

ESSAYS ON
BOOKS

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

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ESSAYS ON BOOKS

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PREFACE

MOST of the essays in this volume have appeared in various periodicals—the *Century Magazine*, the *North American Review*, the *Forum*, the *New Englander*, the *Yale Review*, and others. Some were written as introductions to limited editions. The first essay was originally read at a joint meeting of the American Academy and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, at New York, in 1912; the essay on Schiller was read at Yale University, on the one hundredth anniversary of the poet's death, in 1905.

W. L. P.

SEVEN GABLES, LAKE HURON,
Tuesday, 14 July 1914.

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I

REALISM AND REALITY IN FICTION

DURING those early years of his youth at Paris, which the melancholy but unrepentant George Moore insists he spent in riotous living, he was on one memorable occasion making a night of it at a ball in Montmartre. In the midst of the revelry a grey giant came placidly striding across the crowded room, looking, I suppose, something like Gulliver in Lilliput. It was the Russian novelist Turgenev. For a moment the young Irishman forgot the girls, and plunged into eager talk with the man from the North. Emile Zola had just astonished Paris with *L'Assommoir*. In response to a leading question, Turgenev shook his head gravely and said: "What difference does it make whether a woman sweats in the middle of her back or under her arms? I want to know how she thinks, not how she feels."

In this statement the great master of diagnosis indicated the true distinction between realism and

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reality. A work of art may be conscientiously realistic, — few men have had a more importunate conscience than Zola, — and yet be untrue to life, or, at all events, untrue to life as a whole. Realism may degenerate into emphasis on sensational but relatively unimportant detail: reality deals with that mystery of mysteries, the human heart. Realism may degenerate into a creed; and a formal creed in art is as unsatisfactory as a formal creed in religion, for it is an attempt to confine what by its very nature is boundless and infinite into a narrow and prescribed space. Your microscope may be accurate and powerful, but its strong regard is turned on only one thing at a time; and no matter how enormously this thing may be enlarged, it remains only one thing out of the infinite variety of God's universe. To describe one part of life by means of a perfectly accurate microscope is not to describe life any more than one can measure the Atlantic Ocean by means of a perfectly accurate yardstick. Zola was an artist of extraordinary energy, sincerity, and honesty; but, after all, when he gazed upon a dunghill, he saw and described a dunghill. Rostand looked steadfastly at the same object, and beheld the vision of *Chantecler*.

Suppose some foreign champion of realism should arrive in New York at dusk, spend the whole

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night visiting the various circles of our metropolitan hell, and depart for Europe in the dawn. Suppose that he should make a strictly accurate narrative of all that he had seen. Well and good; it would be realistic, it would be true. But suppose he should call his narrative *America*. Then we should assuredly protest.

“You have not described America. Your picture lacks the most essential features.”

He would reply :

“But isn't what I have said all true? I defy you to deny its truth. I defy you to point out errors or exaggerations. Everything that I described I saw with my own eyes.”

All this we admit, but we refuse to accept it as a picture of America. Here is the cardinal error of realism. It selects one aspect of life, — usually a physical aspect, for it is easy to arouse strained attention by physical detail, — and then insists that it has made a picture of life. The modern Parisian society drama, for example, cannot possibly be a true representation of French family and social life. Life is not only better than that; it is surely less monotonous, more complex. You cannot play a great symphony on one instrument, least of all on the triangle. The plays of Bernstein, Bataille, Hervieu, Donnay, Capus, Guinon, and others, brilliant in technical execution as they often

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are, really follow a monotonous convention of theatrical art rather than life itself. As an English critic has said, "The Parisian dramatists are living in an atmosphere of half-truths and shams, grubbing in the divorce courts and living upon the maintenance of social intrigue just as comfortably as any bully upon the earnings of a prostitute." An admirable French critic, M. Henry Bordeaux, says of his contemporary playwrights, that they have ceased to represent men and women as they really are. This is not realism, he declares; it is a new style of false romanticism, where men and women are represented as though they possessed no moral sense — a romanticism sensual, worldly, and savage. Life is pictured as though there were no such things as daily tasks and daily duties.

Shakespeare was an incorrigible romantic; yet there is more reality in his compositions than in all the realism of his great contemporary, Ben Jonson. Confidently and defiantly, Jonson set forth his play *Every Man in His Humour* as a model of what other plays should be; for, said he, it contains deeds and language such as men do use. So it does: but it falls far short of the reality reached by Shakespeare in that impossible tissue of absurd events which he carelessly called *As You Like It*. In his erudite and praiseworthy attempt

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to bring back the days of ancient Rome on the Elizabethan stage Jonson achieved a resurrection of the dead: Shakespeare, unembarrassed by learning and unhampered by a creed, achieved a resurrection of the living. Catiline and Sejanus talk like an old text; Brutus and Cassius talk like living men. For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The form, the style, the setting, and the scenery of a work of art may determine whether it belongs to realism or romanticism; for realism and romanticism are affairs of time and space. Reality, however, by its very essence, is spiritual, and may be accompanied by a background that is contemporary, ancient, or purely mythical. An opera of the Italian school, where, after a tragic scene, the tenor and soprano hold hands, trip together to the footlights, and produce fluent roulades, may be set in a drawing-room, with contemporary, realistic furniture. Compare *La Traviata* with the first act of *Die Walküre*, and see the difference between realism and reality. In the wildly romantic and mythical setting, the passion of love is intensely real; and as the storm ceases, the portal swings open, and the soft air of the moonlit spring night enters the room, the eternal reality of love makes its eternal appeal in a scene of almost intolerable beauty. Even so carefully realistic an opera

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as *Louise* does not seem for the moment any more real than these lovers in the spring moonlight, deep in the heart of the whispering forest.

A fixed creed, whether it be a creed of optimism, pessimism, realism, or romanticism, is a positive nuisance to an artist. Joseph Conrad, all of whose novels have the unmistakable air of reality, declares that the novelist should have no programme of any kind and no set rules. In a memorable phrase he cries, "Liberty of the imagination should be the most precious possession of a novelist." Optimism may be an insult to the sufferings of humanity, but, says Mr. Conrad, pessimism is intellectual arrogance. He will have it that while the ultimate meaning of life — if there be one — is hidden from us, at all events this is a *spectacular* universe; and a man who has doubled the Horn and sailed through a typhoon on what was unintentionally a submarine vessel may be pardoned for insisting on this point of view. It is indeed a spectacular universe, which has resisted all the attempts of realistic novelists to make it dull. However sad or gay life may be, it affords an interesting spectacle. Perhaps this is one reason why all works of art that possess reality never fail to draw and hold attention.

Every critic ought to have a hospitable mind. His attitude toward art in general should be like

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that of an old-fashioned host at the door of a country inn, ready to welcome all guests except criminals. It is impossible to judge with any fairness a new poem, a new opera, a new picture, a new novel, if the critic have preconceived opinions as to what poetry, music, painting, and fiction should be. We are all such creatures of convention that the first impression made by reality in any form of art is sometimes a distinct shock, and we close the windows of our intelligence and draw the blinds that the fresh air and the new light may not enter in. Just as no form of art is so strange as life, so it may be the strangeness of reality in books, in pictures, and in music that makes our attitude one of resistance rather than of welcome.

Shortly after the appearance of Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence*,

“There was a roaring in the wind all night,
The rain came heavily and fell in floods,”

some one read aloud the poem to an intelligent woman. She burst into tears, but, recovering herself, said shamefacedly, “After all, it isn't poetry.” When Pushkin, striking off the shackles of eighteenth-century conventions, published his first work, a Russian critic exclaimed, “For God's sake don't call this thing a poem!” These two poems seemed strange because they were so natural,

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so real, so true, just as a sincere person who speaks his mind in social intercourse is regarded as an eccentric. We follow conventions and not life. In operas the lover must be a tenor, as though the love of a man for a woman were something soft, something delicate, something emasculate, instead of being what it really is, the very essence of masculine virility. I suppose that on the operatic stage a lover with a bass voice would shock a good many people in the auditorium, but I should like to see the experiment tried. In Haydn's *Creation*, our first parents sing a bass and soprano duet very sweetly. But Verdi gave that seasoned old soldier Otello a tenor rôle, and even the fearless Wagner made his leading lovers all sing tenor except the Flying Dutchman, who can hardly be called human. In society dramas we have become so accustomed to conventional inflections, conventional gestures, conventional grimaces, that when an actor speaks and behaves exactly as he would were the situation real, instead of assumed, the effect is startling. Virgin snow often looks blue, but it took courage to paint it blue, because people judge not by eyesight, but by convention, and snow conventionally is assuredly white. In reading works of fiction we have become so accustomed to conventions that we hardly notice how often they contradict reality. In many novels I have read I have been

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introduced to respectable women with scarlet lips, whereas in life I never saw a really good woman with such labial curiosities. Conversations are conventionally unnatural. A trivial illustration will suffice. Some one in a group makes an attractive proposition. "Agreed!" cried they all. Did you ever hear any one say "Agreed"?

I suppose that all novels, no matter how ostensibly objective, must really be subjective. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Every artist feels the imperative need of self-expression. Milton used to sit in his arm-chair, waiting impatiently for his amanuensis, and cry, "I want to be milked." Even so dignified, so reticent, and so sober-minded a novelist as Joseph Conrad says, "The novelist does not describe the world: he simply describes his own world." Sidney's advice, "Look in thy heart, and write," is as applicable to the realistic novelist as it is to the lyric poet. We know now that the greatest novelist of our time, Tolstoi, wrote his autobiography in every one of his so-called works of fiction. The astonishing air of reality that they possess is owing largely to the fact not merely that they are true to life, but that they are the living truth. When an artist succeeds in getting the secrets of his inmost heart on the printed page, the book lives. This accounts for the extraordinary power of Dos-

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toevski, who simply turned himself inside out every time he wrote a novel.

The only reality that we can consistently demand of a novel is that its characters and scenes shall make a permanent impression on our imagination. The object of all forms of art is to produce an illusion, and the illusion cannot be successful with experienced readers unless it have the air of reality. The longer we live, the more difficult it is to deceive us: we smile at the scenes that used to draw our tears, we are left cold by the declamation that we once thought was passion, and we have supped so full with horrors that we are not easily frightened. We are simply bored as we see the novelist get out his little bag of tricks. But we never weary of the great figures in Fielding, in Jane Austen, in Dickens, in Thackeray, in Balzac, in Turgenev, for they have become an actual part of our mental life. And it is interesting to remember that while the ingenious situations and boisterous swash-bucklers of most romances fade like the flowers of the field, Cooper and Dumas are read by generation after generation. Their heroes cannot die, because they have what Mrs. Browning called the "principle of life."

The truly great novelist is not only in harmony with life; his characters seem to move with the stars in their courses. "To be," said the phi-

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losopher Lotze, "is to be in relations." The moment a work of art ceases to be in relation with life, it ceases to be. All the great novelists are what I like to call *sidereal* novelists. They belong to the earth, like the procession of the seasons; they are universal, like the stars. A commonplace producer of novels for the market describes a group of people that remains nothing but a group of people; they interest us perhaps momentarily, like an item in a newspaper; but they do not interest us deeply, any more than we are really interested at this moment in what Brown and Jones are doing in Rochester or Louisville. They may be interesting to their author, for children are always interesting to their parents; but to the ordinary reader they begin and end their fictional life as an isolated group. On the contrary, when we read a story like *The Return of the Native*, the book seems as inevitable as the approach of winter, as the setting of the sun. All its characters seem to share in the diurnal revolution of the earth, to have a fixed place in the order of the universe. We are considering only the fortunes of a little group of people living in a little corner of England, but they seem to be in intimate and necessary relation with the movement of the forces of the universe.

The recent revival of the historical romance, which shot up in the nineties, flourished mightily

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at the end of the century, and has already faded, was a protest not against reality, but against realism. Realism in the eighties had become a doctrine, and we know how its fetters cramped Stevenson. He joyously and resolutely burst them, and gave us romance after romance, all of which except the *Black Arrow* showed a reality superior to realism. The year of his death, 1894, ushered in the romantic revival. Romanticism suddenly became a fashion that forced many new writers and some experts to mould their work in its form. A few specific illustrations must be given to prove this statement. Mr. Stanley Weyman really wanted to write a realistic novel, and actually wrote one, but the public would none of it: he therefore fed the mob with *The House of the Wolf*, with *A Gentleman from France*, with *Under the Red Robe*. Enormously successful were these stirring tales. The air became full of obsolete oaths and the clash of steel — “God’s bodikins! man, I will spit you like a lark!” To use a scholar’s phrase, we began to revel in the glamour of a bogus antiquity. For want of a better term, I call all these romances the “Gramercy” books. Mr. Winston Churchill, now a popular disciple of the novel of manners, gained his reputation by *Richard Carvel*, with a picture of a duel facing the title-page. Perhaps the extent of the romantic craze

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is shown most clearly in the success attained by the thoroughly sophisticated Anthony Hope with *The Prisoner of Zenda*, by the author of *Peter Stirling* with *Janice Meredith*, and most of all by the strange *Adventures of Captain Horn*, a bloody story of buried treasure, actually written by our beloved humorist, Frank Stockton. Mr. Stockton had the temperament most fatal to romance, the bright gift of humorous burlesque; the real Frank Stockton is seen in that original and joyful work, *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*. Yet the fact that he felt the necessity of writing *Captain Horn*, is good evidence of the tide. This romantic wave engulfed Europe as well as America, but so far as I can discover, the only work after the death of Stevenson that seems destined to remain, appeared in the epical historical romances of the Pole Sienkiewicz. Hundreds of the romances that the world was eagerly reading in 1900 are now forgotten like last year's almanac; but they served a good purpose apart from temporary amusement to invalids, overtired business men, and the young. There was the sound of a mighty wind, and the close chambers of modern realism were cleansed by the fresh air.

A new kind of realism, more closely related to reality, has taken the place of the receding romance. We now behold the "life" novel, the success of

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which is a curious demonstration of the falseness of recent prophets. We were told a short time ago that the long novel was extinct. The three-volume novel seemed very dead indeed, and the fickle public would read nothing but a short novel, and would not read that unless some one was swindled, seduced, or stabbed on the first page. Then suddenly appeared *Joseph Vance*, which its author called an ill-written autobiography, and it contained 280,000 words. It was devoured by a vast army of readers, who clamoured for more. Mr. Arnold Bennett, who had made a number of short flights without attracting much attention, produced *The Old Wives' Tale*, giving the complete life-history of two sisters. Emboldened by the great and well-deserved success of this history, he launched a trilogy, of which two huge sections are already in the hands of a wide public. No details are omitted in these vast structures; even a cold in the head is elaborately described. But thousands and thousands of people seem to have the time and the patience to read these volumes. Why? Because the story is in intimate relation with life. A gifted Frenchman appears on the scene with a novel in ten volumes, *Jean Christophe*, dealing with the life of this hero from the cradle to the grave. This is being translated into all the languages of Europe, so intense is the curiosity of

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the world regarding a particular book of life. Some may ask, Why should the world be burdened with this enormous mass of trivial detail in rather uneventful lives? The answer may be found in Fra Lippo Lippi's spirited defence of his art, which differed from the art of Fra Angelico in sticking close to reality:

“For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.”

I find in the contemporary “life” novel a sincere, dignified, and successful effort to substitute reality for the former rather narrow realism; for it is an attempt to represent life as a whole.

II

RICHARDSON

RICHARDSON was born somewhere in Derbyshire, in the year 1689. His father was a joiner, who originally intended that his son should enter the church — not a bad guess at the youth's talents for godly instruction. But financial embarrassments prohibited an expensive education: and when fifteen or sixteen years old, the diligent Samuel was compelled to earn his living at business. Like Shakespeare, he had only the book-training of the common school: he knew no language but his own: and although, as a printer, he had a bowing acquaintance with contemporary literature, he was never, to his bitter and lasting regret, either a learned or a well-read man. The Latin quotations in his books were prompted by his friends.

At school, however, he learned something besides the three R's; even at that tender age, the two things in which he chiefly excelled in later years — the manufacture of moral phrases and the knowledge of the hearts of women — are what he practised and studied with unwearied assiduity. He

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was a childish anomaly — a wise and prudent prig. The boys called him “Serious and Gravity,” but when did Richardson care for the opinion of boys and men, so long as he had their sisters on his side? As Mrs. Barbauld says, “He was fond of two things, which boys have generally an aversion to, letter-writing, and the company of the other sex.” The author of *Treasure Island* represented exactly the opposite type; Stevenson was always a boy at heart, while Richardson, whatever he was in his teens, was never a boy.

Surely if it were ever given to any man to know the windings of a woman’s heart, it was to Richardson, and he began training as a novelist in a way that may be earnestly recommended to all youthful literary aspirants. “I was not more than thirteen, when three . . . young women, unknown to each other, having a high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lover’s letters: nor did any one of them know that I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either taken or given, at the very time that the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection; and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing *this* word, or

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that expression, to be softened or changed. One highly gratified with her lover's fervour, and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I asked her direction; I cannot tell you what to write; but (her heart on her lips) you cannot write too kindly; all her fear was only, that she should incur slight for her kindness."

Miss Clara Thomson remarks as follows on Richardson's early and unconscious training as a novelist: "It was this early experience that enabled him to describe with such astonishing accuracy the intricacies of feminine passion, and to realise the fallacy of the prejudice that requires a woman's affections to be passive till roused to activity by the declaration of a lover. He understood that . . . the ordinary heroine of the masculine dramatist or novelist is rather an exposition of what he thinks a woman should be, than an illustration of what she is."

It is interesting to remember that the greatest living English novelist, Thomas Hardy, had early training similar to Richardson's. He acted as amanuensis for the village girls, when he was only a child, and though he did not compose, but only wrote their letters, his impressionable brain, receiving so many warm outpourings of the feminine heart, reproduced them afterwards with the fidelity that Tess and Eustacia show.

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When seventeen years old, Richardson was bound as an apprentice to John Wilde, of Stationers' Hall, a printer. He had hoped, in selecting this business, to devote all his spare hours to general reading; but unfortunately he had no spare hours. Mr. Wilde soon discovered that he had a faithful and valuable apprentice; and he forthwith determined to use all the boy's energy and time to his master's profit; rewarding him with well-merited praise, and calling him the pillar of his house. Hard-pressed as Richardson was, his insatiable passion for letter-writing became ungovernable; and he carried on a full correspondence with a gentleman, his superior in rank and fortune. Richardson's similarity in deeds and maxims to Hogarth's faithful apprentice has naturally impressed many. His only diversion was letter-writing. He was careful never to write when by any possibility he could be serving his master, and the candle whose light flickered o'er his manuscript was bought by his own money.

The young man's steadiness and industry met with their natural and edifying reward: graduating from the apprentice school, he became a journeyman printer, and finally the foreman. In 1719 he opened business for himself, removing in 1724 to Salisbury Court, now Salisbury Square, identified with Richardson from that day to this.

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There his warehouse and his city residence remained till his death. We need not follow further his fortunes as a printer. He became one of the best-known men of his class in London; through the Speaker's influence, he printed the Journals of the House of Commons, and acquired a snug fortune, which enabled him to have a pleasant country-house, and to indulge himself in another passion — hospitality — one of his noblest and most delightful characteristics.

Miss Thomson has shown that on 23 November 1721, Richardson was married to Martha Wilde, and that all the circumstances indicate that she was the daughter of his former master, the *Dictionary of National Biography* to the contrary notwithstanding. Could anything carry out more completely the parallel to Hogarth, or could we ever find a better model for the hero of a Sunday-school book? The youth's father loses his fortune; the boy leaves school, and becomes an apprentice; by faithful and diligent toil, by a sober, righteous, and godly life, he rises steadily in fortune and reputation; he becomes the independent head of a flourishing business; and places the capstone in position by marrying his original employer's daughter!

Richardson was twice married, both times happily. His first wife died in 1731, and the next year he made his second matrimonial venture,

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marrying Elizabeth Leake, of Bath. She was then thirty-six years old. She survived her husband, dying in 1773. Richardson had just a dozen children, six by each wife. Martha Wilde bore him five sons and one daughter, and Elizabeth Leake presented him with five daughters and one son. The satisfaction that so exceedingly methodical a man as Richardson must have obtained from so symmetrical branches of offspring was seriously impaired by the fact that they were so soon blighted by death. All the children of his first wife died practically in infancy, and of the second brood, a son and a daughter died not long after birth. This boy was the third that Richardson called Samuel, the mortality of the sons being equalled only by the immortality of the father — as if Fate had determined to reserve that name for only one individual. Four daughters survived him, cheering his way in the Valley, and showing him constant devotion and love. A busy time they had, writing and copying his long letters, but they seemed in somewhat similar circumstances to exhibit more cheerfulness than the daughters of Milton.

About 1755 Richardson's health became so shattered that he looked forward with quiet composure to advancing death. One by one his old friends passed away; in 1757 his eldest daughter Mary was married, the only one of his children wedded

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before his death. Patty and Sarah took husbands not long after their father's funeral, and Nancy, who constantly suffered from ill-health, survived them all, dying a spinster in 1803. Richardson loved his daughters, but they were always afraid of him, as is commonly the case where too much formality obtains between children and parents. His stiffness, arising partly from shyness, partly from self-consciousness, and partly from vanity, made it difficult for him ever to put any one, even his own children, entirely at ease in his presence. Furthermore, he solemnly believed that the *pater-familias* was the Head of the House; and should never be treated by his womankind on terms of exact equality.

In 1761 his increasing infirmities showed that the last catastrophe was nigh. On the fourth of July in that year he died, and was buried in the centre aisle of St. Bride's church, London, close by his home in Salisbury Court. An epitaph on the floor above his dust sets forth his many virtues. The gallant cavalier poet, Lovelace, had been buried in the same church; and his noble and dashing qualities had suggested to the novelist the name of his most famous hero, by merit raised to a bad eminence.

Richardson's personal appearance, owing to our fortunate possession of a number of portraits, is

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as familiar to us as it was to his contemporaries. We have him in his habit as he lived. The best portrait of him was by the artist Highmore, whose daughter Susannah was one of Richardson's most intimate friends. This picture now hangs in Stationers' Hall, off Ludgate Hill. It represents him standing, his right hand thrust within the breast of his coat, and his left hand holding an open book, presumably one of his own compositions. The inevitable quill is within easy reach, and it was with this inspired instrument that he sketched a portrait of himself, far more animated than even Highmore's talent could portray. In a letter to his favourite correspondent, Lady Bradshaigh, he thus gives a picture by which she is to recognise him in the Park.

“Short; rather plump than emaciated . . . about five foot five inches: fair wig; . . . one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support, when attacked by sudden tremors or startlings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God, not so often as formerly: looking directly foreright, as passers-by would imagine; but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back: of a light-brown com-

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plexion; teeth not yet failing him; smoothish faced and ruddy cheeked: at some times looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger: a regular even pace, stealing away ground, rather than seeming to rid it: a grey eye, too often overclouded by mistinesses from the head: by chance lively; very lively it will be, if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours: his eye always on the ladies.”

It was by no accident that the genius of Richardson is most evident in his portrayal of women. They were his chosen companions and confidants; though in the matter of confidences, Richardson felt that it was more blessed to receive than to give. He was not a ladies' man, though he knew them well, any more than he was a man-of-the-town, though he knew that well: he was something quite different — a woman's man. Were he living to-day he would be the hero of Women's Sewing Circles, of the W. C. T. U. and Foreign Missionary Bands, and the incense that would arise from the thousands of Women's Clubs may best be left to the imagination. During the years of his fame, women clung to his coat-tails with passionate devotion. It is curious, by way of contrast, to remember that as the young wits of the seventeenth century loved to call themselves the Sons of old Ben Jonson, so the young women of the next century gloried

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in the appellation of Richardson's "Daughters": and the novelist loved to drink tea and talk sentiment with them, even as Ben loved to sit in the tavern, tankard in hand, surrounded by his beloved Sons. This difference in hero-worshippers illustrates sufficiently the contrast in temperament between a robust nature like Jonson's and a delicate one like Richardson's. "My acquaintance lies chiefly among the ladies," he writes; "I care not who knows it." It was not merely because he understood them sympathetically that the women opened their hearts to the great novelist; it was largely because of his goodness, his purity, his discretion, and the absolute safety of even the closest and most confidential relations with the little man. He was no avantour; secrets were safe. So resplendent a genius united with a moral character so lofty was a rather unusual combination in the social conditions of eighteenth-century life; and it drew the hearts of idolatrous women with irresistible power. They felt, too, that in Pamela and Clarissa he had glorified women, and had given a final and immortal answer to the gibes on female virtue and constancy, which were the staple of satirical literature and polite conversation. And yet Richardson accepted the worship of the fair without disguising his opinion that men were the lords of creation. A strong-minded woman, or

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what we call to-day, a "new" woman, Richardson would not have admitted to the circle of his "Daughters." Lady Bradshaigh, in her charming correspondence with him, said she disliked learned women. "I hate to hear Latin out of a woman's mouth. There is something in it to me, masculine." In a half-bantering way, Richardson gently rebuked her for this utterance, but it is evident that he thought the chief duty of a married woman was to please her husband, and attend to domestic affairs. Furthermore, he shocked his fair correspondent, as he does his admirers to-day, by theoretically advocating polygamy. He declared that he would not openly support it as an institution, or practise it, because the laws of England forbade it, but in theory he argued with considerable warmth, that it was never forbidden by God, and that it was a natural and proper condition of life. "I do say," he writes to Lady Bradshaigh, "that the law of nature, and the first command (increase and multiply), more than allow of it; and the law of God nowhere forbids it." He continued to press similar arguments upon his horrified friend, who finally tried to close the controversy by writing to him, "I remember how you terrified poor Pamela with Mr. B.'s argument for polygamy. The deuse take these polygamy notions!"

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Richardson's shyness in company, previously spoken of, caused him, as well as his associates, many unhappy hours, and upon casual acquaintances produced a false impression of his character. No one knew this better than he, as is shown in a letter to Miss Mulso, dated 15 August 1755. "Never was there so bashful, so sheepish a creature as was, till advanced years, your paternal friend; and what remained so long in the habit could hardly fail of showing itself in stiffness and shyness, on particular occasions, where frankness of heart would otherwise have shown forth to the advantage of general character." That Richardson was by nature both frank and sincere is fully shown in the long list of his letters.

