will be admired and praised by every other people in Europe long before you can get Englishmen to praise. The Englishman all this time is studying, considering, trying, to find fault. Why should he try to find fault? So that he will not make any mistakes at a later day. He has inherited the terrible caution of his ancestors in regard to mistakes. It must be granted that his caution has saved him from a number of very serious mistakes that other nations have made. It must also be acknowledged that he exercises a fair amount of moderation in the opposite direction—this modern Englishman; he has learned caution of another kind, which his ancestors taught him. "Power," says the *Havamal*, "should be used with moderation; for whoever finds himself among valiant men will discover that no man is peerless." And this is a very important thing

for the strong man to know—that however strong, he cannot be the strongest; his match will be found when occasion demands it. Not only Scandinavian but English rulers have often discovered this fact to their cost. Another matter to be very anxious about is public opinion.

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

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

I have nearly exhausted the examples of this northern wisdom which I selected for you; but there are two subjects which remain to be considered. One is the law of conduct in regard to misfortune; and the other is the rule of conduct in regard to women. A man was expected to keep up a brave heart under any circumstances. These old Northmen seldom committed suicide; and I must tell you that all the talk about Christianity having checked the practice of suicide to some extent, cannot be fairly accepted as truth. In modern England to-day the

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

despair.

> Fire, the sight of the sun, good health, and a blameless life,—these are the goodliest things in this world.
>
> Yet a man is not utterly wretched, though he have bad health, or be maimed.
>
> The halt may ride a horse; the handless may drive a herd; the deaf can fight and do well; better be blind than buried. A corpse is good for naught.

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

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

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

Now what is the general result of this little study, the general impression that it leaves upon the mind? Certainly we feel that the life reflected in these sentences was a life in which caution was above