The constitutional seriousness of his mind was deepened by the frequent deaths in his family, and his health, never robust, and undermined by hard work, was sadly shaken by these misfortunes. He writes :

"Thus have I lost six sons (all my sons) and two daughters, every one of which, to answer your question, I parted with with the utmost regret. Other heavy deprivations of friends, very near, and very dear, have I also suffered. I am very susceptible, I will venture to say, of impressions of this nature. A father, an honest, a worthy father, I lost by the accident of a broken thigh,

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snapped by a sudden jirk, endeavouring to recover a slip passing through his own yard. My father, whom I attended in every stage of his last illness, I long mourned for. Two brothers, very dear to me, I lost abroad. A friend, more valuable than most brothers, was taken from me. No less than eleven affecting deaths in two years! My nerves were so affected with these repeated blows, that I have been forced, after trying the whole *materia medica*, and consulting many physicians, as the only palliative (not a remedy to be expected), to go into a regimen; and, for seven years past have I forborne wine and flesh and fish; and, at this time, I and all my family are in mourning for a good sister, with whom neither would I have parted, could I have had my choice. From these affecting dispensations, will you not allow me, Madam, to remind an unthinking world, immersed in pleasures, what a life this is that they are so fond of, and to arm them against the affecting changes of it?"

It is certainly natural that a man, over whose family circle the King of Terrors so frequently presided, should have been both grave and didactic in temper; and if careless readers criticise him for lacking the ease and gaiety of Fielding's disposition, it is well to remember the grim facts in the printer's career. Nor can we withhold admiration for

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Richardson's constancy, self-control, and evenness of disposition, under misfortunes so crushing that many another man would have been changed into a misanthrope. His courage was neither showy nor spasmodic; it was the highest courage humanity can exhibit; for the heaviest blows of circumstance found and left him upright, composed, and calm. He faced the future, "breast and back as either should be." He feared only two realities: God, whom he adored, and Sin, which he hated.

One of the noblest traits in his character was Generosity. As a master, he did not forget that he had been an apprentice; he was encouraging and kind-hearted, and often gave financial assistance to the hands he employed. All sorts and conditions of men constantly wrote begging letters to him, and the number who were unostentatiously aided by him was remarkable. The poetaster, Aaron Hill, repeatedly shared his bounty; he never seemed to grow weary of this particular well-doing. The famous adventuress, Lætitia Pilkington, whose correspondence with Colley Cibber forms some of the most amusing portions of Mrs. Barbauld's volumes, was materially helped by Richardson. Here is an example of one of her letters to him: "I believe it will not greatly surprise you to hear that I am quite broke; indeed, it was what I might naturally expect, having under-

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taken trade without any fund to carry it on; and whether I had business or not, quarter-day came." The relations between this clever and corrupt woman and the pious, respectable printer make delightful reading. Each perfectly understood the other. In entreating Richardson to spare Clarissa from violation, she writes, "Consider, if this wounds both Mr. Cibber and me (who neither of us set up for immaculate chastity), what must it do with those who possess that inestimable treasure?"

At every hour, in every season, the door of Richardson's house was open to all, either to entertain his friends or to relieve the needy. His hospitality knew no bounds, and we cannot be sure that his wife, on whom the burdens of household management fell, always approved of his indiscriminate invitations. The worthy Thomas Edwards spent his last days in Richardson's house, and his dying hours were cheered by his friend's loving care. Innumerable women frequented the place, and wrote rapturous epistles of its delectable atmosphere. A neighbour's house suffered by fire; Richardson immediately suggested that he move into his own first floor, and stay as long as he wished; once hearing of a repentant Magdalen, he wrote: "Let her come to us; she shall do just what she can, and stay till she is otherwise provided

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for." This astonishing hospitality, always courteously and tactfully proffered, attracted wide attention. "I think I see you," a friend writes, "sitting at your door like an old patriarch, and inviting all who pass by to come in." A clear view of the domestic circle may be obtained by reading a letter written by a foreign visitor, Mr. Reich of Leipsic.

"I arrived at London the eighth of August, and had not much difficulty in finding Mr. Richardson in this great city. He gave me a reception worthy of the author of *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Grandison*; that is, with the same heart which appears throughout his works. . . . Sunday following, I was with him at his country house, where his family was, with some ladies, acquaintances of his four daughters, who, with his lady, compose his family. It was there that I saw beauties without affection; wit without vanity; and thought myself transported to an enchanted land. . . .

"Everything I saw, everything I tasted, recalled to me the idea of the golden age. Here are to be seen no counterfeits, such as are the offsprings of vanity, and the delight of fools. A noble simplicity reigns throughout, and elevates the soul. . . . In the middle of the garden, over against the house, we came to a kind of grotto, where we rested ourselves. It was in this seat . . . that *Pamela*,

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Clarissa, and Grandison received their birth; I kissed the ink-horn on the side of it. . . . Mr. Richardson observed to me, that the ladies in company were all his adopted daughters. . . . It was necessary, at last, to quit that divine man. . . . He embraced me, and a mutual tenderness deprived us of speech. He accompanied me with his eyes as far as he could: I shed tears.”

More intimate friends noticed at times a certain amount of irritability in Richardson’s manners, but this was largely excusable on account of his constant ill-health. He suffered keenly from cruel nervous disorders, so that often he could not raise a glass to his lips, nor hold a pen, nor endure annoyances with his customary cheerfulness. A man compelled to live on a rigid diet, omitting everything liquid and solid that the stomach craves, can easily be forgiven occasional petulance and a lack of boisterous joviality. His vanity is by no means pleasant to contemplate, and it is harder to forget; but a man living in perpetual flattery will sooner or later come to agree with his worshippers. Furthermore, Richardson had, by his own efforts, reached fame and fortune from an obscure origin; and when his praises resounded through all England and Europe, he would have been more than mortal if he had refrained from regarding his edifying career with considerable complacency. He was

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so admirable an illustration of his own maxims, that he could not help seeing it himself.

All his biographers and critics have condemned his hostility to Fielding and Sterne, but although, in the case of the former, jealousy and pride fanned the flames of hatred, he inevitably would have despised both men had he never written a line. Sterne simply disgusted him; and the natures of Fielding and Richardson were as wide asunder as the poles. Each had a thorough and wholly natural contempt for the other. The righteous indignation that Richardson felt toward the author of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* totally blinded him to the man's splendid genius; and when we reflect that Fielding's books represented to Richardson exactly the vicious influence that he had spent his whole power and pains to fight, and that the success of *Joseph Andrews* was gained at his expense, we cease to wonder that the virtuous printer failed to see the bright side of his brilliant contemporary. Let him who has always rejoiced at a rival's success cast the first stone at Richardson. It was gall and wormwood to the good man to find even his friends admiring Fielding. "The girls are certainly fond of *Tom Jones*," cheerfully writes Lady Bradshaigh, and she was grieved that she could not persuade Richardson to read the book. He contented himself with

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the epigram, "The virtues of Tom Jones are the vices of good men," which was well said, but only half true. What we must condemn is the fact that Richardson spoke with brutal harshness of his enemy to Fielding's own sister; outraged vanity, jealousy, and zeal for morality, getting the better for once of his natural courtesy. She seems indeed to have accepted this opinion as final, and she probably devoutly wished that her talented brother had written a *Pamela* instead of a parody; for she never wavered in her devotion to the printer. Some things are apparently thicker than blood. We smile at Richardson's calmly assigning Fielding's works to oblivion, and speaking of their popularity as only ephemeral; but he forced himself to believe that such was the truth.

In summing up his character, we find in his favour, Prudence, Honesty, Chastity, Generosity, Hospitality, Courage, and many of the fruits of the Spirit; against him we find Vanity, Jealousy, Formality, and occasional Irritability. This balance sheet exhibits as creditable a moral showing, as did his accounts at Salisbury Court from the financial point of view. Let us take another look at his household, with the eyes of a frequent feminine visitor:

"My first recollection of him is in his house in the centre of Salisbury-square, or Salisbury-court,

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as it was then called ; and of being admitted, as a playful child, into his study, where I have often seen Dr. Young, and others ; and where I was generally caressed, and rewarded with biscuits or *bonbons* of some kind or other, and sometimes with books, for which he, and some more of my friends, kindly encouraged a taste, even at that early age, which has adhered to me all my life long, and continues to be the solace of many a painful hour. . . .

“The piety, order, decorum, and strict regularity, that prevailed in his family, were of infinite use to train the mind to good habits, and to depend upon its own resources. It has been one of the means, which, under the blessing of God, has enabled me to dispense with the enjoyment of what the world calls pleasures, such as are found in crowds ; and actually to relish and prefer the calm delights of retirement and books. As soon as Mrs. Richardson arose, the beautiful Psalms in Smith’s Devotions were read responsively in the nursery, by herself, and daughters, standing in a circle : only the two eldest were allowed to breakfast with her, and whatever company happened to be in the house, for they were seldom without. After breakfast the younger ones read to her in turns the Psalms, and lessons for the day. . . . These are childish and trifling anecdotes, and savour,

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perhaps you may think, too much of egotism. They certainly can be of no further use to you, than as they mark the extreme benevolence, condescension, and kindness, of this exalted genius, toward young people; for, in general society, I know that he has been accused of being of few words, and of a particularly reserved turn. He was, however, all his life-time, the patron and protector of the female sex. . . . Most of the ladies that resided much at his house acquired a certain degree of fastidiousness and delicate refinement, which, though amiable in itself, rather disqualified them from appearing in general society, to the advantage that might have been expected, and rendered an intercourse with the world uneasy to themselves, giving a peculiar shiness and reserve to their whole address, of which habits his own daughters partook, in a degree that has been thought by some, a little to obscure those really valuable qualifications and talents they undoubtedly possessed. Yet, this was supposed to be owing more to Mrs. Richardson than to him; who, though a truly good woman, had high and Harlowean notions of parental authority, and kept the ladies in such order, and at such a distance, that he often lamented, as I have been told by my mother, that they were not more open and conversable with him. . . . His benev-

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olence was unbounded, as his manner of diffusing it was delicate and refined."

Surely no one can deny to Richardson the highest of all titles — a good man.

If a man be known by the company he keeps, our knowledge of Richardson by this test would be too general to have any value, for he kept all kinds. It is often said, especially by those who have never read his books, that Richardson was a narrow-minded man, as if any great novelist who makes a universal appeal to human nature could possibly be narrow! The real width of his sympathies is shown by the kaleidoscopic variety of character displayed by the guests at North End. From the pious author of *Night Thoughts*, to the irrepressible *Weltkind* Colley Cibber — these limits exhibit the generous size of Richardson's mantle of charity. Fielding he had every reason to hate; and doubtless he hated him; yet more in sorrow than in anger. It is sometimes remarked, that Richardson's attitude toward Fielding was hypocritical, for while affecting to despise Fielding's character, he allowed Cibber to enter within his gates. It should be remembered that he regarded the books of Fielding as dangerously immoral in their influence; while Cibber, though an unblushing sinner him-

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self, had laboured long, with powerful effect, toward the moral elevation of the stage.

As it was the ungovernable passion for pen, ink, and paper that has preserved to us the thoughts of Pamela and Clarissa, so the story of Richardson's friendships is simply the story of his correspondence. In letter-writing he practised what he preached, and as he himself remarked, he wrote so much, he scarcely had any time to read. One of his early correspondents was Aaron Hill, a well-known figure in the dynasty of Pope, who hated the reigning sovereign as only an unsuccessful man can hate the popular idol. He tried to persuade himself and others, that Posterity, the friend of all unrecognised literary merit, would judge aright between the author of the *Dunciad* and his victim; and that to the men of the twentieth century, Pope would be a forgotten name, while the works of Aaron Hill would embellish every anthology. Meanwhile, this neglected genius had to live, as Posterity's name at the foot of a check has no commercial value; and Richardson's cash must have been even more welcome to the struggling poet than his sympathy, and Richardson was ever free with both. The printer even forgave Hill's surprising attempt to rewrite *Clarissa* more briefly, an undertaking which Hill jauntily began, and speedily abandoned, for, as Mrs. Bar-

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bould sagely observes, "He soon found that he should take a great deal of pains only to spoil it, and the author found it still sooner than he did." The pangs of literary failure in Hill's case were edged by his loss of health, and the final exit from the planet of this colossal bore was pathetic in the extreme. It is pleasant to remember that Richardson, who had nothing to gain from Hill's friendship, and much to lose, should have stood by him as faithfully as though the poor fellow were really all he claimed to be.

There was another struggling genius in London in those days who had all of Hill's energy, all of Hill's misfortunes of early neglect and bad health, but who finally forced from the age the recognition he was bound to have, and whom Posterity has treated with constantly increasing favour. This was Samuel Johnson. When Richardson first met him, the future Doctor, Dictionary-maker, and heir to Pope's throne was more obscure than Hill, cursed by ill-health, and often too poor to secure a night's lodging except in jail. As Miss Thomson says, "The days of his fame were still to come, and Richardson's attitude toward him at first was that of a generous and successful man of letters to a younger aspirant for literary fame." Johnson's *Rambler* appeared in March 1750, and was by no means wildly popular. Richardson, however, greeted it with warm ap-

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probation, and Number 97, the issue for Tuesday, 19 February 1751, appeared with the following introduction by Johnson :

“The Reader is indebted for this Day’s Entertainment, to an author from whom the Age has received greater Favours, who has enlarged the Knowledge of human Nature, and taught the Passions to move at the Command of Virtue.”

Richardson’s solitary contribution to the *Rambler* greatly extended its circulation for that one day. In 1756, Richardson gave even more tangible proof of his friendship by assisting financially the debt-embarrassed hero, or as Mrs. Barbauld remarks, “He had the honour to bail Dr. Johnson.” In return for the six guineas advanced by the author of *Clarissa* to the author of the *Dictionary*, the following letter was written :

“DEAR SIR,

I return you my sincerest thanks for the favour which you were pleased to do me two nights ago.

Be pleased to accept of this little book, which is all that I have published this winter. The inflammation is come again into my eye, so that I can write very little.

I am

Sir,

Your most obliged
and
most humble Servant

SAM JOHNSON

Tuesday.”

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Johnson brought Mrs. Williams, one of his household menagerie, to call on Richardson at North End, and Miss Mulso wrote pleasantly of Johnson's kindness to the poor creature. That a man of Johnson's sturdy sincerity and robust virility so highly admired and respected Richardson, is additional proof of the solid qualities in the character of the novelist.

The poet Young was for many years an intimate friend of Richardson, as we see by their correspondence, which began about 1750. Young's letters are as solemn as his verses, and are largely taken up with predicting his own speedy death, which, however, Richardson awaited in vain, as the aged poet survived him. Death seemed unwilling to take from the world a man who so vividly portrayed his terrors. Young's remarks on Richardson's novels, particularly *Clarissa*, form the most interesting and valuable part of the correspondence.

It is small matter for wonder that Richardson tolerated the company of Colley Cibber, for no one can read the delightful autobiography of the latter without feeling the charm of the author's personality. Even his egregious vanity is irresistibly attractive, and his wonderful flow of spirits and vivacious cheerfulness must have made him a welcome visitor at many firesides.

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Cibber went wild with excitement over the stories of Richardson, and such enthusiastic appreciation from the Laureate undoubtedly affected the vanity of the novelist. No reader of Stevenson's great essay, *Æs Triplex*, can possibly withhold his admiration from Colley Cibber, who, in his eightieth year, laughed heartily at his success in baffling the approaches of Death. The unabashed old profligate celebrated the Christmas Day of his eightieth year by writing the following letter to the apostle of domestic virtue :

“SIR,

Though Death has been cooling his heels at my door these three weeks, I have not had time to see him. The daily conversation of my friends has kept me so agreeably alive, that I have not passed my time better a great while. If you have a mind to make one of us, I will order Death to come another day. To be serious, I long to see you, and hope you will take the first opportunity: and so with as merry a Christmas, as merry a new year, as your heart can hope for, I am,

Your real Friend and Servant,

C. CIBBER.”

Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? He lasted seven years longer, and was apparently in excellent health three hours before his death, which came finally without a warning; as though weary of trying to frighten his victim by faces, Death had at last suddenly seized him from behind.

Quite the opposite in temperament was the solemn sonneteer Thomas Edwards, the author of *Canons of Criticism*. His letters contain many interesting literary allusions, especially to the poems of Spenser, which he warmly admired. He was one of the early apostles of Spenser in the beginnings of the romantic movement in England, and is interesting also in connection with the revival of the Sonnet as a literary form. Since 1660 practically no English sonnets were written until the fifth decade of the next century. Edwards, however, from 1748 to 1754, made the sonnet his chief form of poetical expression, and thus unconsciously earned for himself a much more important place in English literary history than he obtained by his learned *Canons*. He was a sad and lonely man, devout and deeply religious, and his friendship with the novelist was perhaps the brightest part of his life. He died, as has been mentioned, at Richardson's house.

But while the novelist was admired and respected by many men of the day, his adorers were chiefly among women, and to them he naturally unlocked his heart. The letters to his feminine admirers show all sides of the novelist's character, and the reasons for his close intimacy with so many intelligent women. The letters to and from Sara Fielding are particularly interesting; she was

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often entertained at his house, and, as has been seen, bore with meekness Richardson's wholesale condemnation of her brother.

The most brilliant and clever woman whom Richardson knew was Lady Bradshaigh, and the frankness with which the two friends argued on all kinds of vital themes makes interesting reading. This correspondence began in a way that is rather remarkable. After perusing the first four volumes of *Clarissa*, this lady was horrified at the rumour that the story was to end tragically; she therefore, labouring under great excitement, wrote to Richardson under the assumed name of Belfour, beseeching him to spare his heroine and to answer her letter by printing a few lines in the *Whitehall Evening Post*. This being done, a correspondence began, which continued for years; but it was a long time before Richardson met his fair critic, or knew her real name. It was to her that Richardson wrote the famous pen-portrait of himself, that she might be able to recognise him while walking in the Park. With true feminine waywardness, she made the great man trace and retrace many steps before she granted him the pleasure of an interview; and he finally obtained a clew to her name only by accident. They did not meet in mutual recognition until March 1750.

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Their intimacy had much of the excitement of an intrigue, without any of its guilt; for though she treated the respectable printer with charming coquetry, she loved her husband dearly, and her spirited description of her home life and duties shows her to have been a womanly woman and a model wife. Her shrewd insight into Richardson's peculiar characteristics is repeatedly evident; she knew he did not like to hear certain authors praised, even when he stoutly affirmed that he did. The long discussions the two friends had about subjects so abstract as polygamy, and so concrete as rakes, are well worth reading; and her remark that rakes are often more popular than good men, not because of their wickedness, but because of their superior appearance in society, has more truth than unpopular good men will sometimes allow.

When she first wrote to the novelist, she was about forty years old, and later she described her personal appearance as follows, in order that he might recognise the original should he happen to meet her on the street. "Middle-aged, middle-sized, a degree above plump, brown as an oak wainscot, a good deal of country red in her cheeks, altogether a plain woman, but nothing remarkably forbidding," a description that if we may judge by her portrait, rather underestimates her charms.

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The most beautiful letters that Richardson ever received came from a woman whom he never saw. This was Mrs. Klopstock, the young wife of the famous German author of the *Messiah*. In the most naïve and intimate language, its charm heightened by her imperfect English, this child of God told Richardson the whole story of her love for Klopstock, and the overwhelming happiness of her married life :

“After having seen him two hours, I was obliged to pass the evening in company, which never had been so wearisome to me. I could not speak, I could not play, I thought I saw nothing but Klopstock. I saw him the next day and the following, and we were very seriously friends. But the fourth day he departed. It was a strong hour, the hour of his departure! He wrote soon after, and from that time on, our correspondence began to be a very diligent one. I sincerely believed my love to be friendship. I spoke with my friends of nothing but Klopstock, and showed his letters. They raillied at me, and said I was in love. I raillied them again and said that they must have a very friendshipless heart, if they had no idea of friendship to a man as well as to a woman. Thus it continued eight months, in which time my friends found as much love in Klopstock’s letters as in me. I perceived it likewise, but I would not

believe. At the last, Klopstock said plainly, that he loved; and I startled as for a wrong thing. I answered, that it was no love, but friendship, as it was what I felt for him; we had not seen one another enough to love (as if love must have more time than friendship!). This was sincerely my meaning, and I had this meaning till Klopstock came again to Hamburg. This he did a year after we had seen one another the first time. We saw, we were friends, we loved; and we believed that we loved; and a short time after I could even tell Klopstock that I loved. [In two years they were married.] I am the happiest wife in the world. In some few months it will be four years that I am so happy, and still I dote upon Klopstock as if he was my bridegroom.

“If you knew my husband, you would not wonder. . . . But I dare not to speak of my husband; I am all raptures when I do it!”

And in view of the tragic outcome of her hopes, can we find anywhere in the annals of domestic life a letter that makes so irresistible, because so unconscious, an appeal to our hearts?

“Have you not guessed that I, summing up all my happinesses, and not speaking of children, had none? Yes, Sir, this has been my only wish ungratified for these four years. I have been more than once unhappy with disappointments,

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but yet, thanks, thanks to God! I am in full hope to be mother in the month of November. The little preparations for my child and child-bed (and they are so dear to me!) have taken so much time, that I could not answer your letter. . . . My husband has been obliged to make a little voyage alone to Copenhagen. He is yet absent—a cloud over my happiness! He will soon return. . . . But what does that help? He is yet equally absent! We write to each other every post. . . . But what are letters to presence?—But I will speak no more of this little cloud; I will only tell my happiness! But I cannot tell how I rejoice! A son of my dear Klopstock! Oh, when shall I have him!—It is long since that I have made the remark, that geniuses do not engender geniuses. No children at all, bad sons, or, at the most, lovely daughters, like you and Milton. But a daughter or a son, only with a good heart, without genius, I will nevertheless love dearly. . . . When I have my husband and my child, I will write you more (if God gives me health and life). You will think that I shall be not a mother only, but nurse also; though the latter (thank God! that the former is not so too) is quite against fashion and good-breeding, and though nobody can think it *possible* to be always with the child at home!”

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The next letter Richardson received was by another hand, and began, "As perhaps you do not yet know that one of your fair correspondents, Mrs. Klopstock, died in a very dreadful manner in child-bed, I think myself obliged to acquaint you with this most melancholy accident."

As we read the artless English of this young wife, the interval of one hundred and fifty years is nothing, and we stand by her grave as though it were freshly made.

"Everywhere
I see in the world the intellect of man,
That sword, the energy his subtle spear,
The knowledge which defends him like a shield —
Everywhere; but they make not up, I think,
The marvel of a soul like thine, earth's flower
She holds up to the softened gaze of God!"

Maturity in years and experience seems to be as necessary to the successful novelist as it is superfluous to the poet. Defoe was fifty-eight when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, and it was his first important novel. Richardson had passed the half-century mark, not only with no prospect of a literary reputation, but without having made an attempt to secure one. He had spent his life printing the thoughts and language of other minds. In his fifty-first year, he turned for a moment his attention from the outside of literature to the inside. In 1739, the publishers Rivington and

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Osborne requested him to compose a book of familiar letters. It was to be a kind of manual of epistolary etiquette, showing the proper forms for all circumstances and emergencies, seasoned with Richardson's inevitable homiletics. Could a respectable man possibly begin his literary career more humbly? Miss Thomson describes this little book, as it finally appeared, as follows: "The title-page sets forth its advantage in 'directing not only the requisite style and forms to be observed in writing familiar letters, but how to think and act justly and prudently in the common concerns of human life.' This purpose is further emphasised in the preface, which tells us that the author has endeavoured to point out the duties of masters, servants, fathers, children, and young men entering the world. But especially — and this is characteristic of the future novelist — he has given much attention to the subject of courtship. . . . Love is his predominant theme, but he treats it always as a passion to be sternly controlled and kept within bounds." This book, interrupted by the composition of *Pamela*, he completed later, and it was published anonymously: not till after his death, if an Irish bull may be permitted, did Richardson allow his name to formally sanction it. That it fully accomplished its purpose is evident from its great popularity

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below stairs; it was hungrily read by house-maids and footmen, and according to Mrs. Barbauld, it "not infrequently detained the eyes of the mistress."

To-day, however, it is a forgotten work, and instead of being read by the class of people for whom it was designed, it is known only to students of fiction, and interests them only because it was the stalking-horse to *Pamela*. For it was while writing this useful but unpretentious book that a fortunate idea occurred to the author. Doubtless surprised at his own readiness in invention, and facility in composition, Richardson conceived the plan of creating, with materials all ready at hand, an original work of art. "In the progress of it, writing two or three letters to instruct handsome girls, who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue; the above story [see below] recurred to my thoughts: And hence sprung *Pamela*."

As Richardson has given with such obliging fulness of detail the source and manner of composition of his first novel, we cannot do better than transcribe his own words in full, from a letter to Aaron Hill.

"I will now write to you your question — Whether there was any original groundwork of

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fact, for the general foundation of Pamela's story.

“About twenty-five years ago, a gentleman, with whom I was intimately acquainted (but who, alas! is now no more!) met with such a story as that of Pamela, in one of the summer tours which he used to take . . . he asked who was the owner of a fine house, . . . which he had passed by. . . . It was a fine house, the landlord said. The owner was Mr. B., a gentleman of large estate in more counties than one. That his and his lady's history engaged the attention of everyone who came that way, and put a stop to all other enquiries, though the house and gardens were well worth seeing, the lady, he said, was one of the greatest beauties in England; but the qualities of her mind had no equal: beneficent, prudent, and equally beloved and admired by high and low. That she had been taken at twelve years of age, for the sweetness of her manners and modesty, and for an understanding above her years, by Mr. B.'s mother, a truly worthy lady, to wait on her person. Her parents, ruined by suretiships, were remarkably honest and pious, and had instilled into their daughter's mind, the best principles. When their misfortunes happened first, they attempted a little school, in their village, where they were much beloved, he teach-

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ing writing and the first rules of arithmetic to boys; his wife, plain needle-work to girls, and to knit and spin; but that it answered not: and, when the lady took their child, the industrious man earned his bread by day labour, and the lowest kind of husbandry.

“That the girl, improving daily in beauty, modesty, and genteel and good behaviour, by the time she was fifteen, engaged the attention of her lady’s son, a young gentleman of free principles, who, on her lady’s death, attempted, by all manner of temptations and devices to seduce her. That she had recourse to as many innocent stratagems to escape the snares laid for her virtue; once, however, in despair, having been near drowning; that, at last, her noble resistance, watchfulness, and excellent qualities, subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his wife. That she behaved herself with so much dignity, sweetness, and humility, that she made herself beloved of everybody, and even by his relations, who, at first, despised her, and now had the blessings both of rich and poor, and the love of her husband.

“The gentleman who told me this, added, that he had the curiosity to stay in the neighbourhood from Friday to Sunday, that he might see this happy couple at church, from which they never absented themselves; that, in short, he did see

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them; that her deportment was all sweetness, ease, and dignity mingled; that he never saw a lovelier woman: that her husband was as fine a man, and seemed even proud of his choice: and that she attracted the respects of the persons of rank present, and had the blessings of the poor. — The relater of the story told me all this with transport.

“This, Sir, was the foundation of Pamela’s story; but little did I think to make a story of it for the press. That was owing to this occasion.

“Mr. Rivington and Mr. Osborne, whose names are on the title-page, had long been urging me to give them a little book (which, they said, they were often asked after) of familiar letters on the useful concerns in common life; and, at last, I yielded to their importunity, and began to recollect such subjects as I thought would be useful in such a design, and formed several letters accordingly. And, among the rest, I thought of giving one or two as cautions to young folks circumstanced as Pamela was. Little did I think, at first, of making one, much less two volumes of it. But, when I began to recollect what had, so many years before, been told me by my friend, I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitably to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing,

that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue. I therefore gave way to enlargement and so Pamela became as you see her. But so little did I hope for the approbation of judges, that I had not the courage to send the two volumes to your ladies, until I found the books were well received by the public.

“While I was writing the two volumes, my worthy-hearted wife, and the young lady who is with us, when I had read them some part of the story, which I had begun without their knowing it, used to come into my little closet every night, with — ‘Have you any more of Pamela, Mr. R.? We are come to hear a little more of Pamela,’ &c. This encouraged me to prosecute it, which I did so diligently, through all my other business, that, by a memorandum on my copy, I began it Nov. 10, 1739, and finished it Jan. 10, 1739-40. . . . If justly low were my thoughts of this little history, you will wonder how it came by such an assuming and very impudent preface. It was thus:— The approbation of these two female friends, who were so kind as to give me prefaces for it, but which were much too long and circumstantial,

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as I thought, made me resolve myself on writing a preface: I, therefore, spirited by the good opinion of these four, and knowing that the judgments of nine parts of ten readers were but in hanging-sleeves, struck a bold stroke in the preface you see, having the umbrage of the editor's character to screen myself behind — And thus, Sir, all is out."

With no author's name on the title-page, and unheralded by the puffery of publishers, *Pamela* appeared, in two modest volumes, in November 1740. The surprisingly short time in which it was written — two months — is a sufficient illustration of Richardson's speed in composition. His genius, kindled so late in life, blazed with all the brilliance of youth; and the fact that in sixty days so extraordinary a work, wholly original in method, could be begun and completed, makes us wonder at the long, silent, unilluminated years of patient mechanical industry, which preceded his first essay at literature. The success of the book was instantaneous. Society women were compelled to read it, as it was "the book everyone was talking of." It formed the chief staple of conversation at all the popular resorts. Old and young, grave and gay, united in a shout of universal applause. The Reverend Dr. Slocock, of the old church of St. Saviour's, Southwark,

publicly indorsed it from his pulpit. This gave the final seal of approval to all who had hoped, but hardly dared, to discuss a work of fiction in public. Anxious mothers then allowed their daughters to read the new book. Pope got the better for once of his habitual jealousy, and spoke highly of *Pamela's* powerful moral influence. We may give an illustration of the keen joy with which the happy *dénouement* was greeted. "At Slough, near Windsor, the inhabitants used to gather around the village forge while the blacksmith read the story aloud. As soon as he came to the place where the fate of the heroine is decided by a happy marriage, his hearers were so excited that they cheered for joy, ran for the church keys, and rang the bells to give expression to their gladness."

In publishing the book, Richardson had assumed to be only the editor; but his authorship became known almost immediately. He was overwhelmed with letters of congratulation and enquiry. One enthusiast remarked, "If all other books were to be burnt, this book, next to the Bible, ought to be preserved." Another determined to bring up his son in the paths of virtue by giving him *Pamela* just as soon as he should be able to read, "a choice of books for a youth," comments Mrs. Barbauld, "which we, at present, [1804] should be very much surprised at."

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Aaron Hill related the following incident. A lively little boy, lying unnoticed in a room while *Pamela* was being read aloud, and apparently asleep, — “on a sudden we heard a succession of heart-heaving sobs, which, while he strove to conceal from our notice, his little sides swelled as if they would burst, with the throbbing restraint of his sorrow. I turned his innocent face to look towards me, but his eyes were quite lost in his tears; which, running down from his cheeks in free currents, had formed two sincere little fountains on that part of the carpet he hung over.”

Nor were these things revealed only to babes; they were not hidden, like an older gospel, from the wise and prudent. All sorts of confidential letters of enquiry proceeding from serious-minded men and women, followed hard upon the thunders of applause. The burden of these epistles is the familiar cry at the end of a startling tale. Is it true? Was there ever a Pamela in real life, and did Mr. Richardson have the honour of her acquaintance? People immediately began to point out among their contemporaries the original of the portrait, until Richardson finally gave the real source of the story in the long letter to Hill, quoted above.

That Richardson did not draw Pamela from any person of his acquaintance, we learn from a

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letter to Thomas Edwards, in 1753. "I am charmed, my dear Mr. Edwards, with your sweet story of a second Pamela. Had I drawn mine from the very life, I should have made a much more perfect piece of my first favourite — first, I mean, as to time." In view of this statement, it is rather singular that Richardson accused Fielding of having little or no invention, because his characters were all drawn from life.

Pamela speedily went into a second edition, and by 1771 ten editions of this separate work had appeared. It was translated into French and Dutch, and it was dramatised in both English and Italian. Imitations naturally followed. A book purporting to be a genuine continuation, called *Pamela in High Life*, surreptitiously appeared. This unfortunately drove Richardson to the composition and publication of an authentic sequel, giving, in two additional volumes, the social triumphs of Pamela, as the amiable consort of Mr. B. Though these volumes are now necessarily included in every complete edition of the novel, they are, as some one has remarked, well worth skipping. Overloaded with moral platitudes, the only episode that approaches human interest is Mr. B.'s temptation to renew his vicious habits. For once, and with just the opposite intention, Richardson made vice more attractive than virtue.

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But a greater sequel, and one that pleased Richardson even less than the spurious book above mentioned, was Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, which appeared in 1742. For stirring up this particular enemy, even the best friends of Richardson to-day must be thankful. With the keen eye of the humorist, Fielding saw clearly the vulnerable points in Richardson's armour, and had Mr. B. really been alive, even his complacency would have been ruffled by Fielding's Mr. Booby.

Even in 1741 there had been published a parody on Richardson's style in the following work, which Richardson thought had been written by Fielding. "An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews, in which the many notorious falsehoods and misrepresentations of a book called 'Pamela' are exposed and refuted, and all the matchless arts of that young politician set in a true and just light." It ridiculed the pretended virtuous motives of Pamela, her epistolary style, and Richardson's egotistical preface.

Pamela has many striking defects, both in artistic and moral values. The frankly told scenes of attempted outrage are narrated with ill-concealed gusto. It is an interesting comment on the age, that what was then regarded as an ideal "Sunday-school" book would never be allowed to-day to enter the precincts of a sacred edifice. The spec-

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tacle of a man attempting a girl's virtue by every subtlety that art and nature can suggest, and the keen-witted girl, harmless as a dove, but wise as a serpent, checkmating him by marriage, does not, to our notions, wholly make for righteousness. At heart, however, Richardson was an uncompromising realist, and his genius for detail did not allow him to omit any episode that he considered vital to the story.

In our democratic days, many readers are incensed with Pamela's agreeing even to marry Mr. B., and her gushing gratitude for his condescension grates harshly on ears that love to hear the scream of the eagle. We should remember, that though Mr. B. before his marriage was unquestionably a black-hearted villain, and that Richardson represents him as such, the social gulf that separated him from his hand-maid was enormous; to an eighteenth-century mind, practically impassable. He was the head of the house, and she one of the many humble servants. The question looked at from the standpoint of the housemaid is not — Did Pamela act rightly in expressing gratitude to a would-be ravisher for marrying her? The question is — Would an eighteenth-century Pamela really have felt and expressed gratitude under similar circumstances? To this second and only admissible question, we

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must unhesitatingly give an affirmative answer, which destroys at once all adverse criticism on Pamela's final attitude. If Richardson has represented her emotions true to life, we cannot blame him for making her real.

Nor do I share a common opinion that it would have been impossible for Pamela to feel anything but disgust toward her pursuing villain. Mrs. Barbauld says: "Is it quite natural that a girl, who had such a genuine love for virtue, should feel her heart attracted to a man who was endeavouring to destroy that virtue? Does not pious love to assimilate with pious, and pure with pure?" To this serious question we may reply that if love were a matter of judgment instead of instinct, thousands of marriages would never happen at all, and many wives would hate their husbands. Pamela unquestionably *ought* to hate Mr. B. and after she perceived his intentions ought never to think tenderly of him again. She does try to hate him. Why does she not succeed? Because she loves him. There lies the whole truth of the matter, and if we ask further, Why should So-and-So love So-and-So, we get at once into insuperable difficulties. Miss Thomson says, "No woman will forgive her for . . . the passion supposed to be aroused in her by her unworthy lover." Perhaps not; women find it hard to

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forgive other women for many things. But the fact remains, that thousands of dead and living women, wholly virtuous in character and conduct, have loved evil-minded men, and the growth of Pamela's passion has been sketched by Richardson with consummate art. Depend upon it, he knew what he was about; and he has shown to those who see with their eyes and not with their prejudices, that the only reason why Pamela in her heart of hearts did not hate Mr. B. was because in her heart of hearts she loved him.

My objection to the book is not directed against its fidelity to life, but at its final moral application. The secondary title, *Virtue Rewarded*, has a false ring. Pamela is praised for her skill and perseverance in preserving her virtue; she is rewarded by finally disposing of her person in marriage at the highest possible figure. The moral seems to be, that if comely girls will hold their would-be seducers at arm's length for a sufficiently long time, they may succeed in marrying the men, and incidentally securing worldly fortune and social position. Such a moral standard is not any too high; and in so far, the novel is defective. No such accusation can be brought against that wonderful masterpiece, *Clarissa*.

Yet *Pamela*, with all its defects, is a great book. The heroine is absolutely real, both in the tragic

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and comic scenes. An extraordinary fascination accompanies this girl; she is as attractive to-day as she was one hundred and sixty years ago, simply because she is an incarnation of the eternal feminine. Many may wonder why she loved Mr. B. No one has ever wondered why Mr. B. loved her. Her girlish beauty, her demure manner, her charming prattling — even her vanity and self-righteousness combine to make her irresistible. Her vivacity is the lovely vivacity of youth in radiant health, joined to the pleasing consciousness of possessing both internal virtue and external charms.

Mr. B. is unfortunately not so convincing. He is as impeccable in appearance and about as interesting as a well-executed fashion-plate. Mrs. Jewkes is a monster rather than a woman, but, it must be admitted, an impressive monster. Her horrid exterior, rum-soaked soul, and filthy speech are as loathsome as they were meant to be: and the contrast between the graceful Pamela and this unspeakable dragon is as striking as that between the white Andromeda and the hideous snake of the sea. Mr. Williams is by no means so great a character as Parson Adams, but he is an addition to our acquaintance, and supplies exactly the touch of jealousy needed to bring Pamela's affairs to a crisis. Goodman Andrews,

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the girl's father, is admirable if only we remember that he lived in the eighteenth and not in the twentieth century. Once more we must not ask, Do we approve? but, Is he true to life? As for Lady Davers, her manners are surely not Christ-like, and they lack, it must be confessed, something of the repose that we love to associate with good-breeding; and Richardson has been condemned for making her so cruel and so coarse. But I am inclined to think that high society in that age knew her only too well, and that her coarseness of speech was not natural vulgarity, but sprang from the assurance of her social position. One is often taken for the other, when we read the annals of fashionable society in the days before the French Revolution.

In making a final estimate of this extraordinary book, let us remember that it is really the first analytical novel in the language; that its style, plan, and aim were wholly original; that it is a study of a section of real life that had been neglected; that it produced a powerful effect on English literature, founding a whole school of fiction, and spurred a rival to activity; that with painstaking and delicate art, its author presented one great character to the world, whom no reader of the book can by any chance forget; that the novel has been read with enthusiasm by judicious

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readers in three centuries, and that it is impossible to imagine any age when it will not be read and admired. Such a book is a great book, and was written by a great man.

The first two volumes of Richardson's masterpiece appeared in the month of November 1747, under the unassuming title, *Clarissa; or, the history of a young lady. Published by the editor of Pamela.* All three of Richardson's literary children, Pamela, who went out to service, Clarissa, whose cruel destiny flooded Europe with tears, and Sir Charles Grandison, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, were born in November, and gave the people of London something to think about besides the fog. The author's method of publishing his works had much the same effect on the public as the modern style of issuing an exciting romance in the pages of a monthly magazine, each number of which is eagerly awaited by thousands of interested readers; it resembled also the custom of Dickens and Thackeray, of sending out their long novels in separate parts, printed once a month, the publication of the entire story often covering two years. We remember, in the charming play, *Rosemary*, the intense eagerness with which the hero has seized the latest number of Dickens, how he cannot wait for his comfortable and bright library, but must stumble

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along with a lantern reading the fresh new pages on the lonely road in the night, and stirring up strange echoes with his shouts of laughter. Although the emotions they inspired were not comic, but deeply tragic, it was with the same fever of expectancy that the third and fourth volumes of *Clarissa* were opened, as they issued from the press in April 1748. The fifth, sixth, and seventh volumes, concluding the work, did not appear until December, and thus for over a year Richardson kept his readers on the rack, only to crush their hopes at the end. The excitement aroused among all classes by their anxiety as to the ultimate fate of the heroine may be partially understood by reading the letters addressed to the author. They flowed in thick and fast, coming from every quarter, but commonly bearing the same burden, beseeching Richardson, some with tears, and some with curses, to spare *Clarissa*, and close the book with the jingle of wedding bells. "O what shall I feel," wrote a fair correspondent, "when I read — 'This day is published a continuation of The History of Miss *Clarissa Harlowe!*' I am ashamed to say how much I shall be affected." A gentleman wrote that he had three daughters; that all three were reading the novel; that if *Clarissa* died, all three daughters would die too. But the grim little man, inexorable as fate, never swerved from the course his artistic

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instincts had shown; deaf to hysterical entreaties, blind to the tears of lovely women, and weeping himself over his heroine's fate, he slew her. *Clarissa Harlowe* was a glorious sacrifice on the altar of art.

Lady Bradshaigh's inability to conceal her grief and terror, as the tragedy deepened, was the cause of the beginning of one of the closest friendships in Richardson's life. In October 1748, she wrote, "I am pressed, Sir, by a multitude of your admirers, to plead in behalf of your amiable *Clarissa*; having too much reason, from hints given in your four volumes, from a certain advertisement, and from your forbearing to write, after promising all endeavours should be used toward satisfying the discontented; from all these, I say, I have but too much reason to apprehend a fatal catastrophe. I have heard that some of your advisers, who delight in horror, (detestable wretches!) insisted upon rapes, ruin, and destruction; others, who feel for the virtuous in distress, (blessings forever attend them!) pleaded for the contrary. Could you be deaf to these, and comply with those? Is it possible, that he who has the art to please in softness, in the most natural, easy, humorous, and sensible manner, can resolve to give joy only to the ill-natured reader, and heave the compassionate breast with tears for irremediable woes? . . . Therefore, Sir, after you have brought

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the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destruction, let me intreat (may I say, insist upon) a turn, that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy. . . . If you think, by the hints given, that the event is too generally guessed at, and for that reason think it too late to alter your scheme, I boldly assert — not at all; write a little excuse to the reader, ‘that you had a design of concluding so and so, but was given to understand it would disappoint so many of your readers, that, upon mature deliberation and advice of friends, you had resolved on the contrary.’ . . . If you disappoint me, attend to my curse:—May the hatred of all the young, beautiful, and virtuous, for ever be your portion! and may your eyes never behold anything but age and deformity! may you meet with applause only from envious old maids, surly bachelors, and tyrannical parents! may you be doomed to the company of such! and, after death, may their ugly souls haunt you!”

She continued to write in this strain, using all her resources of argument, flattery, warning, and downright entreaty; if he would only comply, she promised to read the entire work at least once in two years so long as she lived; if he persisted, she would never open the concluding volumes. “I am as mad as the poor injured Clarissa,” she writes, after Richardson had sent her the fifth volume;

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“and am afraid I cannot help hating you, if you alter not your scheme.” She tries to read the book, and fails. “I have been some time *thinking* your history over, and I find I cannot read it. . . . You would not wonder at my inflexibleness, if you knew the joy I had promised myself from a happy catastrophe. I cannot see my amiable Clarissa die; it will hurt my heart, and *durably*. I know your manner, and I know my weakness — I cannot bear it.” Richardson replied to her supplications at great length, showing, both on artistic and moral grounds, the necessity for a tragic close. In the following words, we see that his ideal in this painful story resembled that of the authors of *Antigone* and *King Lear*. “Nor can I go thro’ some of the scenes myself without being sensibly touched. (Did I not say that I was another Pygmalion?) But yet I had to shew, for example sake, a young lady struggling nobly with the greatest difficulties, and triumphing from the best motives, in the course of distresses, the tenth part of which would have sunk even manly hearts; yet tenderly educated, born to affluence, naturally meek, altho’, where an exertion of spirit was necessary, manifesting herself to be a true heroine.” Seldom has there been heard a better statement of a great artist’s conscientious purpose.

It was not only the gentle hearts of women that

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were shaken by the approach of Clarissa's awful doom; while the women found relief in tears, the men swore wildly. Colley Cibber's astonishing complacency for once deserted him, his impressionable nature seized and held by Richardson's powerful grasp. Lætitia Pilkington wrote: "I passed two hours this morning with Mr. Cibber, whom I found in such real anxiety for Clarissa, as none but so perfect a master of nature could have excited. I had related to him, not only the catastrophe of the story, but also your truly religious and moral reason for it; and, when he heard what a dreadful lot hers was to be, he lost all patience, threw down the book, and vowed he would not read another line. To express or paint his passion would require such masterly hands as yours, or his own: he shuddered; nay, the tears stood in his eyes:—'What! (said he) shall I, who have loved and revered the virtuous, the beautiful Clarissa, from the same motives I loved Mr. Richardson, bear to stand a patient spectator of her ruin, her final destruction? No!—My heart suffers as strongly for her as if word was brought me that his house was on fire, and himself, and his wife, and little ones, likely to perish in the flame.' . . . In this manner did the dear gentleman, I think I may almost say, rave; for I never saw passion higher wrought than his. When I told him she must die, he said, 'G—d d—n him, if she

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should ; and that he should no longer believe Providence or eternal Wisdom, or Goodness governed the world, if merit, innocence, and beauty were to be so destroyed : nay, (added he) my mind is so hurt with the thought of her being violated, that were I to see her in Heaven, sitting on the knees of the blessed Virgin, and crowned with glory, her sufferings would still make me feel horror, horror distilled.’” Cibber adopted a comically sincere manner of showing his interest. “I have gone every evening to Ranelagh, in order to find a face or mien resembling Miss Harlowe, but to no purpose : the charmer is inimitable ; I cannot find her equal.”

Nor, essentially British as this novel is in substance and in treatment, were its passionate admirers confined to the circle of English readers. Diderot’s almost frantic excitement while reading it is well known ; the Rev. J. Stinstra, who translated the work into Dutch, wrote, “Multitudes of people earnestly beg the printing of the remaining parts may be expedited. Among them, a certain minister of the Gospel, who, when he had finished the first volume, complained that it was flat and tiresome ; after he had, at my intreaty, read the volumes through, confessed, ‘That he doubted not, but that if very many parts of these letters were to be found in the Bible, they would be pointed out as manifest proofs of divine inspiration.’” . . .

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Such was the manner in which *Clarissa* affected the men and women of the eighteenth century; what is its effect to-day? Do we read the rhapsodies and entreaties of Richardson's correspondents with silent amazement, with smiling contemptuous superiority, or possibly with some degree of intellectual sympathy? When, after receiving the *Castle of Otranto*, Gray wrote to Walpole, "It engages our attention here, makes some of us cry a little, and all in general afraid to go to bed o' nights," we read his words "smiling as in scorn," for we find it impossible to take the *Castle of Otranto* seriously. The books that bring tears to the eyes of the children of one generation make the eyes of their children's children glisten with irrepressible laughter, or perchance make them heavy with sleep. Does Richardson, too, belong to the army of the obsolete? Must we rummage

"Those old odd corners of an empty heart
For remnants of dim love the long disused,
And dusty crumblings of romance"

to learn the secret of his power over our ancestors? Or, is he, indeed, alive to-day as well as yesterday, with something of his former strength and charm? To this last question we must return an emphatic affirmative. Trevelyan, in his *Life of Macaulay*, narrates the following incident, which shows that the freshness and force of *Clarissa's* story were

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proportionally as effective in the nineteenth as in the eighteenth century :

“The ordinary amusements with which, in the more settled parts of India, our countrymen beguile the rainy season, were wanting in a settlement that had only lately been reclaimed from the desert ; . . . There were no books in the place except those that Macaulay had brought with him ; among which, most luckily, was ‘Clarissa Harlowe.’ Aided by the rain outside, he soon talked his favourite romance into general favour. The reader will consent to put up with one or two slight inaccuracies in order to have the story told by Thackeray.

“I spoke to him about ‘Clarissa.’ ‘Not read “Clarissa!”’ he cried out. ‘If you have once read “Clarissa,” and are infected by it, you can’t leave it. When I was in India I passed one hot season in the Hills ; and there were the governor-general, and the secretary of government, and the commander-in-chief, and their wives. I had “Clarissa” with me ; and as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe, and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace. The governor’s wife seized the book ; the secretary waited for it ; the chief-justice could not read it for tears.’ He acted the whole scene : he paced up and down the Athenæum library. I dare say he could

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have spoken pages of the book : of that book, and of what countless piles of others !”

“An old Scotch doctor, a Jacobin and a free thinker, who could hardly be got to attend church by the positive orders of the governor-general, cried over the last volume until he was too ill to appear at dinner. The chief secretary — afterward as Sir William Macnaughten, the hero and victim of the darkest episode in our Indian history — declared that reading this copy of ‘Clarissa’ under the inspiration of its owner’s enthusiasm was nothing less than an epoch in his life. After the lapse of years, when Ootacamund had long enjoyed the advantage of a book-club and a circulating library, the tradition of Macaulay and his novel still lingered on with a tenacity most unusual in the ever-shifting society of an Indian station.”

To those who have ears to hear, the narrative of *Clarissa* is as thrilling in its intensity and as powerful in its accumulation of tragic suffering, as it was when first uttered. An American critic declared the other day that he attempted to reread *Clarissa*, and simply could not ; for he continually burst out crying. Mr. Birrell quotes Napoleon as “a true Richardsonian,” and says, “*Clarissa Harlowe* has a place not merely amongst English novels, but amongst English women.” And as a final shot to the Philistines, he remarks, “There is nothing to be

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proud of, I can assure you, in not being able to read *Clarissa Harlowe*, or to appreciate the genius which created Lovelace." "Clarissa," said one of the best modern French critics, M. Joseph Texte, "is a truly living creation. . . . Hers is the first complete biography of a woman in modern fiction." It is needless to multiply instances which prove that whatever rank in fiction *Clarissa* may finally reach, it is assuredly not a forgotten or a neglected book. It produces upon the readers of to-day, all things considered, about the same effect that it produced in the eighteenth century. Some were thrilled, and others were bored. Horace Walpole remarked, "Richardson wrote those deplorably tedious lamentations, 'Clarissa,' and 'Sir Charles Grandison,' which are pictures of high life as conceived by a book-seller, and romances as they would be spiritualised by a Methodist teacher." On the other hand, the brilliant and beautiful Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, every whit as sophisticated, *blasée*, and worldly minded as Walpole, said : "This Richardson is a strange fellow. I heartily despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works in a most scandalous manner." Enough has been said to show that *Clarissa* does not belong among literary curiosities; and no one who weeps to-day over her fate need blush either for the impulses of his heart, or for the state of his literary taste.

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The manner in which we approach the story, even if reading it for the first time, is of course quite different from that of Colley Cibber, Lady Brads-haigh, and their contemporaries. For they read its pages with the feverish excitement of one who bends over the bedside of a dear friend, where life and death are trembling in the balance. To-day it is safe to assume that no intelligent person reads *Clarissa* without already knowing the plot. What impresses us chiefly is not the skilful manner in which Richardson has managed the details of his story, keeping the reader's mind constantly fluctuating between hope and despair; much might be said in praise of this skill, for, if only the first four volumes were extant, no one could say with absolute certitude what the outcome might be. What enthralles us is the horrible, yet strangely fascinating approach of *Clarissa's* fate — seen dimly from afar and looming nearer by almost imperceptible degrees, our terror and pity heightened by the extraordinary slowness of its march. An absolute kidnapping and outrage at the very start, such as came so near a fatality for Harriet Byron, would not begin to be so impressive as to watch the gradual unfolding of this sincere tragedy. We see *Clarissa*, panoplied with virtue, graced with culture and high breeding, armed with keen intelligence, making nevertheless an unequal struggle, only because she does not at

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the beginning realise that she is fighting for the highest stakes in life. The impressiveness of this drama to us is the impressiveness of suspense — of a delayed catastrophe sure to arrive, like that of *Hamlet*, rather than the shock of a surprise plot, where we greet the outcome with overwhelming amazement, as at the terrific climax of *The Return of the Druses*.

As for the characters in this novel, Clarissa has already been assigned her place in the world's gallery of immortal portraits. She is as essentially feminine as Pamela, there being precisely the difference between them that would have existed in real life — the difference of birth, breeding, and social position. She inherits from her family the terrible Harlowe pride, and much of the poignancy of the tragedy lies in the humiliation of so inflexible a soul. She is

“A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
* * * * *
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.”

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Clarissa has been criticised for lacking passion ; for worshipping at the shrine of the goddess Propriety. Profligates and prodigals do not enjoy a monopoly of passion ; for it burns fiercely in men and women of absolutely regular lives. Who would have dreamed of the individual passion of woman for man that glowed in the heart of the invalid Elizabeth Barrett, had Robert Browning never entered her sick-room ? Suppose Lovelace had crowned his accomplishments with virtue, is it possible to place any limit to the devotion he would have received from Clarissa ? It was by no accident that Richardson made his steadfast women, Pamela, Clarissa, Harriet, and Clementina, thrill with emotions unknown to the wayward and capricious Miss Howe and Charlotte Grandison. Clarissa's capacity for passion is not less because she loves duty and obedience. It is the frightful struggle between the dignity of her personality and her desire to obey her father that appeals to us most keenly ; and the cruel choice of lovers, one, endowed with every grace and charm, but lacking virtue, and the other, offensive as only a respectable boor can be, forms a dilemma with the prospect of happiness excluded. Were she less pure in heart, she might choose Lovelace ; were she less womanly, she might accept Solmes. We admire her because she will not have Lovelace ; we love her because she despises Solmes.

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From first to last she is always the same, in the most trying circumstances never acting in a way inconsistent with her personality. Apparently free, not seeing the meshes of her fate, then struggling wildly in its slimy folds, then with broken heart, her banner of virgin pride trailed in the dust, finally awaiting calmly the release of death, she is always the same Clarissa Harlowe, with the same integrity of soul. From the wreck of her earthly hopes and happiness she shines eternally serene, as through the cloud-rack gleams the evening star.

Lovelace, while something of a stage villain, is the most convincing male character that Richardson ever drew. Compare him with his predecessor Mr. B., whose name is as blank as his personality! Miss Thomson, by printing some extracts from Richardson's unpublished correspondence, shows that he drew Lovelace from life. On 26 January 1747, writing to Aaron Hill, he says, "I am a good deal warped by the character of a gentleman I had in my eye, when I drew both him (Loveiace) and Mr. B. in *Pamela*. The best of that gentleman in the latter; the worst of him for Lovelace, made still worse by mingling the worst of two other characters, that were as well known to me, of that gentleman's acquaintance, and this made me say in my last that I aimed at an uncommon, though I suppose

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a not quite unnatural character." The good qualities must therefore have been supplied by Richardson's imagination, for nothing throughout the story is more constantly insisted upon than the excellent side of the villain. In another unpublished letter of 3 October 1748, Richardson wrote: "Have you read Lovelace's bad and not his good? Or does the abhorrence which you have for that bad, make you forget that he has any good? Is he not generous? Is he not with respect to *meum* and *tuum* matters just? Is he not ingenious? Does he not on all occasions exalt the lady at his expense? Has he not therefore many sparks of goodness in his heart, though, with regard to the sex, he sticks at nothing?" The good qualities in Lovelace were certainly not overlooked by Richardson's feminine readers. One lady remarked, Clarissa "should have laid aside all delicacy; and if Lovelace had not asked her in the manner she wished, she ought to have asked him. In short, Lovelace is a charming young fellow, and I own I like him excessively." A correspondent writes, "You know I love to tell you everything I hear concerning your Clarissa, or otherwise I should not furnish you with more instances of what you have reason to say you too often meet with; namely, the fondness most women have for the character of Lovelace." In the course of her prayers to Richardson, to make the story end happily, Lady Brads-

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haigh writes, "I am very sensible of all the bad qualities you point out in the character of Lovelace : his villainies are hateful to my thoughts; and I acknowledge your hero deserving of hate, contempt, and everything that you think he deserves, except the entire loss of Clarissa, and eternal misery; one, I think, must be the consequence of the other. Sure you will think it worth your while to save his soul, Sir. I have many things yet to say in behalf of this *savage*. 'Lord!' you cry, 'how she loves to excuse this wicked man!' but pray be quiet. You say 'you are surprised and concerned that this character should meet with so much favour from the good and virtuous'; but you may assure yourself the good and virtuous are utter enemies to all his wickedness, and are only pleased with the distant view and hopes of his becoming the good, the virtuous, and the tender husband of Clarissa. . . . I agree with you in thinking it a pernicious notion, that reformed rakes make the best husbands. . . . A rake, reformed by time, age, or infirmities, generally wants only the power of being what he was; but a sensible man, who reforms in the prime of his days, and apparently from laudable motives, may, I think, be esteemed worthy, and one whom even Clarissa need not be ashamed to accept of, though not at his own appointed time, and by way of favour to her."

Clarissa's dilemma between Lovelace and Solmes was sufficiently cruel. But if her choice had been determined by the majority of women who read the novel at that time, I fear that the former would have polled an enormous vote, for in affairs of the heart, it is natural to be guided by inclination rather than by principle. On this basis, it was Solmes, and not Lovelace, who was guilty of the unpardonable sin — the sin of being unattractive. Mrs. Barbauld, however, wisely sums up the question of a possible marriage with Lovelace in these final words, which represent precisely the author's unmistakable attitude. "That woman must have little delicacy, who does not feel that his crime has raised an eternal wall of separation between him and the victim of his treachery, whatever affection she might have previously entertained for him."

It is indeed surprising that a character like Lovelace, who, compared with men of real life, or even with Don Juans of other great realistic novels, is at once seen to be impossible, should take so strong a hold upon our imagination. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Analyse him — he simply will not do; no such person ever lived. Reading his letters, we see his gay personality clearly, know him well, and never forget him. May not the real reason for this lie in the fact that while Clarissa is the heroine of a realistic novel of actual life, Love-

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lace is simply the hero of romance? He is essentially a romantic character. Now in the great romances, whether they be by Malory or Dumas, we do not ask that the persons in the story shall be like the men we meet on the street; we ask only that they shall make a permanent impression on our imagination. And Lovelace, though figuring in a great realistic novel, carries ever with him the atmosphere of romance. Thus, impossible in real life, he nevertheless lives; and even French critics, to whom one instinctively turns to learn whether or not the portrait of a rake is correct, agree that Lovelace is an artistic triumph. M. Texte remarks, "He is one of the most living of all the characters in Richardson's gallery."

The minor characters are many of them impossible to forget. Miss Howe, with her charming vivacity and sparkling personality, throws sunshine over the earlier phases of the tragedy; and sunshine is needed to dispel the shadows of the grim family of Harlowes. Father, mother, sister, brother, each plainly individualised, yet all unmistakably akin — there is surely the work of genius. Belford stands out bold and rugged in outline, faithful to the life. Curiously enough, the Rev. J. Stinstra thought Richardson was drawing his own portrait in Belford. He wrote, "Pardon me, Sir, but I was before of opinion, that you in your

Belford had drawn your own picture ; that you had seen the world, and loved it ; but afterwards escaped out of its incitements. In this case, I should not have been ashamed of corresponding with you ; for, am I not a follower of that Saviour, which declared that there was joy in heaven on a repenting sinner ?” Nor, among the lesser characters, can we forget the wretched creatures of the brothel, who set off by their abominable shamelessness the fair purity of the heroine.

However salutary may have been the moral effect of *Pamela* on the age in which and for which it was written, we feel that in this particular respect it has now outlived its usefulness. In short, a keener moral sense and a juster appreciation of moral values make us repudiate it. There are many critics to-day who insist that *Pamela* is a more immoral book than *Tom Jones*. I would not myself go so far as that, though I realise the danger at this moment of saying anything of any sort against the works of Fielding. But about *Clarissa* there cannot be two opinions. The call to virtue rings clear and true. As Diderot cried in his excitement : “Who would be Lovelace, with all his advantages ? Who would not be Clarissa, in spite of her misfortunes ?” The ethics of this remarkable book are sound, because the reward of virtue is seen to lie not in the abundance of things which one may possess, but in

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character. We are purified by this spectacle of pain, and realise that while the things that are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal. It is a joint masterpiece of Morality and Art.

Richardson's avowed aim in composing the story was a moral one. Discussing the Abbé Prévost's translation of *Clarissa*, he said, "He treats the story as a true one; and says, in one place, that the English editor has often sacrificed his story to moral instructions, warnings, &c., — the very motive with me, of the story's being written at all." In spite of himself, Richardson was an artist of the first class; otherwise, instead of writing a great novel, he would merely have written a moral tale. And the moral of *Clarissa* is by no means negative; it is not simply, as was Richardson's original purpose in composing *Pamela*, to warn attractive girls against rakes; if that were all to be learned from the perusal of *Clarissa*, the mountain would have laboured only to bring forth a mouse. Nor, as Mrs. Barbauld remarks, is any moral teaching contained in the fact that Clarissa resisted the advances of Lovelace; her virtue was so impregnable that she could laugh an assault to scorn. The moral is, as Mrs. Barbauld finely says, "that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that in circumstances the most painful and degrading, in a prison, in a brothel,

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in grief, in distraction, in despair, it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration.”

As *Pamela* was named by its author, *Virtue Rewarded*, we may, as has often been said, call this masterpiece *Virtue Triumphant*. When Lady Bradshaigh insisted that eternal bliss in heaven was not so satisfying a reward (to her mind) for Clarissa, as a little earthly felicity, Richardson wisely responded, “Clarissa has the greatest of triumphs even in this world. The greatest, I will venture to say, even *in* and *after* the outrage, and *because* of the outrage, that ever woman had.”

Across the title-page of one of his most striking and powerful novels, Thomas Hardy wrote

“A PURE WOMAN FAITHFULLY PRESENTED.”

But many shook their heads when Tess, overwhelmed by calamities, returned to her seducer, and Mr. Hardy was forced from his customary reserve of the artist to the platform of the advocate in order to defend his heroine. Richardson never had to defend the purity of Clarissa, and no one can imagine any stress of grief or terror that would have placed her acquiescent in the power of Lovelace. Whatever the lovely Tess may have been, Clarissa is certainly “a pure woman faithfully presented.”

All discussions of the characters in this immortal book begin and end with the heroine. It is the suf-

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fering of the innocent, and not of the guilty, that inspires the deepest emotions of pity and fear. We may with justice put into the mouth of Clarissa the infinitely mournful words of Cordelia :

We are not the first

Who, with best meaning, have incurred the worst.

In the month of November 1753, appeared, in both octavo and duodecimo form, the first four volumes of a work, which for some time many sentimental women had eagerly awaited. The title-pages read as follows: *The History of Sir Charles Grandison, in a Series of Letters published from the Originals. By the Editor of Pamela and Clarissa.* In the same November number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* which contained the first announcement of the issue of this novel, we find the following words, evidently inspired by Richardson himself, and containing in a condensed form his apology and purpose. "In this work, of which 4 volumes only are published, the author has completed a plan of which *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are parts. In *Pamela* he intended to exhibit the beauty and superiority of virtue in an unpolished mind, with the temporary reward which it frequently obtains, and to render the character of a libertine contemptible. His chief design in *Clarissa* was to shew the

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excellence of virtue, tho' in this life it should not be rewarded, and to represent the life of a libertine, with every adventitious advantage, as an object not only of detestation, but of horror. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, he proposed to display the superiority of virtue in yet another light; and by exhibiting the character and actions of a man of true honour, to shew that every natural and accidental advantage is improved by virtue and piety; that these polish elegance, heighten dignity, and produce universal love, esteem and veneration. How far this important design is effected, the world will soon be able to judge, as the last volumes, will be published in the beginning of the year."

This promise was speedily fulfilled; in December the fifth octavo and the fifth and sixth duodecimo volumes appeared, and in March 1754, the publication of the whole work was completed by the issue of the sixth octavo and the seventh duodecimo volumes.

We see by the important statement quoted above from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, that Richardson's aim in his last novel was to show the beauty of holiness in a more positive manner than he had before attempted. He had portrayed the allurements of vice in Mr. B. and in Lovelace, and the wisdom and glory of resistance in Pamela and Clarissa; to crown his lifework A GOOD MAN was necessary,

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who should have all the natural advantages of the rake, combined with supreme moral excellence; the whole building, fitly framed together, constituting an ideal standard of human conduct. That seven stout volumes should be necessary to make clear this paragon merely illustrates Richardson's method. It would have saved some time had he not written at all, but merely referred enquirers to a few verses in the Gospel according to Matthew, where the same purpose is fairly well accomplished in considerably less space. But no doubt Richardson knew that in his day — it may still be true — there are many persons who would rather read a novel, even in seven volumes, than a single chapter of the Bible.

Although the little printer always followed his own instincts in the end, he was ever ready to listen to his multitudinous advisers. His shrewdness is never seen to better advantage than when he pretends to consider, with seriousness and deliberation, advice that he secretly knows is not worth the paper on which it is written. One of his friends, deceived by the courteous gravity with which Richardson listened to every trivial suggestion, became alarmed lest in the multitude of counsellors he should lose his safety, so he inconsistently joined their number by advising the novelist to take no advice. "I wish you would take up a resolution

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(which perhaps may be new to you) of neither trusting others, nor distrusting yourself, too much. If you bundle up the opinions of bad judges in your head, they will only be so much lumber in your way."

Now although *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* was apparently written "by request," we may be sure that if he had not felt the spur to composition in his own mind, he would not have constructed such a work merely to please his friends. That he was urged is, however, sufficiently clear. After the publication of *Clarissa*, letters began to flow in, beseeching him to add to his works the portrait of a good man. On 16 December 1749, Lady Bradshaigh wrote, "You are ever ready, Sir, to acknowledge an obligation upon my strongly soliciting you to resume your pen, yet will you not give me the least satisfaction, not a glimmering of hope? Won't you, Sir? . . . I believe there never was a fine character drawn without having its admirers (even amongst the most profligate) if not its imitators. And as I know with the good man you would connect the fine gentleman, it might, I hope, be thought worthy of imitation. It is a character we want, I am sorry to say it; but few there are who deserve it. Do but try, Sir, what good you can do this way; and let me have to brag, that I was instrumental in persuading you to it." To this sup-

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plication, Richardson replied under date of 9 January 1750, as follows: "Dear lady! what shall I say? To draw a character that the better half of the world, both as to number and worthiness, I mean the women, would not like; after such a reception too as Mr. Hickman has met with, after such kindness shewn to that of Lovelace." Yet, either at the very time of sending this half-negative answer, or, at all events, very shortly after, Richardson was busy with not only the plan, but the execution, of the work so ardently desired; for by the month of March, portions of the manuscript were privately circulating among his intimate friends, like the "sugred sonnets" of Shakespeare. This throws a curious light on his letter to Mrs. Dewes, dated 20 August 1750: "All together, time of life too advanced, I fear I shall not be able to think of a new work. And then the task, as I have written to Mrs. Donnellan, is a very arduous one. To draw a man that *good* men would approve, and that young ladies, in such an age as this, will think amiable, — tell me, Madam, is not that an arduous task?" We cannot help smiling as we read these words, and we borrow the drunken porter's language to exclaim, "Faith, here's an equivocator."

We even know with considerable accuracy just how far he had progressed, for in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, dated 24 March 1750, he says, "But

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my Harriot! — and do you, can you like the girl? I have designed her to keep the middle course, between Pamela and Clarissa; and between Clarissa and Miss Howe; or rather, to make her what I would have supposed Clarissa to be, had she not met with such persecutions at home, and with such a tormentor as Lovelace. She interests her readers so far, as to make them wish her to have a good man.

“But who is the good man that you think you see at a little distance? — In truth he has not peeped out yet.” Richardson continued to favour his friends by sending them portions of the manuscript, and every morning, in his beloved grotto at North End, he read what he had written to a select circle. On 27 May 1750, Colley Cibber wrote, labouring under great excitement: “I have just finished the sheets you favoured me with; but never found so strong a proof of your sly ill-nature, as to have hung me up upon tenters, till I see you again. Z—ds! I have not patience till I know what’s become of her. — Why, you! I don’t know what to call you! — Ah! Ah! you may laugh if you please: but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should never be able to shew *hers* again? What piteous, d—d, disgraceful, pickle have you plunged her in? For God’s sake send me the sequel; or — I don’t know what to say! — After all, there is one

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hint in your narration, that convinces me, Greville, though he was seen to light from his chair at home, must be the man that has had the good or bad disposal of her. My girls are all on fire and fright to know what can possibly become of her. — Take care! — If you have betrayed her into any shocking company, you will be as accountable for it, as if you were yourself the monster that took delight in her calamity. Upon my soul I am so choaked with suspense, that I won't tell you a word of the vast delight some had in Miss Byron's company, till you have repeated it, by letting me see her again without the least blemish upon her mind, or person; though, 'till you brought her to this plunge, I could have kissed you for every character that was so busy about her. But — O Lord! send me some more, and quickly, as you hope ever to see, or hear again, from

Your delightfully uneasy

Friend and Servant,

C. CIBBER."

Three years later, under date of 6 June 1753, Cibber sent a particularly characteristic note, showing his unabated interest in the outcome of the novel.

"SIR, The delicious meal I made of Miss Byron on Sunday last, has given me an Appetite for another slice of her off from the spit, before she is served up to the Publick table; if about 5 o'clock

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tomorrow afternoon, will not be inconvenient Mrs Brown, & I will come, and nibble upon a bit more of her: But pray let your whole family, with Mrs Richardson at the head of them, come in for their share."

When Richardson essayed to write *Grandison*, he was at a double disadvantage. He chose a hero, instead of a heroine: and he forsook the familiar fields of low and middle-class life, and ventured into the strange domain of aristocratic society. He felt like Samson shorn of his strength; and the chief criticisms that are to-day leveled against this work, were made in advance by the author himself. In one of his many letters on this subject, he says, "How shall a man obscurely situated, never delighting in public entertainments, nor in his youth able to frequent them, from narrowness of fortune, had he had a taste for them; one of the most attentive of men to the calls of his business; his situation for many years producing little but prospects of a numerous family; a business that seldom called him abroad, where he might in the course of it, see and know a little of the world, as some employments give opportunities to do; naturally shy and sheepish, and wanting more encouragement by smiles, to draw him out, than any body thought it worth their while to give him; and blest, (in this he will say blest), with a mind that set him above a

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sought-for dependence, and making an absolute reliance on Providence and his own endeavours. How, I say, shall such a man pretend to describe and enter into characters in upper life? How shall such a one draw scenes of busy and yet elegant trifling?

“Miss M. is of opinion, that no man can be drawn, that will appear to so much advantage as Harriot: I own that a good woman is my favourite character; and that I can do twenty agreeable things for her, none of which would appear in a striking light in a man. Softness of heart, gentleness of manners, tears, beauty, will allow of pathetic scenes in the story of the one, which cannot have place in that of the other.” Richardson certainly understood both his powers and his limitations.

The question of how Sir Charles should act in affairs of honour gave Richardson not a little trouble, and he doubtless anticipated the smiles of twentieth-century critics. It was proper that Colonel Morden should fight Lovelace, for the Colonel was only an admirable, not an ideal character; but in the case of Grandison, it would never do to have him engage in duels, nor would his refusal to fight free him from the imputation of cowardice. Richardson held very positive views concerning the vice of duelling, and yet his ideal man must be ideally brave. Dr. Delany, writing in 1751, said, “I think you have

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many difficulties to encounter for your *fine gentleman*, an epithet not often understood; as little known. And no part more difficult than to make him brave, and avoid duelling, that reigning curse. Some vanity you must give him, of shewing his bravery, that he may dare to refuse that wicked, mean, fashionable vice. A proper fortitude of mind, and command of his passions, will prevent his giving a challenge; and (a greater security than all) his christian virtue. But how to ward off a challenge, and preserve his character, is a task only to be undertaken by the author of *Clarissa*." How Richardson cut this Gordian knot we all know. Perhaps there was no better way.

The stock criticism that in creating Grandison, Richardson made, not a real man, but merely a pattern of all the virtues, was also foreseen by the novelist, and he did his best to overcome the difficulty. Writing to Miss Mulso, 11 July 1751, he says, "Well, but, after all, I shall want a few unpremeditated faults, were I to proceed, to sprinkle into this man's character, lest I should draw a *faultless monster*. . . . I would not make him guilty of too great refinements: I would draw him as a mortal. He should have all the human passions to struggle with; and those he cannot conquer he shall endeavour to make subservient to the cause of virtue." And, in response to Miss Mulso's fear

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that the ladies will think Grandison "too wise" to be attractive, Richardson playfully wrote, "Dear, dear girls, help me to a few monkey-tricks to throw into his character, in order to shield him from contempt for his wisdom."

Perhaps the most amusing advice which Richardson received came from the Rev. Mr. Skelton, who insisted that in the same novel with the Good Man there should appear a Bad Woman. "I hope you intend to give us a bad woman, expensive, imperious, lewd, and at last a drammer. This is a fruitful and a necessary subject, which will strike, and entertain to a miracle. You are so safe already with the sex, that nothing you can say of a bad woman will hinder your being a favourite, especially if now and then, when your she-devil is most a devil, you take occasion to remark how unlike she is to the most beautiful, or modest, or gentle, or polite part of the creation." It is quite possible that this reverend gentleman is responsible for the impossible character of Emily's mother, for Richardson always regarded the advice of the clergy as having great weight. At any rate, a year later, when Richardson informed him that the bad woman had been included, this apostle of Christianity in religion and Naturalism in art wrote, "I am glad you have a bad woman, but sorry she does not shew herself. Is this natural? Did you ever know a bad woman that

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did not make a figure in her way? No, no; the devil always takes care that his confessors of that sex canonize themselves." How wide the experience of the Rev. Mr. Skelton had been we can only conjecture.

In view of the ultimate publication of *Sir Charles Grandison* in seven volumes, it is interesting to note that Richardson originally planned to make it a short story, to call it *The Good Man*, and not to have it published until after his death. "I have no thoughts," he writes to Lady Bradshaigh, "were I to finish this new piece, of having it published in my life-time. The success of a writer's work is better insured, when the world knows they can be troubled with no more of his." A curious remark to come from the author of *Pamela*! What he really feared was that *Grandison* was not up to the standard of his previous works, a fear, on the whole, well grounded. He never recovered from the wonder aroused in his heart by the amazing success of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*; and he could not bear the thought that readers might say his genius was declining. No doubt this was one reason why he allowed such a variety of persons to read the manuscript. Writing to Lady Bradshaigh, 24 February 1753, he exclaims: "Think you, Madam, that all these honours done to my *Clarissa*, (nor has *Pamela*, the poor *Pamela*, been neglected by them), do not

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give me apprehensions for my new piece? indeed they do. A man of my time of life and infirmities should know when to give over. There would have perhaps been a greater assurance of a favourable reception, had I, as I once intended, left to executors the disposal of the piece."

He was frightened also by the length of the book. On 21 June 1752, he writes, "The *good man*, alas! I knew not what the task was which I undertook. He is grown under my hands from a thin gentleman, as I designed him, to a gigantic bulk." Again, two months later: "I hope I am in the last volume. It is run into prodigious length. When I can get to an end, I will revise, in hopes to shorten." Three months after this: "I am now going over it again, to see what I can omit: this is the worst of all my tasks, and what I most dreaded. Vast is the fabric; and here I am under a kind of necessity to grasp it all, as I may say; to cut off, to connect; to rescind again, and reconnect. Is it not monstrous, that I am forced to commit acts of violence, in order to bring it into seven twelve volumes, which I am determined it shall not exceed, let what will happen?" This resolution he kept.

Much against his will, he had to rush it through the press. Some scoundrelly booksellers in Dublin, by bribing the compositors, secured many of the sheets before the day of publication in London, and

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issued a pirated edition in a mangled shape. The honest man was righteously angry, and sent out a full account of this treachery. But the mischief was irreparable; he obtained no satisfaction, and his own copies sent to Ireland for sale, were driven from the market by the low price of the surreptitious edition. The composition of *Joseph Andrews*, and the piracy of *Sir Charles Grandison* were the two injuries that Richardson never forgave. Had he possessed a keener sense of humour, he might have enjoyed the fun in Fielding's parody, and enjoyed also the oddity of having a work, wherein was set forth the ideal combination of virtues, stolen by a gang of rascally printers.

Sir Charles Grandison, in spite of its many admirable qualities, is on the whole inferior to Richardson's other books. Its inferiority to *Clarissa* is apparent. Many critics, on the other hand, rank it above *Pamela*, and a very pretty quarrel is still on, in the endeavour to decide, not which one of Richardson's books is the best, but which is the worst. The false morality of *Pamela* has blinded many readers to the extraordinary power and charm of the story. If we omit the last two volumes of *Pamela*, which are not an integral part of the work and were added later by an unfortunate decision of the author, we shall surely find reasons enough to place it above *Grandison* in literary merit. Character-

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drawing, with all that expression includes, keenness of interest in the succession of events, freshness and force of epistolary style — in all these respects *Pamela* is distinctly superior. The hero of *Grandison* is so little less than the angels that he is a little more than human, and does not therefore strongly appeal to us; as for the two women, we sympathise with both too deeply, to be wholly moved by the misfortunes of either. But the great blot on Richardson's last novel is, apart from Clementina herself, the vast deserts of talk indulged in by her father, mother, three brothers, uncle, aunt, cousin, lover, governess, maid, and attendant father Confessor. This, on Richardson's part, was a little more than kin, and less than kind. To be sure, with an unconscious humour appreciated by all modern readers, Richardson has properly grouped his characters in his list of *Dramatis Personæ*; he calls them, with a felicity of expression that we cannot but admire, MEN, WOMEN, and ITALIANS. This impossible Italian menagerie is an affliction that the patient reader — and Richardson has no readers that are otherwise — should have been spared. The roll-call of this family strikes terror to the heart of one who has read the book, as he remembers the flood of talk in which he was so often engulfed. Their capacity to bore simply cannot be overestimated; it was doubtless their conversation,

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rather than the loss of Sir Charles, that drove Clementina to madness. The "general" is an unmitigated ass; and how eagerly we long to have the Chevalier Grandison for once forget his resolution on duelling, and drive the cold steel through this preposterous cad. Poor Jeronymo we dismiss rather in sorrow than in anger; he is not so intolerable as the general, and yet it is with mixed feelings that we watch by his bedside. His recovery will mean more talk. We can only say to him in the language of the old play

"Go by, Jeronymo; go by."

While Richardson was condensing his novel, in order to contract it into seven volumes, we can but wonder at the opportunities he neglected. It is the only novel he wrote that is really too long; for while all attempts at condensing *Clarissa* — from Aaron Hill to Mrs. Humphry Ward — have proved failures, *Sir Charles Grandison* might easily be improved not only by omitting most of the scenes in Italy, but by omitting the entire last volume. Yet it is possible that the fault may lie with us, and that we have failed to grasp the full artistic design of this monumental work. For Richardson certainly understood his purpose better than we do, and in the *Preface* he wrote, regarding the immense number of letters in these seven volumes: "As many, however,

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as could be spared, have been omitted. There is not one episode in the whole, nor, after SIR CHARLES GRANDISON is introduced, one letter inserted but what tends to illustrate the principal design."

In spite of serious faults, *Sir Charles Grandison* is a great novel. In many places the plot is managed with consummate skill, and with a sure eye for dramatic effect. Nothing could be better than the first appearance of the hero. Impatient as we are to see him, he enters the stage at precisely the right instant of time. We can scarcely repress an instinct to cheer. This skilful introduction of Sir Charles was no lucky accident; it had been carefully studied by the author. Writing to Lady Bradshaigh, who, in reading the manuscript, had enquired when the hero was to appear, he said, "He must not appear till, as at a royal cavalcade, the drums, trumpets, fifes and tabrets, and many a fine fellow, have preceeded him, and set the spectators agog, as I may call it. Then must he be seen to enter with an eclat; while the mob shall be ready to cry out huzza, boys!"

Furthermore, Richardson's management of the plot shows great skill in holding the reader in suspense. It is as impossible for us to tell how the story will end, as it was for Sir Charles himself to know which of the two women he would ultimately

marry. Harriet Byron's agony of doubt, with the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, forms one of the most convincing successions of scenes in fiction. Richardson had obtained an immense advantage in holding the interest of the readers of *Grandison* by his treatment of Clarissa; for the ruthless ending of that story filled every one who followed Miss Byron's misfortunes with the keenest alarm. They knew that the author was fully capable of blasting her hopes and theirs, and they could only wait, and not forecast, the outcome. Had Richardson ended *Clarissa* happily, no one would have read *Grandison* with much anxiety for Harriet. Herein lies something of the power of the writer of tragedies; we follow the fate of Mr. Hardy's heroines with the sharpest apprehension, while the wildest adventures of mere romantic heroes do not disturb our inward calm.

Sir Charles himself cannot be dismissed as a mere prig. He is richly dressed, has elaborate manners, enjoys high social rank, but is a man for all that. The fact that he actually loved two excellent women, and that he would probably have succeeded in being happy with either, gave great trouble to Richardson's feminine admirers. Lady Bradshaigh bounced off her chair as she read this part of the story. But the situation was really by no means impossible. It would have been perfectly true to

life, though it would have killed this or any other novel, had the hero met a third woman, of equal charm of person and character, and ultimately married her. Such utterly unromantic facts constantly happen, and Richardson was endeavouring to show that even the passion of love, in an ideal man, may be partially guided by reason and good judgment — nay, that in time, it may be wholly controlled. But Sir Charles is no iceberg; and the difference — not fully understood by himself — between his pity for Clementina, and his love for Harriet, is wonderfully well portrayed by Richardson. Had Sir Charles never met Miss Byron, and also had he succeeded in his treaty with the Italian family, he would never have imagined that he could love any one but Clementina, and would have been wholly happy with her. That marriage apparently proving hopeless, his passionate love for Harriet is not only possible, it is natural; and his proposal even then to marry Clementina came simply from his extraordinarily nice sense of honour, the struggle that it cost him being terrible in its intensity. For as lookers-on often see points in the game hidden from the players, it is evident to the reader that in his second Italian journey, and even while treating with the family of Clementina, Harriet Byron possesses the hero's heart. The relation of Sir Charles to these two women, in spite of the adverse criticism

it has aroused, seems to be only an exhibition of Richardson's skill, and his knowledge of human nature.

The madness of Clementina, though a little too fully elaborated, is deeply affecting. In a time when the authority of the classics was greater than it is to-day, Thomas Warton said: "I know not whether even the madness of Lear is wrought up and expressed by so many little strokes of nature and passion. It is absolute pedantry to prefer and compare the madness of Orestes, in Euripides, to this of Clementina."

It is curious, that as it was the composition of a Complete-Letter-Writer that led Richardson to write *Pamela*, so, one of the minor objects of his last novel was to furnish for the unsophisticated a manual of etiquette. In the same number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* that contained the first announcement of the appearance of *Sir Charles Grandison*, there was a letter to Mr. Urban, defending the length and minuteness of incident in the work. The writer then adds: "All the recesses of the human heart are explor'd, and its whole texture unfolded. Such a knowledge of the polite world, of men and manners, may be acquired from an attentive perusal of this work as may in a great measure supply the place of the tutor and the boarding school. Young persons may learn how to act in all

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the important conjunctures, and how to behave gracefully, properly, and politely, in all the common occurrences of life." The fact that Richardson could not shake himself wholly free from the manual-of-etiquette style in which he began his literary career, accounts not only for many of the stilted conversations that disfigure his works, but goes far toward explaining why the character of Sir Charles is so offensive to many readers. A hero who is to set styles in language and in dress must never forget himself; and a man who never forgets himself cannot be wholly admirable.

Sir Charles Grandison, although many of its pages are aglow with the fire of genius, does not reach, either in art or in moral instruction, the highest success. Its artistic defects are manifest; and its failure as an edifying work may be summed up by saying that it called the righteous, and not the sinners, to repentance. Richardson himself felt this, for discussing this very book, he said: "Good people may approve the morality of my writings. But good people want not such for themselves; and what bad ones have they converted?" The difficulty is, of course, that Sir Charles, instead of converting, only irritates the ungodly.

There was one fair saint who saw no fleck of failure in the work. The lovely Frau Klopstock wrote: "You have since written the manly *Clarissa*, with-

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out my prayer: oh you have done it, to the great joy and thanks of all your happy readers. Now you can write no more, you must write the history of an Angel." Had Richardson elected to undertake this task, he could have found no better subject than the beautiful woman who suggested it.

Romances had been more or less common and popular in England since the time of Malory's wonderful *Morte Darthur*, printed by Caxton in 1485. But the English *novel* was not born until the eighteenth century — that century of beginnings; and its father was no less a personage than Daniel Defoe. It is true that the structure of his works is singularly bare and crude. He had no conception of the proper handling of a plot. All that is implied by the expression "evolution of a story," so beautifully exemplified in *The Scarlet Letter*, is conspicuous in Defoe mainly by its absence. Events in Defoe's novels succeed one another merely in chronological order, like the pages of a diary. But he was the first man in England to write a genuine realistic novel, showing, in the form of a story, the development of a character taken from actual contemporary life. If *Moll Flanders* (1722) is not in every respect as properly classed by the term "realistic novel" as is *Esther Waters* (1894), what terminology can be invented

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to place it more accurately? Defoe might honestly have adapted Joseph Hall's saying, and cried,

“ I first adventure : follow me who list,
And be the *second* English novelist.”

We cannot, therefore, concur with a common opinion that the first man in England to write novels was Samuel Richardson. He was the second, not the first; but of the modern analytical novel, he was the true progenitor. Defoe's method was realistic, but not psychological. Richardson, on the other hand, studied and portrayed with tireless assiduity the secrets of the soul. For although his avowed object was didactic, no sooner did he begin to write than he became absorbed in the faithful delineation of human hearts.

Richardson was wise in selecting the epistolary style, for at that once great art — now lost — he was a master hand. He, like many others in eighteenth-century times, wrote private letters with the same care that manuscript was prepared for the press. He made copies of his correspondence — both letters sent and received; they circulated among his intimate friends, and were enjoyed in concert, as an evening party enjoys a good book read aloud. The hurry and worry of more modern times, and, above all, cheap postage, have quite destroyed that once fine art.

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Richardson knew also the value of the epistolary method for soul-revelation. The minds and hearts of all his prominent characters were to be laid absolutely bare before the reader, and there is no instrument like a confidential letter for this process of vivisection. We do not need the authority of Schopenhauer to be told that a letter is the surest key to the writer's personality; for in a long letter it is more difficult to conceal one's actual sentiments, than by the tone of the voice or the expression of the features.

"There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face."

It is not quite true to say, with Mrs. Barbauld, that Richardson invented the manner of writing stories in letters; and yet he may fairly be called the originator of the epistolary novel. No one had ever used this style with anything like the effect attained by Richardson. As M. Texte remarks, in Richardson "the epistolary novel has really become what it should be, a form of the analytical novel. If it is not this, it is nothing, and the originality of Richardson consists in the very fact that he made it such." He adopted this method, of course, not altogether by conscious choice, but partly by accident and necessity. If he had not begun the *Complete-Letter-Writer*, he might never have begun *Pamela*; and, although no gulf among

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books is wider than the gulf separating etiquette-manuals from realistic novels, Richardson found the crossing easy and natural.

At the outset of his literary career, Richardson was certainly not a conscious artist; that was to come with the extraordinary development of his unsuspected powers. How surprisingly different in the attitude towards his art is the Preface to *Pamela* from the Preface to *Clarissa*! In the latter, he says, "All the letters are written while the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects (the events at the time generally dubious): so that they abound not only with critical situations, but with what may be called *instantaneous* descriptions and reflections (proper to be brought home to the breast of the youthful reader;) as also with affecting conversations; many of them written in the dialogue or dramatic way." The man who penned those words had become a self-conscious artist; and his excitement while in the fever of composition reminds one of the well-known anecdotes of later novelists. He wept bitterly over *Clarissa's* fate, as Thackeray sobbed at the exit of Colonel Newcome, and as Hawthorne's voice involuntarily rose and fell while reading to his wife the final declaration of Dimmesdale.

It was the combination of the Philistine and the

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Artist in this man that partly explains the variety of persons whom he impressed. That Lady Montagu, and the maid curling her mistress's hair, should have each sobbed over *Clarissa* is a significant fact. Horace Walpole saw in him only the didactic Philistine, and therefore despised him; Dr. Young and Thomas Edwards saw in him only the didactic Philistine, and therefore admired him; Colley Cibber and Diderot saw in him the great Artist, and worshipped him. Richardson's personality was a singular union of qualities usually contrary, and much in his writing and in its effect can be explained only by keeping in mind the double nature of the man.

For it is beyond dispute that this solemn *paterfamilias*, drinking tea with sentimental women, and apparently foreordained to be a milksop, was in actuality one of the most stern and uncompromising realists that ever handled a pen. Once at his desk, all tincture of squeamishness vanished. His realism was bolder and more honest than Fielding's and shrank from nothing that might lend additional power to the scene, or that might deepen the shades of character. He refused absolutely to follow advice that conflicted with his aim and method. He knew his work was original in design, plan, and treatment, and he fully trusted only the instincts of his own heart. A friend wrote,

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speaking of the critics who wished him to introduce changes, "Another defect in those that are called the best judges is, that they generally go by rules of art; whereas yours is absolutely a work of nature. One might, for instance, as well judge of the beauties of a prospect by the rules of architecture, as of your *Clarissa* by the laws of novels and romances. A piece quite of a new kind must have new rules, if any; but the best of all is, following nature and common sense. Nature, I think, you have followed more variously, and at the same time more closely, than anyone I know. For Heaven's sake, let not those sworn enemies of all good works (the critics) destroy the beauties you have created."

Richardson's Realism, where it does not conflict with his didacticism, is indeed absolute. In beginning his career as a novelist, he forsook everything that was generally understood by the term Fiction. Romantic adventures, supernatural machinery, remote countries, the characters and customs of chivalry, and the splendour of historical setting, he resolutely brushed aside. He took his own country, his own time; and instead of selecting for protagonist a princess, he selected a housemaid. This is Realism, as distinguished from Romanticism; and though there was a moral basis to his story, the realistic method was as uncompromising

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as Zola's. Richardson often received such advice as the following, and what he thought of it, his novels sufficiently show. "I am glad to hear your work is what you call long. I am excessively impatient to see it. And shall certainly think it too short, as I did *Clarissa*, although it should run out into seven folios. The world will think so too, if it is sufficiently larded with facts, incidents, adventures, &c. The generality of readers are more taken with the driest narrative of facts, if they are facts of importance, than with the purest sentiments, and the noblest lessons of morality. Now, though you write above the taste of the many, yet ought it not to be, nay, is it not, your chief design, to benefit the many? But how can you cure their mental maladies, if you do not so wrap up your physic as to make it pass their palates? . . . Therefore stuff your works with adventures, and wedge in events by way of primings."

A good motto for Richardson's novels may be found in what he said just before the appearance of *Grandison*. "I think the characters, the sentiments, are all different from any of those in my two former pieces, though the subjects are still love and nonsense, men and women." *Love and nonsense, men and women* — the phrase indicates fully the subject-matter and the exclusive aim of

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the avowed realist. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "there is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all 'Tom Jones.'" ERSKINE: "Surely, sir, Richardson is very tedious." JOHNSON: "Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself." The Doctor's remarks, as usual, are worth serious reflection. Fielding was a novelist of manners; in that sense a realist. But Richardson was an analyst, a psychologist, and he cared nothing for the course of the story so long, as with infinite patience, he followed accurately the windings of the heart. In this respect, *Clarissa* is like *Anna Karenina*. The abundance of detail destroys the artistic contour of the story, but it represents what these two men endeavoured to represent — life.

The Prolixity of Richardson's novels is inseparable from their subject and manner of composition. They are, in truth, works of prodigious length. To have read *Clarissa* entirely through is in itself an achievement, like having climbed the Matterhorn. Richardson was fully conscious of the immense mass of words he had written, and knew that it would lose him many readers. "Every reader must judge for him or herself, as to the supposed prolixity," he said, "I am contented that he or she should." Sometimes he seems to suspect

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the yawns of future generations. "Have I not written a monstrous quantity; nineteen or twenty close written volumes?" His method of composition necessitated this, for instead of filling up a framework, he wrote one letter, without knowing what he would say in the next. I frankly confess I admire his courage and lack of amenity in launching such leviathans. In a day when we are greeted by so-called dramatic stories, whose sole claim to popularity lies in their ability to furnish enough fighting to keep the reader breathless, it is refreshing by way of contrast to see Richardson writing "the history of a young lady" in seven volumes. The same unflinching courage that made him lead his readers into a brothel, made him persevere through a tremendously long journey. He feared the charge of Indelicacy as little as the complaint of Tediousness. He set out to accomplish a certain result in his own way.

All English novelists who have lived since 1748 have learned something from Richardson. Jane Austen, though her keen sense of humour and hatred of cant made her see plainly his faults, studied him and his methods with the utmost zeal. Her astonishing power in representing the manners and conversations of actual people was largely developed by Richardson. What is true of her is true of all the great masters of English fiction.

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The honest printer made an impression on the history of the novel far deeper and more lasting than his best fonts of type could produce.

Nothing is more interesting or instructive to the student of literary development than to notice how often the mightiest influences in literature are unconscious in their origin. The whole English Romantic movement, which shaped the literature of the nineteenth century, and which reached its first climax in Sir Walter Scott, began with a total absence of conscious aim and method. Such is the case also in the history of the sentimental novel in England. When, a half-century old, Samuel Richardson turned from his Complete-Letter-Writer to construct the history of Pamela, nothing could have been farther from his thoughts than the results that were finally accomplished from so unpretentious a beginning. The success of his novel astonished him, but to its far-reaching consequences he was naturally blind. A temporary fad must pass entirely away before we can see what, if any, its results are to be. And *Pamela* was distinctly a fad. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1741, we read, "*Several encomiums on a Series of Familiar Letters, published but last month, entitled PAMELA or Virtue Rewarded, came too late for this Magazine, and we believe there will*

be little Occasion for inserting them in our next, because a Second Edition will then come out to supply the Demands in the Country, it being Judged in Town as great a sign of Want of Curiosity not to have read Pamela, as not to have seen the French and Italian Dancers." Such was the manner in which fashionable society took up the fortunes of the fictitious housemaid; and when other literary sensations appeared, *Pamela* was neglected by this class of readers. But Richardson, in this book, and in the two others which succeeded it, made an appeal to, and an impression on the emotional side of humanity which was by no means to pass away. The Sentimental Novel had been created and was to appear in a variety of forms, growing side by side with the ever increasing Romantic movement. Lady Bradshaigh, in a characteristic postscript to a letter of Harriet Byron proportions, written 9 January 1750, begged to know the proper meaning of the new expression *sentimental*. "Pray, Sir, give me leave to ask you (I forgot it before) what, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue amongst the polite, both in town and country? In letters and common conversation, I have asked several who make use of it, and have generally received for answer, it is — it is — *sentimental*. Everything clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word; but am

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convinced a wrong interpretation is given, because it is impossible everything clever and agreeable can be so common as this word. I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a *sentimental* man; we were a *sentimental* party; I have been taking a *sentimental* walk. And that I might be reckoned a little in the fashion, and, as I thought, show them the proper use of the word, about six weeks ago, I declared I had just received a *sentimental* letter. Having often laughed at the word, and found fault with the application of it, and this being the first time I ventured to make use of it, I was loudly congratulated upon the occasion: but I should be glad to know your interpretation of it."

And so should we. But Richardson doubtless discovered his own inability to define a word with such various connotation, or he never would have been guilty of neglecting a lady's postscript.

The first and most striking evidence of Richardson's influence upon English fiction appeared in a way that must have made him momentarily regret that he had ever written at all. Although *Joseph Andrews* is certainly not a sentimental novel, it must be classed among the results of *Pamela*; and Richardson was willing to believe that the great popularity of his rival was really due to himself — that he was the unwilling father of Field-

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ing's good fortune. "The Pamela," he said, "which he abused in his Shamela," [showing that Richardson believed Fielding to have been the author of "Conny Keyber's" parody] "taught him how to write to please, tho' his manners are so different. Before his Joseph Andrews (hints and names taken from that story, with a lewd and ungenerous engraftment) the poor man wrote without being read."

But Richardson was responsible for something else than Fielding, so curiously does Divinity shape our ends. As it was the philosophy of the devout Berkeley that brought into being the writings of the great sceptic Hume, so the novels of the prim printer were immensely influential in producing *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey*, the latter of which Richardson was fortunate enough not to live to see. The famous starling was meant to appeal, and did appeal to a generation that had read *Clarissa* with swimming eyes. Those were golden days for the sentimental writers, for before the tears on the faces of Sterne's readers were fairly dried, appeared Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* (1771), and the lachrymose fountains flowed afresh. English literature at that period was simply moist, and though we call many of those books, like the *Man of Feeling*, and the *Fool of Quality*, dry, it is, under the circumstances,

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hardly a happy appellation. More than that, Richardson's sentiment prepared English readers for Ossian, the mighty influence of which on nations and individuals is one of the most striking facts in literary history. Nay, the influence of the didactic printer may be worked out even in such extraordinary religious movements as the Wesleyan revival, which found the fields white for the harvest. The river of Sentiment, rising from the not too clear well in *Pamela*, became a veritable flood, overrunning with resistless force not only England, but France and Germany as well.

The direct influence of Richardson in Germany was exceedingly great. We have seen how emotional women like Frau Klopstock devoured his novels. Klopstock himself wrote an ode on Clarissa's Death, and the novel was translated in eight volumes by Dr. Haller, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Göttingen. Gellert, the professor of rhetoric at Leipsic, translated *Pamela* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, and he remarked, "I have formerly wept away some of the most remarkable hours of my life, in a sort of delicious misery, over the seventh volume of *Clarissa* and the fifth of *Grandison*." *In a sort of delicious misery* — the words should not be forgotten, for they precisely express the sensation aroused and enjoyed by contemporary readers of Richardson,

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and of the sentimental literature that followed in his wake of tears. "Immortal is Homer," shouted this German scholar, "but among Christians the British Richardson is more immortal still," a delightful expression; for the writer's enthusiasm must make us forgive the comparative of such an adjective. A number of German novelists essayed stories in the Richardsonian manner, but it was not only in the third and fourth rate writers that the influence of the Englishman may be seen. Wieland, who had read *Pamela* in French, was charmed, and after the perusal of *Grandison*, he turned the fortunes of Clementina into a play, and thought of composing a book which should be called *Letters from Charles Grandison to his pupil Emily Jervois*. We can only imagine the gush of sentiment flowing from a volume with such a title.

Lessing was profoundly influenced by Richardson, for, in his hatred of the French domination of the theatre, he greeted everything English with enthusiasm. Those who have attentively read Lessing's prose play *Miss Sara Sampson* may easily detect the influence of our English novelist. Richardson was even parodied in Germany, and *Grandison der Zweite* (1760-1762) is proof that there were readers enough and to spare of the struggles of Sir Charles. An edition of *Grandison der Zweite* appeared so late as 1803.

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In *Wilhelm Meister*, in a discussion that arose upon the novel and the drama, we find the following words: "But in the novel, it is chiefly *sentiments* and *events* that are exhibited; in the drama, it is *characters* and *deeds*. The novel must go slowly forward; and the sentiments of the hero, by some means or other, must restrain the tendency of the whole to unfold itself and to conclude. . . . The novel-hero must be suffering, at least he must not in a high degree be active; in the dramatic one, we look for activity and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones himself, are, if not suffering, at least retarding personages; and the incidents are all, in some sort, modelled by their sentiments." Even had Goethe not named the characters of Richardson in this passage, there could have been no doubt concerning the novels he had chiefly in mind. And the immense contribution that Goethe made to the Sentimental movement in his *Sorrows of Werther* (1774) was in a large measure the indirect result of the writings of Richardson. For while Goethe was more directly affected by Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), Rousseau might never have written his book at all had it not been for the appearance of *Clarissa*. Mr. Birrell remarks, "Without *Clarissa* there would have been no *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and had there been no *Nouvelle Héloïse*, everyone

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of us would have been somewhat different from what we are.”

This remark leads us to dwell lastly on Richardson's influence in France. It is a curious fact that Frenchmen — the exact opposite of Richardson in the respective emphasis they place on Art and Morality — should have been even more profoundly influenced by the puritanical printer than the men and women of his own nation. The influence of Richardson in France has received so adequate treatment by M. Joseph Texte, in his admirable work, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et le cosmopolitisme littéraire*, that it may be discussed here only briefly. M. Texte remarks, “It has been truly said that *Clarissa Harlowe* is to *La Nouvelle Héloïse* what Rousseau's novel is to *Werther*: the three works are inseparably connected, because the bond between them is one of heredity.” In 1742, Desfontaines greeted *Pamela* with delight, pointed out its striking originality in subject and treatment, and declared that it would be a good pattern for French writers. This started a fierce controversy, and M. Texte suggests that it was out of resentment that Desfontaines translated *Joseph Andrews*. But the French public would not listen to Fielding, insisting that he was unworthy to be mentioned in the same breath with his intended victim. On 26 July 1742, Crébillon wrote to Chesterfield,

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“But for *Pamela*, we should not know here what to read or to say.” Sequels, imitations, dramatisations, and parodies appeared in French; Richardson’s waiting maid was the reigning sensation, and continued to enjoy an extraordinary vogue until the appearance of Prévost’s translation of *Clarissa* — curious, indeed, the relations between Richardson and the author of *Manon Lescaut*! *Clarissa* aroused the most intense interest, and it was everywhere mightily cried up. Prévost’s translations were not either accurate or fully complete, for the author of *Manon Lescaut* found the realism of Richardson too uncompromising; he omitted some of the most powerful passages in *Clarissa*, and softened many others. Yet, in spite of this treatment, he regarded his author with reverential admiration.

The death of Richardson was the signal for the wildest eulogies from French critics. As M. Texte says, “Popular enthusiasm rose to frenzy.” In twenty-four hours Diderot composed his famous eulogy, which, among utterances that can only be called rhapsodical, contained much valuable criticism. As an example of his enthusiasm, we may quote: “O Richardson! Richardson! first of men in my eyes, you shall be my reading on all occasions. . . . I will sell my books, but I will keep you: you shall remain on the same shelf with

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Moses, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles; and I will read you by turns." And as an example of his insight: "You may think what you please of the details, but to me they will be interesting, if they be natural, if they display the passions, if they disclose characters. You say they are common, they are what we see every day. You are mistaken; they are what pass before your eyes every day, without being seen by you." And, the emotion aroused by reading him is significantly described by Diderot exactly as we have found it affected the Professor Gellert. "Il m'a laissé une mélancholie, qui me plaît & qui dure."

While all the French people were still talking about *Clarissa*, in 1756 Rousseau began the composition of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Richardson's story had simply inspired him; he said that no novel that had ever been written in any language was comparable to *Clarissa*. Everyone noticed the similarity of the two works, and the source of Rousseau's book — which was also written in letters — was immediately pointed out. In 1761 *La Nouvelle Héloïse* appeared in an English translation, and was read by Richardson during the last year of his life. He heartily disapproved of it, as he would of many other books that sprang from the seed he had sown, had he lived to see them flourish. Fielding, Sterne, Rousseau — an extraordinary

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result of the printer's didactic efforts! Little did he dream that through the works of Rousseau the stream of his influence would continue to widen and deepen until it reached the awful cataract of the French Revolution. For that the quiet, God-fearing, conservative, conventional, law-abiding Richardson was one of the men who helped unconsciously but powerfully to bring about the greatest political upheaval of modern times, is a fact no less extraordinary than true.

Finally, from a great French artist in prose and verse, Richardson's *Clarissa* received the highest of all compliments. For Alfred de Musset called it *le premier roman du monde*.

III

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WEDNESDAY, the twelfth of September 1900, was a beautiful day. The sun shone brilliantly, and the air had quality. Early in the morning we said farewell to Salisbury's tall and crooked spire, and after a lunch at high noon we visited the splendid old Norman Abbey church at Romsey. During the afternoon our bicycles carried us over an excellent road fringed with beautiful trees, and at Hursley we entered the sacred edifice where saintly John Keble held forth the Word of Life. We did homage at his grave in the churchyard, and gazed without emotion at the house of Richard Cromwell. Over the downs we pedalled merrily, and late in the afternoon, under the level rays of the September sun, we entered the ancient capital of England, the cheerful city of Winchester. Deep in the evening we saw the massive grey Cathedral glorified by the moon.

Hampshire rolled into the sunshine again on Thursday morning, and we visited the great Gothic church. The disappointment felt by most pilgrims at the rather forbidding exterior gave place

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to solemn rapture as we stepped within the portal. The vault of the immense nave, the forest of columns, the Norman transepts, all seen through the dim religious light, made one realise that a mediæval cathedral is the symbol of generations of human aspiration. It is a lapidary prayer. We visited the tomb of Joseph Warton, who led the eighteenth-century revolt against Pope Alexander, once thought to be infallible, we saw the grave of the gentle author of the *Compleat Angler*, and then we paused reverently by the last resting-place of Jane Austen. Hither she was borne on 24 July 1817, followed only by members of her family, who loved her for the purity and sweetness of her character.

In the afternoon we sped northward to Steventon, the village made famous by her birth. The town is so small and otherwise insignificant as to have no railway station, and to be forgotten by many mapmakers. It is indeed unknown to most Hampshire farmers, as we shortly discovered; for we dismounted and mounted our wheels many times, with enquiries that proved fruitless. We finally, however, reached the object of our quest. A small, mean, dirty village is Steventon to-day, graced only by beautiful hedgerows. The house where Jane Austen lived has long since disappeared, an instance — if any were needed — of how

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much more transient are the houses built with hands than those created by the imagination. Part of the site is marked by an old pump, which gives little idea of the well of inspiration used by the novelist. The present rectory is on a knoll of turf, commanding a pleasant view, but having little interest for the pilgrim; so we wended our way to the old church, where Jane heard her father preach and pray. In the autumnal twilight we pedalled on to Basingstoke, over a much better road than the Austens saw in their frequent journeys; and the Feathers being "full up," we slept peacefully under the ægis of the Red Lion, who roared as gently as a sucking dove.

Jane Austen was born at Steventon, in the northern part of the county of Hampshire, on 16 December 1775. Her father was the Rev. George Austen, an Oxford man, who had received the neighbouring rectories of Deane and Steventon in 1764, the year of his marriage to Cassandra Leigh. Instead of bringing woe and death in her train, Cassandra brought the parson conjugal bliss and seven children, to one of whom she gave her own name, in defiance of augury. It is not true, as stated in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that Jane was "the youngest of seven children," and the *Dictionary's* further

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statement, that her brother Charles died in 1832, at the age of seventy-three, would place his birth before the marriage of his parents. The *Dictionary* article on Jane Austen is brief, unsympathetic, and inaccurate. The oldest son, James, was born at Deane in 1765. At Oxford he had a high reputation among the undergraduates for his skill in composition and his knowledge of English literature. It is to this young Oxonian that the world owes a debt of gratitude; for on his return to the rectory, his mind full of his favourite books, he took charge of the reading of his two younger sisters, and guided them at their most docile age into the green pastures of literature. Edward was the second son; he was born at Deane in 1768, but at an early age left the family circle, being adopted by his cousin, Thomas Knight, who owned estates at Godmersham Park, Kent, and Chawton in Hampshire. He came into the inheritance in 1794, and in 1812 changed his name to Knight. This adoption was a fortunate thing not only for him, but for the whole family; for after some years he was able to give his widowed mother and sisters a home, and was especially kind and helpful to Jane. The next arrival in the family was the third son, Henry Thomas, born in Deane in 1771. He lived a life of active uselessness. Brilliant, witty, and charming in conversa-

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tion, eternally hopeful and enthusiastic, he went through life with innocent gaiety, and with a constantly increasing sense toward the end that he might have reached distinction had he concentrated his energies. We should not forget, however, that he did help Jane in some details of her business dealings with her publishers, and that she highly valued his criticisms. He died in 1850.

The dearest member of the family to Jane, and the most intimate friend she had in the world, was her sister Cassandra, three years her senior. Two girls of about the same age against five brothers would naturally form an offensive and defensive alliance; and between these two sisters as they grew from childhood into maturity ripened a marvellous friendship, where each took delight in the other's gifts and pleasures. They were all in all to each other; they were never married, and they remained in the diminishing family circle while the brothers struck out into the world. It was to Cassandra that Jane wrote nearly all of the letters that have come down to us; and the very absence of literary style in these documents and their meagreness of information about Jane's literary career is a substantial proof of the intimacy of the two women. It was in Cassandra's arms that Jane died; and how terribly the survivor suffered we shall never know, for she thought it to be her

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duty to control the outward expression of her grief. She was indeed a woman of extraordinary independence and self-reliance, who loved her younger and more impulsive sister with an affection unknown to many more demonstrative individuals. She died in 1845.

The fifth child was Francis, born in 1773. In striking contrast to the serene and tranquil life of his sisters, this resolute and ambitious man lived in the very whirlwind of action. His career affords a striking illustration of the truth that those who seek death do not find it; for he served in the navy during England's most stirring period of warfare on the sea. In the midst of death he found life, for while the other members of the family, all but one of whom dwelt in peace and apparent security, passed away, he rose steadily in the service, and lived to be ninety-two years old. He was a religious man, and was known as "the officer who kneeled at church." Most remarkable of all for a sailor, no one ever heard him swear. His long years of service in the navy were crowned with success, for he rose to the highest rank obtainable, being at the time of his death the Senior Admiral of the Fleet.

The youngest child in the family was Charles, who was born in 1778. He also entered the navy, and frequently smelt gunpowder. He sur-

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vived all the perils of action, however, and rose to be an Admiral. While on a steam-sloop in Eastern waters, he died of cholera in 1852. He was beloved by both officers and sailors, one of whom said, "I know that I cried bitterly when I found he was dead."

Readers of her novels have often wondered why Jane Austen, who lived in wars and rumours of wars, showed apparently so little interest in the momentous events of her time. As a matter of fact she took her part in those world-combats vicariously, and the welfare of her brothers was more interesting to her than the fate of Napoleon. The sea-faring men in her books supply the evidence of her knowledge of the navy, though, true to her primal principle of art, she did not let them escape beyond the boundaries of her personal experience.

Jane Austen has been regarded by many as a prim, prudish old maid, and yet she loved to drink wine and play cards, she loved to dance, and she delighted in the theatre. The very smallness of Steventon brought its inhabitants together in social intercourse; and in a house where a genial father and mother presided over seven children, and where there were often dances and social gatherings several times a week, we need not waste any pity on her desolate and lonely youth.

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She was so fond of society that had she lived in a large city, among brilliant men and women, she might never have written a book. In her four residences, Steventon, Bath, Southampton, and Chawton, she saw many phases of humanity; and had good opportunities for observation, since the main traits in human nature are always the same. We need not regret, therefore, that the geographical limits of her bodily life were so circumscribed. She could have lived in a nutshell, and counted herself a monarch of infinite space, for she had no bad dreams like those of Hamlet. It has been well said that the happiest person is he who thinks the most interesting thoughts; and keen was the enjoyment that this quiet woman got out of life.

As a child she began to scribble, regretting in later life that she had not read more and written less. She composed "The Mystery: an Unfinished Comedy," and dedicated it to her father with mock gravity. Even then she loved burlesque, and she delighted in laughing at the two great schools in literature so prominent in her childhood, the school of impossible romance and the school of absurd sentimentality. She saw clearly the ridiculous side of the sentimental books that followed in the wake of Richardson and Sterne, and the absurdity of the Gothic ro-

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mances that pursued hard upon the *Castle of Otranto*. She did not know then that she was to write an immortal burlesque, wherein both these tendencies were treated with genial contempt; but her attitude of mind did not change as she grew older, and before she was twenty-one, she had begun the composition of one of the greatest novels in all literature, *Pride and Prejudice*. She was surely in the vein; for upon the completion of this work, she immediately began *Sense and Sensibility*, and during her residence in Steventon she also composed *Northanger Abbey*. These three books constitute sufficient proof of the manner in which genius finds its own environment.

Jane Austen had visited Bath before the composition of the last-named work, and thither the whole family moved in the spring of 1801, beginning the century under as different surroundings from the old home as can well be imagined. Steventon was a small village, Bath a city alive with social excitement. Here she was too much occupied in living to do much writing, though it is possible that she began her unfinished story, *The Watsons*, during this period. A visit to Lyme in 1804 gave her unconsciously the material which she afterwards alchemised into the pure gold of *Persuasion*. Her father died in February 1805, at Bath, and the fortunes of the

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family underwent a change for the worse. They were, however, by no means destitute, nor did they ever know the pangs of poverty. Before the end of this year they moved to Southampton, and lived in a comfortable old house in Castle Square. Here they stayed four years.

As her nephew says, neither Bath nor Southampton can be regarded as homes of Jane Austen; "she was only a sojourner in a strange land." In 1809, however, they had the pleasure of once more finding an abiding-place. As has been said, Edward Austen, who became Edward Knight, inherited two residences, one at Godmersham Park, in Kent, the other at Chawton in Hampshire. He now gave his mother the choice of two dwellings, each house being near his property in these two respective counties. Perhaps owing to her long residence in Hampshire, she chose the cottage at Chawton, which stood in the village "about a mile from Alton, on the right-hand side, just where the road to Winchester branches off from that to Gosport. It was so close to the road that the front door opened upon it; while a very narrow enclosure, paled in on each side, protected the building from danger of collision with any runaway vehicle. . . . It had been originally built for an inn, for which purpose it was certainly well situated. . . . Trees were

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planted each side to form a shrubbery walk, carried round the enclosure, which gave a sufficient space for ladies' exercise. There was a pleasant irregular mixture of hedgerow and gravel walk and orchard, and long grass for mowing, arising from two or three little enclosures having been thrown together. The house itself was quite as good as the generality of parsonage houses then were, and much in the same style; and was capable of receiving other members of the family as frequent visitors. It was sufficiently well furnished; everything inside and out was kept in good repair, and it was altogether a comfortable and ladylike establishment, though the means which supported it were not large."

In this unpretentious cottage, with no separate study, but writing in the family sitting-room amidst the general conversation, Jane Austen not only arranged for the press her three earlier novels, but composed three masterpieces, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. She had the pleasant excitement of the publication of her books, of reading them aloud to the family in manuscript, of receiving and examining bundles of proof, of actually handling money earned by her pen, and of observing the faint dawn of her reputation. This made her peaceful environment more than interesting, and we may be sure that

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the days passed swiftly. Up to this time her sole reward for her labour had been the glow of composition and the satisfaction of knowing that she had done good work; the harvest was late, but she now began to reap it. Unfortunately the time was short. It is one of the apparent perversities of the stupidity of Destiny, that the only member of the family who possessed genius should have died so young. Jane Austen is the kind of person who ought to live forever.

In the spring of the year 1816 her health began to fail. This is said to have been caused by worry over some family misfortunes; but may it not have been owing to the consuming flame of genius? It is impossible that she could have written such masterpieces without feeling that virtue had gone out of her. The joy of artistic creation is probably one of the greatest joys known to the sons and daughters of men; but the bodily frame pays dearly for it, and the toil of making a good book surpasses in intensity of labour almost all other forms of human exertion. Whatever was the cause, the fact was that her life began to decay at precisely the time when her mind began to reach its greatest brilliancy. Her cheerful letters showed faint signs of an impending disaster. She wrote to her brother Charles, "I live upstairs for the present, and am coddled. I

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am the only one of the party who has been so silly, but a weak body must excuse weak nerves." The malady began to gain ground, and she had to walk shorter distances, and then cease walking altogether. Soon she was obliged to lie down a good part of the day, when she wished ardently to be at work; and there being only one sofa in the general sitting-room she refused to use it except in the absence of her mother, who had passed seventy years. She tried to persuade her friends that she was getting well. In January 1817, she wrote, "I have certainly gained strength through the winter, and am not far from being well; and I think I understand my own case now so much better than I did, as to be able by care to keep off any serious return of illness." It was not to be. The last date found on her manuscript is the seventeenth of March 1817. Her nephew says, "And here I cannot do better than quote the words of the niece to whose private records of her aunt's life and character I have been so often indebted: 'I do not know how early the alarming symptoms of her malady came on. It was in the following March that I had the first idea of her being seriously ill. It had been settled that about the end of that month or the beginning of April I should spend a few days at Chawton, in the absence of my father and mother, who were just then en-

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gaged with Mrs. Leigh Perrot in arranging her late husband's affairs; but Aunt Jane became too ill to have me in the house, and so I went instead to my sister Mrs. Lefroy at Wyards'. The next day we walked over to Chawton to make inquiries after our aunt. She was then keeping her room, but said she would see us, and we went up to her. She was in her dressing-gown, and was sitting quite like an invalid in an arm-chair, but she got up and kindly greeted us, and then, pointing to seats which had been arranged for us by the fire, she said, "There is a chair for the married lady, and a little stool for you, Caroline." It is strange, but those trifling words were the last of hers that I can remember, for I retain no recollection of what was said by anyone in the conversation that ensued. I was struck by the alteration in herself. She was very pale, her voice was weak and low, and there was about her a general appearance of debility and suffering; but I have been told that she never had much acute pain. She was not equal to the exertion of talking to us, and our visit to the sick-room was a very short one, Aunt Cassandra soon taking us away. I do not suppose we stayed a quarter of an hour; and I never saw Aunt Jane again.'"

In the month of May 1817, the family decided that she must be taken to Winchester, in order to

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get the benefit of daily skilled medical advice. Thither she went with the faithful Cassandra, and the two sisters took lodgings in a pleasant house on College Street, near the great cathedral. From these rooms she wrote in a trembling and uncertain hand the following letter, in which she tried to give a playful tone to her illness. The letter bears date of the 27 May.

“There is no better way, my dearest E., of thanking you for your affectionate concern for me during my illness than by telling you myself, as soon as possible, that I continue to get better. I will not boast of my handwriting; neither that nor my face have yet recovered their proper beauty, but in other respects I gain strength very fast. I am now out of bed from nine in the morning to ten at night: upon the sofa it is true, but I eat my meals with Aunt Cassandra in a rational way, and can employ myself, and walk from one room to another. Mr. Lyford says he will cure me, and if he fails, I shall draw up a memorial and lay it before the Dean and Chapter, and have no doubt of redress from that pious, learned, and disinterested body. Our lodgings are very comfortable. We have a neat little drawing-room with a bow window overlooking Dr. Gabell’s garden. Thanks to the kindness of your father and mother in sending me their

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carriage, my journey hither on Saturday was performed with very little fatigue, and had it been a fine day, I think I should have felt none; but it distressed me to see Uncle Henry and Wm. Knight, who kindly attended us on horseback, riding in the rain almost the whole way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night; and on Thursday, which is a confirmation and a holiday, we are to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit from him, poor fellow, as he is in sick-room, but he hopes to be out to-night. We see Mrs. Heathcote every day, and William is to call upon us soon. God bless you, my dear E. If ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. May the same blessed alleviations of anxious, sympathising friends be yours: and may you possess, as I dare say you will, the greatest blessing of all in the consciousness of not being unworthy of their love. I could not feel this.

“Your very affect^{te} Aunt,
“J. A.”

She added later: “I will only say further that my dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse, has not been made ill by her exertions. As to what I owe her, and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occa-

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sion, I can only cry over it, and pray God to bless them more and more."

Thus, with only temporary alleviations, she grew gradually weaker, and died on the morning of 18 July 1817. Shortly before she became unconscious, she was asked if there were anything she wished. She replied, "Nothing but death."

What are the qualities that place the novels of Jane Austen so far above those of all her contemporaries except Scott, and that class her so distinctly above a writer like Charlotte Brontë?

That much-abused phrase, "Art for art's sake," so often heard in the mouths of hypocritical and unclean authors, is strictly applicable to the aims and ideals of Jane Austen. She is one of the supreme literary artists of the world, like the Russian Turgenev. She made no compromises, and never wrote a line to please anybody but herself. That is precisely why she pleases all readers of taste and intelligence. Coming before the days when the advertising of new novels had become as purely a commercial enterprise as the exploitation of breakfast foods, she knew nothing of the ways of publishers, nor did she understand how it was possible for an author to write for the market. Far from the madding crowd

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she wrought her books in the peaceful tranquillity of an affectionate family circle, and she refused to search for material either in huge libraries or in remote corners of the earth. Many novelists of to-day work up a new story exactly as a haggard student prepares a doctor's thesis, by collecting an immense amount of historical fact. Jane Austen never worked up material, for she found it all on the sensitive plates of her own delicate mind. There are those who think the flawless perfection of her books was a kind of accident; that she wrote them without in the least realising the magnitude of her success. That she did not anticipate the prodigious fame that her novels have won in the twentieth century is probably true; but that a woman of so consummate genius and good sense did not know that she had done truly great work is simply impossible. She knew exactly what she was about; she understood her powers and in exactly what field of art they could find full play. To a man high in station who suggested that she portray "the habits of life, and character, and enthusiasm of a clergyman who should pass his time between the metropolis and the country," she replied, "I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of Nov. 16th. But I assure you I am not. The comic part of

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the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science, and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who, like me, knows only her own mother tongue, and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress." Not discouraged by this, as he should have been, her fatuous correspondent proposed that she write "an historical romance illustrative of the august House of Cobourg" — (what a pity that Anthony Hope was unborn!) to which happy suggestion he received the following reply from the author of *Northanger Abbey*, dated 1 April 1816:

"You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of

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profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other."

In another connection she described her work as follows: "The little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour." The very last word to describe the perfection of her art would be the word *accident*.

Not only did she write without any pretence to knowledge and experience unpossessed, but she worked with faithful devotion through years of obscurity. She began the composition of her famous novels in 1796; it was not until 1811 that any of her work found a publisher. If this be not "art for art's sake," one must despair of finding it anywhere.

Not only is the structure of her stories superb in outline, not only is her style so perfect that it

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seems to the unskilful no style at all, but her characters have an amazing vitality. Not a single one of them passes through an extraordinary adventure; hence we are interested in them not for what they do and suffer, but wholly for what they are. No persons in the whole realm of fiction are more alive than Elizabeth Bennet, or the adorable heroine of *Persuasion*. To read Jane Austen's books is to add to our circle of acquaintances men and women whom it is most desirable to know, and whose presence in our mental world adds to the pleasure of life. They are so real that the mere mention of their names brings a clear image of their faces before our consciousness, along with a glow of reminiscent delight.

Her books are truly great, then, because they have in them what Mrs. Browning called the "principle of life." Their apparently simple and transparently clear style contains treasures inexhaustible; for no one reads any of her stories only once. With every fresh reading comes the old pleasure, heightened in intensity; to read her novels is simply to live, to live in a world of steadily increasing interest and charm. It would be possible to give in detail a critical estimation of the value of her books; to dwell on the elements in her English style, to examine minutely the construction of her plots, and to analyse microscop-

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ically her *dramatis personæ*. But it is needless; the reason why Jane Austen has outlived thousands of novelists who have been greeted with wild acclaim, is simply because she succeeded in producing to a marvellous degree the *illusion* that is the essence of great Art, the pleasing illusion that we are gazing not on the image, but on the reality.

Her fame was slow in growth, but no slower than might have been expected, and we should not blame previous generations for not seeing instantly what we have the advantage of seeing with a proper background. She lived only six years after the publication of her first book; and during that brief time she enjoyed fully as much reputation as could reasonably have been anticipated. Some of her novels went almost immediately into second editions; and her pleasure at praise from good sources was like all her emotions, genuine, frank, and unashamed. She was glad to have her books widely read and appreciated, as any sensible person would be; and her delight in receiving a sum of money from the publisher — the tangible mark of success — was charming in its unaffected demonstration. Those worthy writers who receive a semi-annual copyright statement of two dollars and seventy-five cents for their learned productions can perhaps understand her enthusiasm.

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She has never lacked discriminating admirers. The *Quarterly Review* for October 1815, contained an article on *Emma*, from the pen of Walter Scott; *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were reviewed in the same periodical for January 1821, by Archbishop Whately. The latter writer compared her to Shakespeare — we cannot ask more than that. Walter Scott said in his diary, 14 March 1826: “Read again, for the third time at least, Miss Austen’s finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!” Trevelyan, in his *Life of Macaulay*, says, “But, amidst the infinite variety of lighter literature with which he beguiled his leisure, *Pride and Prejudice*, and the five sister novels, remained without a rival in his affections. He never for a moment wavered in his allegiance to Miss Austen. In 1858 he notes in his journal: ‘If I could get materials, I really would write a short life of that wonderful woman, and raise a little

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money to put up a monument to her in Winchester Cathedral.'” After the publication of the *Memoir* by her nephew in 1870, which came at the psychological moment, the books and articles on Jane Austen began to bloom in every direction. About 1890, what was called a “revival” took place; it was really nothing but the cumulative growth of her fame. Many new editions appeared; and an instance of how she was regarded as a master of style may be seen in the fact that for some years every Harvard Freshman was required to read one of her books for rhetorical purposes. She has had sufficient vitality to survive even such treatment.

Sense and Sensibility was the first of the novels to be honoured by publication. It appeared in 1811. It may be considered as her first work, for she had written a draft called *Elinor and Marianne*, which is undoubtedly the first form of the later novel. This was made originally in Letters; an interesting fact, because it affords unmistakable evidence of her debt to Richardson. She learned more of the art of writing from Richardson than from any other master; it is said that she could repeat pages of *Sir Charles Grandison* by heart. There is no doubt that Richardson’s power of analysis, and his uncompromising realism, made a profound impression on her mind. She

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had too keen a sense of humour not to perceive his errors; but she remained all her life long an ardent admirer of his genius. After the family had removed to Chawton, Jane Austen revised and prepared for publication her earlier works; and we shall never know how far the press copy differed from the manuscript she had written at Steventon in her girlhood. Her nephew tells us that *Sense and Sensibility* was begun at Steventon in November 1797, immediately after the completion of *Pride and Prejudice*; even thus early she had rejected the epistolary form and had composed it on its present plan. Then the work remained in manuscript until 1811, as the rejection of *Pride and Prejudice*, and the unwillingness of the Bath publisher to risk his money on *Northanger Abbey* — both of which works she must have thought superior to *Sense and Sensibility* — did not give her sufficient courage to make further overtures. During the spring of 1811, however, Jane Austen was in London, and with the assistance of her brother, the publication of her first novel became an assured fact. It is, of course, possible that it was printed at its author's expense, though we do not know. With what affection she regarded the children of her brain may be seen in a letter she wrote from London to her sister Cassandra, 25 April 1811. "No, indeed, I am never

too busy to think of S. and S. I can no more forget it than a mother can forget her sucking child; and I am much obliged to you for your enquiries. I have had two sheets to correct, but the last only brings us to Willoughby's first appearance. Mrs. K. regrets in the most flattering manner that she must wait *till* May, but I have scarcely a hope of its being out in June. Henry does not neglect it; he *has* hurried the printer, and says he will see him again to-day. It will not stand still during his absence, it will be sent to Eliza." Then follows in the same letter a passage which seems to indicate that Cassandra had thought the incomes of the characters in the novel needed re-adjustment. "The *incomes* remain as they were, but I will get them altered if I can. I am very much gratified by Mrs. K.'s interest in it; . . . I think she will like my Elinor; but cannot build on anything else." In this same anxious period of suspense, another novel had appeared, which had awakened great interest and considerable alarm in the breast of the modest author of *Sense and Sensibility*, for she writes, "We have tried to get 'Self-Control,' but in vain. I *should* like to know what her estimate is, but am always half afraid of finding a clever novel too clever, and of finding my own story and my own people all forestalled."

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She was delighted to receive from the publisher, Mr. Egerton, one hundred and fifty pounds! The book, therefore, was moderately successful, and its author had in her hands the visible proof thereof. She made no scruple whatever of showing her pleasure at the receipt of money earned in this manner; and we can easily understand her feelings, after she had waited so many years to see her writings in print. Writing in 1814 about *Mansfield Park*, she said, "People are more ready to borrow and praise than to buy, which I cannot wonder at; but though I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls 'Pewter,' too."

Sense and Sensibility is on the whole the poorest of Jane Austen's completed novels. The contrast between the two sisters is of course interesting; but they are less individual than the persons in the other tales. The very fact that Elinor stands for Sense and Marianne for Sensibility militates against the complexity of their personalities; and the three leading men are less satisfactory than her other heroes. The book is the least original of all her works; and in places sounds as if it were written under the shadow of Richardson's influence. There is of course the same contrast between first impressions and the final reality that appears elsewhere; there is the same endeavour to show that those who

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have the most ease of manner are not necessarily of the most solid worth. There is in addition the touch of burlesque in the character of Marianne, where Jane Austen is laughing at the sentimentalists; but while all these characteristics are typical of her art, they appear with less subtlety than in the other novels, indeed one might say there is now and then a suggestion of crudity. Edward Ferrars is spineless, Willoughby is a stage villain, and Colonel Brandon is depressing. On the whole, if we had to part with any one of Jane Austen's works, I imagine that *Sense and Sensibility* is the one that we should most willingly let die.

Pride and Prejudice has a curious history. She began its composition before she was twenty-one years old, in October 1796, and finished it in less than a year, during the month of August 1797. Her father — who unfortunately did not live to see a line of his daughter's in print — was so captivated by this story that he immediately set about finding a publisher. On the first of November 1797, he wrote the following letter to Cadell:

“SIR, — I have in my possession a manuscript novel, comprising 3 vols., about the length of Miss Burney's ‘Evelina.’ As I am well aware of what consequence it is that a work of this sort sh^d make its first appearance under a respectable name, I apply to you. I shall be much obliged therefore if you will inform me whether you choose

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to be concerned in it, what will be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk, and what you will venture to advance for the property of it, if on perusal it is approved of. Should you give any encouragement, I will send you the work."

The father's suspense was of short duration, for the next post brought a summary declination. The publisher did not even care to look at the manuscript, or to consider the question of printing it at the author's expense, probably thinking, as someone has suggested, that it was a feeble imitation of Miss Burney. Here indeed was a case of pride and prejudice. Paternal pride and publisher's prejudice kept this work in manuscript until 1813. It is fortunate that the young girl knew the value of her work, and preserved it — for we have instances in literature where proud and angry authors have committed literary infanticide. In January 1813 this novel — which had been originally christened "First Impressions" — was published at London by Egerton, in three small volumes, printed in large, heavy type. On the title-pages of *Sense and Sensibility* ran the legend, "By a Lady" — for Jane Austen would not permit her name to appear with any of her publications; it was perhaps thought inconsistent with feminine modesty. The title-pages of the second work are as follows: "PRIDE

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AND PREJUDICE: A Novel. In Three Volumes. By the Author of 'Sense and Sensibility.' London: Printed for T. Egerton, Military Library, Whitehall, 1813." On 29 January she wrote to her sister: "I want to tell you that I have got my own darling child from London. On Wednesday I received one copy sent down by Falkener, with three lines from Henry to say that he had given another to Charles, and sent a third by the coach to Godmersham. . . . Mrs. B. dined with us on the very day of the book's coming; and in the evening we fairly set at it, and read half the first volume to her, prefacing that having intelligence from Henry that such a work would soon appear, we had desired him to send it whenever it came out, and I believe it passed with her unsuspected. She was amused, poor soul! *That* she could not help, you know, with two such people to lead the way; but she really does seem to admire Elizabeth. I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print; and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know. There are a few typical errors; and a 'said he,' or a 'said she,' would sometimes make the dialogue more immediately clear; but 'I do not write for such dull elves' as have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves. The second volume

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is shorter than I could wish; but the difference is not so much in reality as in look, there being a larger proportion of narrative in that part. I have lop't and crop't so successfully, however, that I imagine it must be rather shorter than *Sense and Sensibility* altogether." The second volume contained 239 pages, while the first had 307, and the last 323, which accounts for her fears about the shortness of the middle one. The fact that she speaks of her condensation is absolute proof that the novel as it was published is by no means the same in style as that written in her girlhood. It was undoubtedly thoroughly revised. She wrote shortly after, "I am quite vain enough and well satisfied enough. The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling. It wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn, specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story. . . . Her liking Darcy and Elizabeth is enough. She might hate all the others, if she would." This letter is interesting, as showing how perfectly she understood her art, and how she refused to tolerate long didactic disquisitions in the middle of a story. It is pleasant to observe, also, that she fully realised what a charming girl Elizabeth Bennet was.

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Pride and Prejudice was a successful novel, for it went into a second edition the same year. We can fix the date of the second edition with even more exactitude, for she had written a letter to Cassandra on the 3d of November 1813; then, on the 6th of the same month she writes: "Since I wrote last, my 2nd edit. has stared me in the face. Mary tells me that Eliza means to buy it. I wish she may. . . . I cannot help hoping that many will feel themselves obliged to buy it. I shall not mind imagining it a disagreeable duty to them, so as they do it. Mary heard before she left home that it was very much admired at Cheltenham." I have a beautiful copy of this second edition in three neat volumes before me as I write. One winter day in 1904, as I was prowling around old book-shops in Munich, I had the rare fortune to find these three volumes tucked away among various curiosities in various languages. I enquired the price — it was one mark the volume, seventy-five cents for the whole work!

Pride and Prejudice is Miss Austen's masterpiece, and one of the few great novels of the world. Its literary style is not perhaps equal in finish to that shown in *Mansfield Park* or *Persuasion*; but Elizabeth Bennet is her author's greatest creation, and of all the delightful characters in

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her works, Elizabeth is the one we should most like to meet. She has the double charm of girlhood and womanhood; and to know her is indeed a liberal education. She has no particular accomplishments, and is second to one of her sisters in beauty; it is her personality that counts with us, as it did with her proud lover. Mr. Darcy, in spite of his stiffness and *hauteur*, is a real man, an enormous improvement on Colonel Brandon. He exhibits the exact difference between pride and conceit that Miss Austen wished to portray. The whole Bennet family are impossible to forget, in their likeness and in their individuality; and there is so astonishing a sense of reality in the characters and action of this work, that when Elizabeth hurries into the breakfast-room of her critics "with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with warmth of exercise," no corporeal appearance could be more vivid to our eyes, and we actually tremble for the impression her dirty stockings and petticoat will make on the fastidious folk around the table. Jane Austen is fully as conscientious an artist and fully as courageous and firm in her realism as was Flaubert; and she is greater than the author of *Madame Bovary*, for she arouses even more intense interest without using physical stimulants to awaken it.

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Miss Austen's nephew tells us that *Northanger Abbey* was composed in 1798, when its author was only twenty-two. It was during the sojourn of the family in Bath that the book was prepared for publication. It seemed at first to have a better chance to appear in type than *Pride and Prejudice*; for in 1803 it was actually sold to a Bath publishing house, for a consideration of ten pounds. The publisher either did not have time to examine it, or after examination he repented of his bargain; for he laid it away in a drawer, where it remained undisturbed for years. It was not published until after its author had ceased to live, finally appearing with *Persuasion* and a brief Memoir — four volumes all together — in 1818. The family neatly revenged themselves on this publisher's delay; for years later, when they were living at Chawton, the same publisher, Mr. Bull, was offered his ten pounds back for the surrender of the manuscript, which proposition he accepted with surprise and pleasure. After the precious papers were received, he was informed that the dust-covered pages were written by the author of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*!

Northanger Abbey bears the marks of youth. It is a burlesque, and has the virtues and defects of that species. As an example of what Jane

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thought of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and of the whole school of blood and thunder, it is highly important; it contains also many remarks on novels and novel-reading which are valuable as showing how Jane Austen regarded her art. But it is not equal to such a work as *Mansfield Park*; it lacks variety and subtlety. The narration of the heroine's finding the washing-bill in the old Abbey is pure fun, youthful mirth, and the description of the face and figure of the young girl is no more nor less than satire on the popular heroines of the day. Historically, however, the book is of the deepest significance; for it marks a turning-point in the history of the English novel, and it tells us more of its author's personal views than all the rest of her tales put together. It is more subjective; in the fifth chapter there is an almost passionate defence of the novel against its detractors, who regarded such writing as merely superficial and lacking in serious artistic purpose; while in the sixth chapter, *Sir Charles Grandison* is favourably compared with the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe and her ilk. Such a work, written in the very bloom of youth, is conclusive evidence of the self-conscious purpose of its author; it proves that she knew exactly what she wanted; that her purpose in art was definite, and unalterable. In *Northanger Abbey* she showed how novels

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ought not to be written; her other books are illustrations of what she conceived to be the true theory.

Visitors to Bath have always loved this story, as it deals with places that shine bright in the memory; she returned to these familiar scenes in *Persuasion*, a far greater work, and it was fitting that her two Bath guide-books should have appeared together. Miss Austen had been at least twice in this gay city before the family moved thither; which gave her the necessary experience, and proves that here, as elsewhere, she kept within the limits of her actual knowledge.

Of *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*, little need be said, and it is probable that Jane Austen would have forbidden their publication. They appeared together with the second edition of Mr. Austen-Leigh's *Memoir*, in 1871. No one knows exactly when they were written; the fact that *Lady Susan* is in the form of letters, as was the first draft of *Sense and Sensibility*, seems to set the date of its composition before that of *Pride and Prejudice*, at the very beginning of her career. This opinion is shared by Mr. Oscar Fay Adams, whose *Story of Jane Austen's Life* is a model of its kind. *Lady Susan* has flashes of great brilliance, but really adds little to its writer's fame. She was evidently

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dissatisfied with it, for she left it in her portfolio; it is the raw material of literature, rather than the finished product.

The date of the composition of the unfinished fragment, *The Watsons*, can be guessed with more evidence. The water-marks of the years 1803 and 1804 were found on the manuscript, after a careful examination; this makes it of course certain that it was not composed before those dates, but leaves us in the dark as to its exact time. The most probable supposition seems to be that she worked at it while living in Bath, but subsequently lost interest, and was content to leave it in obscurity. It contains some thoroughly mature characterisation, together with some fine strokes of style; but it wholly lacks the peculiar brightness of such a book as *Pride and Prejudice*.

We come now to the three great novels whose inception and composition seem to date wholly after the year 1809, when the family moved to Chawton Cottage. *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814. On 5 March of that year, writing a letter to Cassandra, in which she states without comment that she has read the *Corsair*, she remarks, "Henry has this moment said that he likes my M. P. better and better; he is in the third volume. I believe *now* he has changed his

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mind as to foreseeing the end; he said yesterday, at least, that he defied anybody to say whether H. C. [Henry Crawford] would be reformed, or would forget Fanny in a fortnight." On the ninth of March she writes again: "Henry has finished Mansfield Park, and his approbation has not lessened. He found the last half of the last volume *extremely interesting*." Later, on 13 June: "Mr. Cooke says 'it is the most sensible novel he ever read,' and the manner in which I treat the clergy delights them very much." The book, it is pleasant to note, had an immediate success; for writing to her niece Fanny on 18 November of the same year, she says: "You will be glad to hear that the first edition of M. P. is all sold. Your uncle Henry is rather wanting me to come to town to settle about a second edition, but as I could not very conveniently leave home now, I have written him my will and pleasure, and unless he still urges it, shall not go. I am very greedy and want to make the most of it, but as you are much above caring about money I shall not plague you with any particulars. The pleasures of vanity are more within your comprehension, and you will enter into mine at receiving the *praise* which every now and then comes to me through some channel or other." To the same niece on 30 November: "Thank you, but it is

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not settled yet whether I do hazard a second edition. We are to see Egerton to-day, when it will probably be determined." The second edition actually appeared in 1816.

Next to *Pride and Prejudice*, this novel is perhaps Jane Austen's greatest work. It contains an immense variety of characters, none of whom is badly drawn. Fanny Price, Henry Crawford and his brilliant sister, Mrs. Norris, Sir Thomas Bertram, his wife, and sons and daughters, Fanny's father, mother, and family, the Rev. Dr. Grant and his wife, Mr. Rushworth, — these are all strikingly individual. Fanny is in some respects the loveliest of Miss Austen's heroines, and we suffer with her silent love, as she lets concealment, like a worm i' the bud, prey on her damask cheek. The contrasts in characters and scenes in this narrative are truly dramatic. As someone has said, even Zola has not excelled the picture of sordid misery presented in the Price *ménage*, made positively terrible to Fanny by the remembrance of the luxury she had quitted. Henry Crawford comes dangerously near being a hero of romance, and it must be admitted that Miss Austen could not draw men as she sketched women. He is, however, far more real than the Willoughby of *Sense and Sensibility*, and his fascination for certain kinds of women is perfectly comprehensible,

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just as we easily understand why his sister outshone for a time the less conspicuous charm of Fanny. Edmund, like all of Jane Austen's good men, is inclined to be priggish; but he is not lacking in reality. Dr. Grant was probably known only too well at the Steventon parsonage; but after all, while somewhat selfish, and decidedly gluttonous, he is not made contemptible. Mrs. Norris is one of the best drawn characters in the story; she is indeed so offensively real, that she gets on a reader's nerves, and we realise how formidable she must have been to a creature like Fanny. Sin and disgrace enter into this powerful novel more than into any other of Miss Austen's works; but it is the character of the sinner, and not the details of the sin, that the author analyses. She was interested not in the sensations of sin, but wholly in the processes of mind that lead up to it; being a true psychologist. Of all Miss Austen's masterpieces, *Mansfield Park* is the richest in its display of artistic resources.

Emma, bearing on its three title-pages the date 1816, had been advertised to appear in the preceding December. Since the publication of *Mansfield Park*, early in 1814, Miss Austen steadily worked on this story, and was far advanced with it by the spring of 1815. The dedication of *Emma*

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and the circumstances that led to it are interesting, and prove, that although the author's name never appeared with her books, her identity was fairly well known. During the autumn of 1815 her brother Henry fell seriously ill, and Jane went to London to take care of him. One of the Prince Regent's physicians was in constant attendance, and he knew that the quiet woman who seemed anxious only for her brother's recovery was the great novelist. He gave her deep pleasure by the information that the Prince was an assiduous reader of her books; that a full set reposed in every one of the royal residences; that the Prince had been informed that Miss Austen was in London, etc., etc. His Royal Highness immediately requested Mr. Clarke, the librarian of Carlton House, not only to invite the lady to visit the palace and view the Prince's library and other rooms, but to inform her that if she were writing another novel, she might dedicate it to him. The following correspondence immediately took place —

“Nov. 15, 1815.

“SIR, — I must take the liberty of asking you a question. Among the many flattering attentions which I received from you at Carlton House on Monday last was the information of my being at liberty to dedicate any future work to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, without the necessity of any solicitation on my part. Such, at least, I believed to be your words; but as I am very anxious to be

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quite certain of what was intended, I entreat you to have the goodness to inform me how such a permission is to be understood, and whether it is incumbent on me to show my sense of the honour by inscribing the work now in the press to His Royal Highness; I should be equally concerned to appear either presumptuous or ungrateful."

To which communication she received the following reply :

"CARLTON HOUSE, Nov. 16, 1815.

"DEAR MADAM, — It is certainly not *incumbent* on you to dedicate your work now in the press to His Royal Highness; but if you wish to do the Regent that honour either now or at any future period I am happy to send you that permission, which need not require any more trouble or solicitation on your part."

Mr. Clarke added that every novel she wrote increased his opinion of her powers, and that *Mansfield Park* had reflected the highest honour on her genius and her principles.

Shortly after, in response to another letter from the royal librarian, she wrote in the following interesting vein :

"Dec. 11.

"DEAR SIR, — My *Emma* is now so near publication that I feel it right to assure you of my not having forgotten your kind recommendation of an early copy for Carlton House, and that I have Mr. Murray's promise of its being sent to His Royal Highness, under cover to you, three days previous to the work being really out. I must make use of this opportunity to thank you, dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other novels. I am too vain to

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wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their merits. My greatest anxiety at present is that this fourth work should not disgrace what was good in the others. But on this point I will do myself the justice to declare that, whatever may be my wishes for its success, I am strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred *Pride and Prejudice* it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred *Mansfield Park* inferior in good sense."

Emma is unique among Jane Austen's works in that the reader's attention is almost entirely concentrated upon one character. In this respect it differs most widely of all from *Mansfield Park*, where the interest is more generally diffused than in any other of her stories. She felt deep misgivings as to the popular and critical reception of *Emma*, as the letter printed immediately above sufficiently shows; but while, for one reason or another, the majority of her admirers do actually prefer both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* to this later production, she need have felt no fear that its publication would lower her reputation. On the contrary, there are many who place *Emma* first in the list of the author's novels. This "sturdy young patrician," as somebody has called her, is at least refreshingly assertive and self-reliant, most of all when she is in the wrong, thereby differing from Fanny Price, who hardly dared call her soul her own. What a powerful

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contrast between this heroine and the one whom she followed into the world, and what an illustration of creative power to make both girls so remarkably attractive! Emma has more actual faults than any other of Miss Austen's persons who are intended to gain the reader's sympathy. She is something of a snob, understands perfectly the privileges of her social rank, and means to have others understand them as well. She thinks she understands human nature, and delights to act in the rôle of match-maker, in which capacity she is a failure. Best of all, she is ignorant of her own heart, as the most charming heroines in fiction are wont to be. She does not realise that she loves Knightley until the spark of jealousy sets her soul aflame. The curious thing is, that before we finish the book we actually like her all the better for her faults, and for her numerous mistakes; her heart is pure, sound, and good, and her sense of principle is as deeply rooted as the Rock of Gibraltar. She is, however, a snob; and this is the only instance in fiction that I can remember at this moment where a snob is not only attractive, but lovable.

The plot of the story, that which critics used to call the "fable," is not so well ordered or so convincing as in *Mansfield Park*. It by no means gives the sense of the inevitable that we feel in

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reading *Pride and Prejudice*. The suspicion crosses our mind at times that the author is about to arrange a surprise for us, though we do not know what it is to be. We are dazzled at the skill, brilliancy, and cleverness displayed, and we admire the genius which is so constantly in evidence; but in some of the other stories we have no thought of admiring skill or genius, for we feel that it is not art, but life. In other words, the dramatic illusion is not so perfect in *Emma*; the novel is simply a wonderful *tour de force*.

Emma was the last production that Jane Austen saw in type, for her life was drawing to a close. How active her pen was in these last days may be seen by the fact that while she was revising the proof-sheets of *Emma* she was busily engaged on a new book. As early as 13 March 1816, she writes to her niece Fanny, "I will answer your kind questions more than you expect. *Miss Catherine* is put upon the shelf for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out; but I have a something ready for publication, which may, perhaps, appear about a twelvemonth hence. It is short — about the length of *Catherine*. This is for yourself alone. Neither Mr. Salusbury nor Mr. Wildman is to know of it." Mr. Oscar Fay Adams says: "Mr. Austen-Leigh in his biography makes no mention of *Catherine*; and I

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am not aware that this reference to it appears to have been noticed by any writer upon Jane Austen. Its author probably never subjected it to revision, from the feeling that it was not up to the level of her other work, and took care that it should not be published. . . . I am led to wish that this and not *Lady Susan* had fallen into her nephew's hands." Is not the explanation of the *Catherine* mystery really a very simple one? It has occurred to me only this moment at my desk, but it seems convincing. The reference must be to *Northanger Abbey*, whose heroine is Catherine. It is certain that Jane Austen thought of publishing this book before her death, and certain also that she did not. The novel also is short, "about the length" of *Persuasion*. This covers every difficulty, including the supposed total disappearance of another book.

On 28 March she writes to the same correspondent: "Do not be surprised at finding Uncle Henry acquainted with my having another ready for publication. I could not say No when he asked me, but he knows nothing more of it. You will not like it, so you need not be impatient. You may perhaps like the heroine, as she is almost too good for me." She had already remarked in the same letter, "Pictures of perfection, as you know, make me sick and wicked," a statement

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that throws a flood of light on the creation of such characters as *Emma*, and indeed on her whole method of composition.

She finished *Persuasion* in August 1816, in the form in which we have it now; but she thought she had finished the book on the 18 July, for she wrote at the end of the manuscript, "Finis," and then added that date. The more she thought about the conclusion, however, the less she liked it; and in spite of failing health, she determined to have nothing published of which she could not approve. She therefore struck out Chapter X, and wrote in its place two others, which bring about the *dénouement* in a totally different fashion. Curious readers may compare the condemned chapter, which appears in Mr. Austen-Leigh's *Memoir*, with the book as it stands; and they will see that the flame of genius burned brightly to the last, for the substitution is a marked improvement on the first version. It affords, also, as has been said, an illustration of her conscientious devotion to her art.

She probably spent the rest of the year 1816 in revising and correcting the whole work; and on 27 January she began the composition of a story, which she wrote at steadily, completing twelve chapters, under enormous difficulties of disease, by 17 March, when she was forced to lay

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aside all thoughts of book-making. No title was ever given to this narrative, nor does anyone know what course the plot was to follow; but we are assured by her nephew that in the draft which remains there is no evidence of failing strength.

Persuasion was not published until 1818, when, as has been said, it appeared with *Northanger Abbey* and a *Memoir*, in four volumes. It thus has a melancholy interest for us, as being the last work of art that she completed. It is one of the miniature masterpieces in the English language, and its scenes at Bath and at Lyme are indelibly impressed on the reader's mind. The character of Anne Elliott, while completely lacking the self-assertion of Emma, was, we may be sure, a pretty close approximation to what Jane Austen thought a woman should be. There is no moral teaching in this book, any more than in her other works of fiction, but the ethical element is strong, and the virtues of constancy, purity, and modesty stand out in bold relief. In some respects Anne Elliott is the most spiritual of all Miss Austen's heroines; she has a great soul, and we do not wonder that Captain Wentworth found it difficult to forget her. In her gentleness, purity, and sweetness she reminds us of the best of all Russian heroines, Turgenev's Lisa; and like Lisa, when she gave her heart, she gave it once and for all.

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Let no one believe that Jane Austen's men and women are deficient in passion because they behave with decency: to those who have the power to see and interpret, there is a depth of passion in her characters that far surpasses the emotional power displayed in many novels where the lovers seem to forget the meaning of such words as honour, virtue, and fidelity. To say that Elizabeth Bennet, Darcy, Knightley, Captain Wentworth, Fanny Price, and Anne Elliott lack passion, because we know that not one of them would have sacrificed a principle for its enjoyment, is to make the old error of assuming that only those persons have passions who are unable to control them.

IV

DICKENS

ON the last page of one of Mr. Arnold Bennett's realistic romances, two men are discussing the character of the hero, and, as might be expected, from totally different points of view. His jealous enemy petulantly enquires: "What has he ever done? He never did a day's work in his life." To which the other responds, "He is engaged in the great work of cheering us all up."

Such work in the world is needed, and is in truth of enormous importance. When it is successfully accomplished, its reward should be correspondingly great; when a supreme genius devotes all his powers throughout his entire career to this single aim, the result is of incalculable benefit to humanity. The birth of Charles Dickens in 1812 was one of the best things that happened in the nineteenth century; and if the death of a comedian can eclipse the gaiety of nations, the death of Dickens in 1870 took away the world's chief benefactor. Fortunately, when a great writer dies, he does not cease to live, and the sum of happi-

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ness that he bequeaths accumulates at compound interest through all time to come.

Now, the great work in which Dickens was engaged was the work of cheering us all up. For the principal aim of his life was not, like that of Flaubert, to write his language well; nor was it, like that of Stevenson, to protest against one form of fiction by writing another; nor, like that of Jane Austen and Tolstoi, to tell the exact truth about humanity. We may not all agree as to whether Dickens was a realist or a romanticist, as to whether his portraits are accurate or caricatures, as to whether his style was fundamentally good or fundamentally bad; but we are virtually agreed that his novels, from *Pickwick Papers* to *Our Mutual Friend*, have been, are, and will be, a prodigious and permanent contribution to the happiness of men, women, and children all over the world. He loved humanity, and I do not suppose there ever was a writer more beloved than he. The supreme glory of being an artist lies in the grateful homage of human hearts. We admire our discoverers, our geographers, our inventors; we pay them the tribute of respect. We realise the value of men who throw bridges across vast chasms, who enable us to talk with friends hundreds of miles away — men who conquer like gods the elements of earth, water, and air. We cannot get

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along without them any more than we can get along without food and clothing. Even more highly do we value those who dwell day and night in laboratories, spending years in patient search after the spirit of evil represented by a microbe; for the result of their lonely toil is that sickness and physical pain are diminished. The anguish departs, the blind see, and the lame walk. Strictly speaking, these scientists are perhaps the most useful members of society. But the first place in our hearts is held not by those who make new machinery or by those who arrest the progress of disease, but by those who in a certain sense are not useful at all. Those who give us ideas rather than facts, those who enrich our imagination and our memory, those who ravish our hearts with harmonies, who thrill us with a rag of canvas and a block of stone, who mist our eyes with mirth and with sympathy by purely imaginary persons in imaginary situations in printed type — those are the ones we love. For although man cannot live without bread, he cannot live by bread alone.

Mr. Kipling has neither affection nor admiration for our country, and we are all keenly aware of the fact; yet when he lay close to death in New York, the bulletins from his bed preceded in importance all other news in every town in the United

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States, and thousands who had never seen him talked of his illness with a lump in the throat. Some years ago, an enterprising German newspaper sent out a vast number of blanks to be filled in with the names of the ten men whose lives were considered most important to the welfare of Germany. After the Kaiser and the Chancellor, Gerhart Hauptmann stood first on the list, while Koch and Roentgen trailed in the rear.

To realise the true greatness of Dickens, one need only think for a moment what English fiction would be without him. If not the highest, he at all events fills the biggest place. Of the dozen British novelists who hold permanent positions, he would be the last one we could spare. For, looking at him from many points of view, he seems the most original writer of them all. In his characters and in his style, he resembled none of his predecessors. If we lost Scott, we should still have Stevenson, and vice versa ; if we lost Fielding, we should still have Thackeray ; if we lost Jane Austen, we should still have George Eliot. But if we lost Dickens, to whom should we go? The loss would make a blank appalling to contemplate. Smollett? Put Smollett in Dickens's place, and see what becomes of Smollett. Of all the careless, ill-considered commonplaces of criticism, the statement that Dickens resembles Smollett is one of

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the most absurd. In nearly all vital things Dickens was the exact opposite of Smollett. Those who say that there is a family likeness between Smollett and Dickens have either never seen Smollett in a strong light or else they have forgotten him. And it is surprising how easy it is to forget Smollett, although he was a man of genius.

I say that in nearly all vital things Dickens is the exact opposite of Smollett. The personality of a writer is the thing that counts, and even the most objective writers cannot as a rule conceal their personality. In fact, the only one I have ever read who has really hidden himself is Shakespeare — one of the numerous miracles displayed in his works. The personality of Smollett, his way of thinking, his attitude toward life, and his attitude toward the children of his imagination, are in striking contrast to Dickens. Of all the great British novelists, Smollett is the most *heartless*, while the bigness of Dickens's heart — its throbbing love and sympathy — is the most obvious and salient characteristic of his books. The moral attitude of a writer, his grasp of the religious and moral basis of life, is of the highest importance, for out of that flows the stream of his work, and its quality and flavour are largely determined by it. Now, there is no English novelist of high rank whose books betray so little of religion and

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morality as Smollett's, and none who shows more than Dickens. In *Roderick Random* and in *Peregrine Pickle*, God, Christianity, and the future life are as though they were not. The light of humour and the light of intellect are there, but there is no spiritual radiance. On the other hand, Dickens was so obsessed by religious and moral forces that his novels, like those of Dostoevski, are really a commentary on the four gospels: his characters concrete illustrations of ethical ideas; while the whole vast panorama is illumined by the splendour of the other world. Take Christianity and immortality out of Dickens, and his fire straightway becomes ashes. You cannot take these ideas out of Smollett, because he never put them in. I do not of course mean to say that Smollett was an immoral writer. He was not nearly so immoral as Sterne, although he was a physician and Sterne a minister of the gospel.

The moral grasp of a novelist is shown most clearly in his attitude toward his characters. Tolstoi said that an artist need not write a book with a moral purpose, least of all with the main object of enforcing some particular truth that might be dear to him; but his attitude toward his own characters should always be absolutely clear. He went on to say that this deficiency — the inability to distinguish between what is right

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and what is wrong, irrespective of creed — is the most glaring deficiency in the works of Guy de Maupassant. That this brilliant Frenchman originally possessed some moral force is clearly evident in the first and greatest of his novels, *Une vie*; that he ultimately lost it, just as one may lose the sense of hearing or of sight, is equally evident in his later books, like *Notre cœur* and *Fort comme la mort*. Now, the attitude of Dickens toward his characters, though sometimes unnecessarily evident, was always correct. It is shown not only in a general, but in a particular and peculiarly charming manner — I mean in the way his characters develop. For some of the best of his characters are not at all fixed types. The Pickwick of the earlier chapters is different from the Pickwick at the end of the book. And the great beauty of this projection is that Pickwick does not change; he develops. He seems at first an object meant primarily to arouse laughter, at times the butt of the company, of the reader, and of the author; but when we finish the last chapter, we realise that Mr. Pickwick is a noble-minded gentleman, whom we love, honour, and respect. A remarkable instance of this same method of development in character is seen in the case of Dick Swiveller. In the early stages of our acquaintance with this never-to-be-forgotten per-

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sonage, he impresses us as little more than an idle loafer; but Dickens, looking on this young man, loved him, and raised him to the very heights of chivalry. For, with conditions and circumstances considerably altered, the attitude of Mr. Richard Swiveller to the wretched little drudge was as full of noble courtesy as that of Lohengrin to Elsa.

The mind, heart, and soul of Dickens were ablaze with faith — faith in God and faith in humanity. This is one of the reasons why he succeeded so well in the great work of cheering us all up. Faith was the furnace that warmed every room in the great structures he built. A man without faith may have many excellent qualities, he may be a great artist, or become an immortal writer; but he is not our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Dickens, however, had sufficient faith to inspire himself and countless thousands who came within the circle of his influence, for he really believed in ultimate good. Like Browning he

“Never doubted clouds would break;

Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;”

and he naturally wrote his novels from that point of view, for he interpreted the significance of life in just that way. Perhaps the most glaring con-

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trast between the work of Dickens and that of much contemporary literature in 1912 is the presence and absence of the central fire of faith. A large number of brilliantly written novels and dramas in our time betray not merely weariness, gloom, and heartsickness, but, above all, bewilderment and uncertainty. There is not only no helpful philosophy of life: there is no philosophy of life at all. Thence comes the depressing *monotony* that hangs over modern Continental literature like a cloud — the monotony of a ship whose steering-gear is broken, driven hither and thither by every gust, and at the mercy of the storm's caprice. This atmosphere of monotonous restlessness is well exhibited in a recent French play, with the significant title, *Les marionnettes*. The only good character in the drama finally speaks out his mind, expressing as well the sentiments of the spectators: "L'air qu'on y respire est mauvais . . . oui, j'ai besoin de calme, de solitude . . . et je serais heureux surtout d'entendre parler d'autre chose que d'amour."

Dickens's characters are not marionettes. His pages are charged with the tremendous vitality of their author's mind. Life was inexpressibly sweet to him, and he had a veritable zest for it. He loved the streets of London because they were filled with crowds of men, women, and children. His

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zest for life is shown in the way he describes a frosty winter morning, the pleasant excitement of the departure of a coach, and the naïve delight he takes in the enormous meals his characters devour. He fills the hungry with good things. It would be interesting sometime to write a critical essay on various authors from the strictly culinary point of view. Some novelists never give us anything to eat and drink, others give us too much. The delicate reserve, austerity, and shyness characteristic of Hawthorne both as an artist and as a man appear in a great variety of ways, and appear specifically in the fact that he seldom places his characters about the dinner-table, and when he does, the food lacks both variety and abundance. In Dickens, there is a vast amount of beef, mutton, vegetables, pudding, and beer. No sooner do two characters meet on the street, than they adjourn to a restaurant, where every article in the long bill of fare is portrayed with realistic relish. Dickens discusses gravy as a Frenchman discusses love or a pedant an old text. Think of the stupendous meals consumed by Homeric heroes, with their "rage of hunger," and then read the *Faerie Queene*, where no meals are served except to one of the seven deadly sins! No dyspeptic should ever read Dickens, for the vicarious diet of the characters might kill him.

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Every child in England and America to-day should be grateful to Dickens, for the present happy condition of children is due in no small degree to his unremitting efforts in their behalf. Under the Puritan régime, there was no place for children, while to-day we have gone so far in the other direction that many households revolve about the nursery, and the caprices of the child are carefully studied and gratified by doting parents. This is the golden age for children, and I suppose they are making the most of it, and will continue to do so, while the kindergarten and nature-study take the place of discipline. But in Dickens's boyhood the influence of the Puritan autocracy of maturity had by no means passed away. Our novelist must have suffered continual mortification as a child to write about the bad manners of elders toward children with such mordant bitterness. What he emphasised was not so much the material discomfort constantly suffered by children as the daily insults to their dignity. They were repressed, they were beaten, they were starved; but worse than that, they were treated with a grinning condescension more odious than deliberate insult. Dickens, with all the force of his genius, insisted on the inherent dignity of childhood. I confess I cannot read without squirming those passages in *Great Expecta-*

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tions where every visitor greeted the small boy by ruffling his hair; and I think most of us can remember without any difficulty and with a flush of joy those extremely rare cases in our own childhood when some grown-up visitor treated us with real, instead of with mock, respect. It is perhaps the final test of a gentleman — his attitude toward children.

Dickens's novels are unequal in value, but, unlike many writers, he had no single great period and no prolonged lack of inspiration. *Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist*, which came very early in his career, are great books, but so indubitably are *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend* which came very late. Indeed, I think, with the single exception of *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations* is his finest work. And yet it followed hard upon the only two novels of his that I dislike, *Little Dorrit*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. As for *Little Dorrit*, it is not too much of a good thing so much as it is too much of a bad thing; and as for the much-praised *Tale of Two Cities*, it rings to my ears false from first to last. His genius was not fitted for historical romance, any more than it was for the writing of history, as his *Child's History of England* abundantly demonstrates. Indeed, I think that the *Tale of Two Cities* is as inferior to *David Copperfield* as — to refer to that splendid

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reincarnation of Dickens in our own day, long life to him! — *An Affair of Dishonour* is to *Joseph Vance*. All we can say of these two historical romances is that they are better than most contemporary attempts in the same direction. But of genius we always expect works of genius, which is sometimes very hard on the genius.

Two things constantly said of Dickens seem to me in the last analysis untrue — that he was primarily a caricaturist and that he was careless as an artist. A caricaturist is not by nature original: he must have a model; otherwise he cannot work, and the point of his caricature is lost. Now, Dickens was profoundly and in the highest sense an original writer; his creation of character had that originality possessed only by genius. Sam Weller, Dick Swiveller, Ham, Steerforth, Tom Pinch, Mr. Boffin, to select out of what an astonishing number and variety! are not caricatures; they are original creations, imperishable additions to our literary acquaintances. And if one really doubts that Dickens was a serious and sincere artist, one should read again that chapter in *David Copperfield* where the profound conviction of his life was expressed, namely, that the one sure road to failure is to belittle one's own calling and efforts, and to take one's chosen work in the world in a flippant or ironical way. I am sure that many

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readers cannot see those words staring at them from the page without a wave of shame.

Some years ago I organised among my undergraduate students a Faerie Queene Club. The sole requirement for active membership was that the candidate should have read every word of that vast poem. One of the youths, writing an essay on his sensations after concluding his task, said, "The *Faerie Queene* is so great that it is absurd to attempt to measure its greatness; we can only measure ourselves by it." The remark betrayed healthy modesty and true insight, and the boy who said it has already achieved literary distinction. I am glad to adapt his words to Dickens. He is so great that we can only measure ourselves by him. There are many who fancy they have outgrown Dickens; but I suspect that they would change their minds if only they would read him. Those who think they have outgrown him really need him the most; just as no one needs faith so much as those who have lost it. They need to be cheered up. And Dickens was engaged in the great work of cheering us all up.

V

CARLYLE'S LOVE-LETTERS

TIME has dealt ironically with the man who requested that no biography of him should be written. From earliest youth to extreme old age he resented the intrusion of curious eyes within his own four walls. Writing to Miss Welsh, 12 October 1823, discoursing eloquently on the thought that after death our friends will remember us with love alone, and all our faults be forgotten, he exclaims, "The idea that all my deformities shall be hid beneath the grass that covers me, and I shall live like a stainless being in the hearts of those that loved me, often of itself almost reconciles me to the inexorable law of fate." What a motto this sentence would have been for Froude to have placed on the title-page of his biography! And we know that Froude had read these very words in Carlyle's own manuscript. The "stainless being" has had his "deformities" subjected to a ruthless searchlight. The idlest vagaries of his dreams and the most hasty imprecations of transient irritation have received the permanent mould of cold type. His best friend and most ardent disciple, in an

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eager and honest effort to tell the whole truth about him, laboriously constructed a colossal myth. Let us hope that Browning was right when he said that in the next world we shall enjoy some better means of communication than words. For language, even when used with the excellent combination of sincerity and literary skill, often produces an effect the exact opposite of its maker's intention. But as clouds and fogs obscure a mountain only for a time, and are powerless to lessen its real proportions, so misrepresentation can never destroy a great man. Truth lives in an atmosphere of falsehood as mountains live serenely amid clouds. And the final truth is that Carlyle's character was as noble as his genius was lofty.

Just as the love-letters of the Brownings form one of the greatest of the world's love stories, and raise one's opinion of the possible nobleness of human nature, so the letters between Carlyle and Jane Welsh would be intensely interesting had neither writer attained other fame. It is like a novel or a great drama: the man loved the woman from the first moment, and after a siege of five years, captured her. At the last it was an unconditional surrender; but a spectator who did not know the end would never believe in a victorious outcome. Few better opportunities have ever been given the world to study the intricate workings of a

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woman's heart. The man in this particular element is the constant, the known quantity; there was not a day in these five years, even when union seemed farther away than a star, that he did not love her; and with the boldness, not of professional art, but of naked sincerity, he told her so again and again. But the woman — she passed through every conceivable phase in her mental and emotional attitude toward her correspondent. To his intense mortification, she addressed him first as *Mr. Carlsisle*: and when remonstrated with, did it a second time. Indifference can go no farther than that. Then she gradually became aware of his extraordinary mental power, and responded to it with unwilling admiration. Naturally enough, she found his letters intellectually stimulating, as who would not? And being at this time eaten up with ambition herself, she felt that he could aid her immensely toward realising her vain dreams of literary fame. So while opening her mind to his influence, she kept the door of her heart firmly closed. Soon she began to see that, mentally, he was enormously her superior: she saw this with a mortification that changed into respect; for it is the simple truth to say that even in the days of his greatest fame no one believed in Carlyle's genius more implicitly than did Jane Welsh in the dark hours of his obscurity. Whatever she was,

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she was no fool: she saw clearly that the obscure peasant's son who made love to her was one of the elect of all the earth. Then she discovered, that while she wanted fame only, he wanted to be worthy of it; and it dawned upon her that the distance that separated them morally was greater than the distance between their minds. So the base of her fancied social superiority, from which she had somewhat contemptuously regarded her clumsy admirer, began to shift: from looking down, she found herself looking up: and for the rest of her life, whenever she looked at Carlyle, she looked in no other direction than that. In a woman, the desire to be good is strong, and survives even in the presence of evil; Jane Welsh's spirit of pride and mockery was quelled by the simple moral grandeur of her lover. She told him that she loved him, but was not *in love with him*; she knew the difference well enough, for she had been passionately in love with Irving, and had suffered keenly. She had reached the stage where she would not marry Carlyle, but promised to marry nobody else; and Carlyle pretended to be content with that. Then came a crisis; she was forced to face the possibility of losing him forever; and the awful blank revealed to her the actual state of her heart, and she found she was really in love. Carlyle had won her without once yielding to her caprices,

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without one touch of servility, and without the least blindness to her defects: an amusing part of the correspondence is his complete frankness about her many faults. They both agreed on marriage finally because they felt that while they probably would not be entirely happy together, they would assuredly be miserable separate. Never was a marriage entered upon with more misgivings on both sides — and yet there is not the slightest doubt that the love of both was passionate and sincere. He had loved her steadily: she had swung around the complete circle of emotion, and had finally been drawn indissolubly to him by his rock-like constancy. It is Donne's great figure of the compasses, only in this instance the man is the fixed foot.

“If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.”

In truth his firmness “made her circle just.”

The world's thanks are due to the editor of these two volumes for his courage and wisdom in printing all the letters, for his pains taken to ensure

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complete accuracy, for the excellent notes, which are always clear and helpful, for the adequate illustrations, and for the extremely valuable appendices. These contain the original poems that passed between the two, and incidentally give for the first time the credit of the authorship of the best one to Carlyle: it is the one example that has always been cited to prove that Mrs. Carlyle had some genuine literary talent, and thus disappears the last spark of her purely literary fame. Froude receives a few hard knocks in the *Introduction* and *Notes*, but we are glad to see that these volumes are not intended as a controversial document; interesting as this melancholy fight may be to the members of the two families, the world has almost ceased to take any interest in it, and will soon forget it entirely; for even the proverbial door-nail is not so dead as an extinct literary controversy. The value of this correspondence lies in its wonderful revelation of the hearts of a great man and an interesting woman; and in the light that it throws on the early growth and development of Thomas Carlyle. No one can fully understand his position in the history of literature without reading these volumes.

It is an extraordinary fact that Mr. Craig's book should have appeared synchronously with the *Love-Letters*, for his conclusions are apparently

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based on a knowledge of their contents. His work is properly called, *The Making of Carlyle*; but it might equally well be entitled, *A Commentary on the Love-Letters*. All things considered, it is perhaps the fairest and most accurate account of the early years of Carlyle's life that has ever been published, which is certainly saying a good deal. Mr. Craig is no advocate for anybody or anything; he is interested in Carlyle, and a devout believer in his genius, or he would not take the trouble to write so big a book about him; but the controversies that have risen over his grave cause sorrow rather than anger. His references to the *Love-Letters* are especially interesting, now that we can verify his conclusions by the actual published originals. He says: "With her he kept up an incessant correspondence which has never yet been published, if indeed in its entirety it exists." Again: "Probably all the letters will be published some day, not improbably by Carlyle's representatives under pressure of circumstance." This is not a bad guess.

Mr. Craig traces Carlyle's life, both in its external facts and in its mental development, from his birth in 1795 to the year of the publication of the *French Revolution*, which made him a famous man, and marked the end of his terrible struggle for recognition. The bitter years of obscurity are

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perhaps the most interesting to study, for they contain the whole of the fight. It was during these years also that his greatest book was written, for Mr. Craig rightly judges that *Sartor Resartus* is Carlyle's masterpiece, as well as his spiritual autobiography. "*Sartor* had proved that in Carlyle lay the most original thinking force in literary Britain." This sentence will probably find more favourable judgment than the following, "*Sartor*, however, is a book of the Ages, ranking alongside *Job* or *Faust*, a book the world does not receive the like of every century or every millennium."

Several important facts that have been hitherto unnoticed or unstressed are made clear in this volume. "Carlyle never suffered extreme poverty, and never in all his life did he live in *very* disagreeable situations. . . . Few men have defied and toiled and struggled and risen so comfortably, sunnily, well-housed and circumstanced as Thomas Carlyle." This statement will surprise many, but it is abundantly proved. Carlyle's *ill-health* was actual, not imaginary; but the worst trait in his nature was his daily substitution of the mountain for the mole-hill. Many authors have suffered far greater hardships than he, without making one-tenth of the pother; and marriage, which cures many a man of this vice of complaint, only added to Carlyle's; for his wife's gift in this direction

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was even greater than his own. The modest style of living of the young couple was not forced upon them by Carlyle's pride, but by necessity; Jane Welsh had no money, and was no heiress; she was even poorer than he. This fact, the ignorance of which has caused all kinds of abuse to be heaped on Carlyle's head, is now clear. Again, their going to Craigenputtock, so pathetically described by Froude, was in reality the wisest and best thing to do, and no blame can be given to the husband. It is true furthermore that Jane Welsh's original love affair with Irving had a powerful influence upon the steps leading up to the marriage with Carlyle; indeed, at the last Miss Welsh sought the marriage rather than accepted it. It is certain that Carlyle could have endured separation better than she. Again, owing to Froude's unfortunate although unintentional misrepresentations, the world has believed that Carlyle destroyed both his wife's health and his wife's religious belief, after their marriage; a terrible accusation, which is false. It is proved to be false by the *Love-Letters*. Miss Welsh suffered from ill-health and racking headaches years before she married Carlyle, and during the whole period of their courtship; her health surely was not broken down by housekeeping. Nor did she at any time during the five years of their acquaintance before marriage have any

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Christian belief. Carlyle, though he had made his peace with orthodoxy, was much nearer Christianity than she; and his religious influence on her was never destructive. We now know also that the real origin of Carlyle's peculiar style is seen in his *Letters*. It has been often assumed that Carlyle originally wrote in the conventional way, as his publications before *Sartor* show: and that later he deliberately adopted the style known as Carlylese. This was true in the case of Walt Whitman, whose curious style was a deliberate after-thought; but Mr. Craig shows that the Carlylese is in his early letters, and that the conventional style was a mask, which he threw off in *Sartor*, and never wore again.

VI

WHITTIER

TUESDAY, 17 December 1907, marked the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Greenleaf Whittier. It is probable that his great fame was never greater than it is to-day; it also seems evident that he is a permanent figure in America, and that his poetry forms a permanent contribution to English literature. Just why this uneducated farmer should have become a major poet, while so many clever verse-experts of higher æsthetic temperament remain distinctly "minor," constitutes an interesting literary problem.

Whittier was born at East Haverhill, Massachusetts, of old Yankee stock. His father was poor, and the boy had to work on the farm. His school education was exceedingly scanty, and he was obliged to support himself during term-time by manual labour. Later he taught at the Academy, a (to him) detestable job; then he became a journalist in various towns in New England and the East. He fell in love with a Hartford girl, offered his heart and hand, and was rejected. He planned a journey in the Far West, which ill-health caused

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him to abandon; the same unpleasant reason forced him to give up a political career, for which his soul burned with ambition. Under Garrison's influence, he became an anti-slavery man, devoting many of the best years of his life to this unpopular cause; his wisdom, moderation, and calmness in the conflict finally bringing him sharp rebukes from the leader, to whom such qualities were incomprehensible. After the war, he lived in contented seclusion, and died at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, on the seventh of September 1892, having nearly attained the age of eighty-five years.

He was essentially a lonely man. Romantic by temperament, susceptible to feminine charms, and exactly constituted for the happiness of love and domestic life, he was doomed to austere celibacy. Filled with curiosity for distant places, and having as contemporaries Irving, who spent over twenty years of his life in Europe; Cooper, who, besides his voyages, lived abroad seven successive years; Bryant, who made six excursions to the Old World; Longfellow, who knew Europe perhaps better than his native land — Whittier's travels were bounded on the north by the limits of New England, on the east by the neighbouring shore, on the south by Washington, and on the west by Harrisburg. Brought up a Quaker, he was cut off from the cheerful human activities of New England

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churches, the most prominent feature of village social life. The curse of constant headaches and chronic insomnia made him almost a prisoner, or, as Barrett Wendell phrases it, he was "generally troubled by that sort of robust poor health which frequently accompanies total abstinence." But with all these discouragements, privations, and enforced renunciations, he seems to have preserved the temperament of a beautiful child.

Whittier wrote poetry from earliest youth up to the last moments of his life, his excellent poem to Oliver Wendell Holmes appearing about a week before his death. His successive volumes were the chief events in his existence. Now, if we could borrow a word from the science of Mathematics, we might roughly divide poetry into two classes, — Pure and Applied. Pure poetry would be poetry entirely sufficient unto itself; it gives pleasure merely; its final aim is Beauty. Poets of high distinction who have successfully endeavoured to compose pure poetry are John Keats and Edgar Allan Poe. Applied poetry would include instances where the poet's art is applied to some moral aim, as the religious elevation of humanity, or something still more specific, like the abolition of slavery. Most of Whittier's productions come under the head of Applied Poetry. He makes no claim to be either *Poeta* or *Vates*. He says:

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“Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature’s face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seerlike power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother’s pain and sorrow were my own.”

Whittier would seem to illustrate Tolstoi’s definition of art; if I understand the Russian apostle, he maintains that Poetry, Fiction, and Drama should be written wholly under the impulse of the religious consciousness. For this reason he despised Shakespeare, and regarded his own tracts as greater than *Anna Karenina*. Whittier’s poetic creed would surely have pleased him.

To the sensation-seeker, Whittier’s poems seem to lack many of the qualities that have brought permanent fame to other writers. The eternal and predominant theme of poetry — Love-Passion — is conspicuous by its almost complete absence; we search in vain for the salt of humour; there is

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very little internal struggle; for, while Whittier's religious faith was weak in dogma, it was strong in assurance; the swift march of his narrative is often delayed by didactic *impedimenta*; and his imagination seldom soars to a thrilling height. Yet he unquestionably belongs to the glorious company of true poets.

In the first place, he had something which is the real foundation of Art, as it is of Character — absolute Sincerity. Both the man and the poet were simply incapable of deliberate falsehood. His best poems are transparent like a mountain lake. The pure in heart shall see God; and they see many lowly things as well, for their eyes are clairvoyant, unclouded by selfish desire. No taint of self-pity mars — as it does in Byron — Whittier's poems of Nature. He could not interpret Nature like Wordsworth, but he could *accurately portray in verse the things that he saw*, a rare gift. His pictures of the New England winter landscape are too familiar to quote; but he is something more than a snow-poet. The very Genius of Summer is in these lines:

“ Along the roadside, like the flowers of gold,
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,

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Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,
Unfelt ; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
Confesses it. The locust by the wall
Stabs the moon-silence with his sharp alarm.
A single hay-cart down the dusty road
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
On the load's top. Against the neighbouring hill,
Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
The sheep show white, as if a snow-drift still
Defied the dog-star. Through the open door
A drowsy smell of flowers — grey heliotrope,
And white sweet-clover, and shy mignonette —
Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends
To the pervading symphony of peace."

Such passages class Whittier among our foremost American poets of nature ; and they prove that in fidelity to detail he was as sincere artistically as he was morally in his attacks upon slavery.

Again, if Hawthorne was, as has been happily said, the Ghost of New England, Whittier was its Soul. The rocky hillsides of the North Shore had complete dominion over his heart. And (whether we like it or not) New England, though narrow geographically, has always held the intellectual and moral hegemony of America. There was a vast difference between the Yankee farmer and a European peasant. The former owned the land that he tilled, as his fathers had before him. The Yankee farmers were often poor, often uncultured : but they were never servile ; they were kings,

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recognising no superior but God. Whittier knew the Massachusetts farmer's life as well as any man who ever lived: and no one has ever expressed it better than he. His poetic realism is both external and internal. He gives us naïvely all the details of the farm, together with the spirit of the New England home. Busy men in city offices, who had been born and bred in the country, read *Snow-Bound* in a golden glow of reminiscence. The picture is simply final in its perfection, without and within. Not only is it perfect in outline, but perfect in its expression of the castlelike security and proud independence of the Home. The right word to describe the inner meaning of this poem is unfortunately not in the English language, and it is rather curious that we must seek it in the French. The French, as has been wearisomely pointed out, have no word for home; but we have no word that exactly expresses the significance of *foyer*. It is, however, the real basis of Whittier's greatest poem.

Finally, in the wide field of Religious Poetry, Whittier achieved true greatness. Someone has said that the Puritans represented the Old Testament, and the Quakers the New. Surely, no religious sect in the world has ever had a finer history in virtues of omission and commission than the Society of Friends. Whittier is primarily a

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Christian poet, a child of faith. He fulfils one of the highest functions of the poet — he not only inspires us in the midst of the daily work and drudgery, but he comforts and sustains weary and sore hearts. He followed the gleam. Like that old Churchman, George Herbert, Whittier's intense piety did not restrict one iota the bounds of his immense charity. The same spirit that kept him from hating the slaveholders made him a genuine admirer of men whose religious principles he could not follow. His poem, *The Eternal Goodness*, embraces a larger number of true Christians than the Apostles' Creed. On the more positive side, it is pleasant to note his manly, sturdy defence of his sect in the verses called *The Meeting*. I have always believed that this particular poem was inspired by Browning's *Christmas Eve*. The definite attitude toward religious worship taken by both poets is precisely similar. They both cheerfully recognise the ignorance and uncouthness of the pious band; but there each chose to abide, for there each thought he found the largest measure of sincerity.

It is a splendid tribute to the essential goodness of popular taste that Whittier has triumphed and will triumph over all the modern sensational poets who delight in clever paradoxes, affected forms of speech, and in mentioning the unmentionable. The

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“Complete Poetical Works” of Whittier are aglow with the divine fire of a great Personality — a personality whose influence makes for everything that is best in civilisation, and which had to so high a degree the childlike simplicity of the Kingdom of Heaven.

VII

NOTES ON MARK TWAIN

ONE does not naturally associate the names of Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) and Mark Twain, yet there is a curious parallel between a section of the *Religio Medici* (1642) and *Some Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion*, by our American humorist. The latter sketch gives an amusing dialogue between a profane old sea-captain, Hurricane Jones, and a well-known New England clergyman, who figures in the story as "Peters." The captain did not know that Peters was a minister, so he undertook to explain the Bible miracles to his passenger, and "wove a glittering streak of profanity through his garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech." In particular the captain gave a delightful exegesis of the discomfiture of the prophets of Baal by Elijah. The fact that the captain called Elijah "Isaac" is merely an unimportant detail, and does not in any way vitiate the value of his interesting commentary.

"Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they knew how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At

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last, about sundown, they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

“What does Isaac do, now? He steps up and says to some friends of his, there, ‘Pour four barrels of water on the altar!’ Everybody was astonished, for the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he, ‘Heave on four more barrels.’ Then he says, ‘Heave on four more.’ Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water ran all over the altar, and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogsheads, — ‘measures,’ it says; I reckon it means about a hogshead. Some of the people were going to put on their things and go, for they allowed he was crazy. They didn’t know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and began to pray; he strung along, and strung along, about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the State and the country at large, and about those that’s in authority in the Government, and all the usual program, you know, till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the under side of his leg, and pff! up the whole thing blazes like a house afire! Twelve barrels of *water? Petroleum*, sir. PETROLEUM! That’s what it was!”

“Petroleum, captain?”

“Yes, sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don’t you worry about the tough places. They ain’t tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain’t a thing in the Bible but what is true; all you want is to go prayerfully to work and sipher out how’t was done.”

Now in the nineteenth section of Browne’s *Religio Medici*, the author is talking gravely of his

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religious doubts and thinks that they are whispered in the ears of believers by no less a personage than the devil.

“For our endeavours are not only to combat with doubts, but always to dispute with the Devil: the villany of that Spirit takes a hint of Infidelity from our Studies, and by demonstrating a naturalty in one way, makes us mistrust a miracle in another. Thus having perused the *Archidoxes* and read the secret Sympathies of things, he would dissuade my belief from the miracle of the Brazen Serpent, make me conceit that Image worked by Sympathy, and was but an *Ægyptian* trick to cure their Diseases without a miracle. Again, having seen some experiments of *Bitumen*, and having read far more of *Naptha*, he whispered to my curiosity the fire of the Altar might be natural; and bid me mistrust a miracle in *Elias*, when he entrenched the Altar round with Water; for that inflammable substance yields not easily unto Water, but flames in the Arms of its Antagonist.”

Having observed this interesting parallel, I wrote to Mark Twain on the subject. I immediately received this characteristic reply:

NEW YORK, April 24, 1901.

I was not aware that old Sir Thomas had anticipated that story, and I am much obliged to you for furnishing me the paragraph. It is curious that the same idea should have entered two heads so unlike as the head of that wise old philosopher and that of Captain Ned Wakeman, a splendidly uncultured old sailor, but in his own opinion a thinker by divine right. He was an old friend of mine of many years' standing; I made two or three voyages with him, and found him a darling in many ways. The petroleum story was not told to me; he told it to Joe Twichell,

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who ran across him by accident on a sea voyage where I think the two were the only passengers. A delicious pair, and admirably mated, they took to each other at once and became as thick as thieves. Joe was passing under a fictitious name, and old Wakeman didn't suspect that he was a parson; so he gave his profanity full swing, and he was a master of that great art. You probably know Twichell, and will know that that is a kind of refreshment which he is very capable of enjoying.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain's first book, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, was published on the first of May 1867. On the very day of its appearance in print, the author wrote a highly interesting letter to his friend, Bret Harte, in which he comments on the new publication, and announces his departure for the Old World. This was the voyage that made him famous, for it resulted in the composition of *Innocents Abroad*, the work that gave him the world-wide reputation that he was to enjoy for forty years. The year 1867 marks also the date of Bret Harte's first book, *Condensed Novels*; his great contribution to literature, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, had not yet appeared. It is interesting to note the signature, "Mark," for in later years he almost invariably signed his epistles with his own name. It was only a short time before this that he had adopted the pseudonym.

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WESTMINSTER HOTEL, May 1, 1867.

DEAR BRET — I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am well and hope these few line [*sic*] will find you enjoying the same God's blessing.

The book is out, and is handsome. It is full of damnable errors of grammar and deadly inconsistencies of spelling in the Frog sketch because I was away and did not read the proofs — but be a friend and say nothing about these things. When my hurry is over I will send you an autograph copy to pisen the children with.

I am to lecture in Cooper Institute next Monday night. Pray for me.

We sail for the Holy Land June 8. Try and write me (to this hotel), and it will be forwarded to Paris, where we remain 10 to 15 days.

Regards and best wishes to Mrs. Bret and the family.

Truly Yr Friend

MARK.¹

On a memorable afternoon at Florence, the fourteenth of April 1904, I had an hour's conversation with him and his daughter Jean. Her sudden death five years later was the last terrible shock that Mark Twain had to endure in the steady tragedy of his old age. She acted as her father's secretary, and during the last year of his life, she, and his biographer, Mr. Paine, made up the little family circle at Redding. In a letter that I received from Mark Twain only a few weeks

¹ This autograph letter, yellow with years, was kindly given to me in 1908, by Bret Harte's sister, Mrs. Wyman, of Oakland, California.

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before his death, he said of Jean, "I shall not have so dear and sweet a secretary again."

When I entered the room in Florence where he and his daughter were sitting, I found him absorbed in reading the latest news of the Japanese-Russian war, and it was with difficulty that I could induce him to talk on any other theme. He was a tremendous partisan of the Japanese, and rejoiced greatly in their victories. "The real reason," said he dryly, "why the Russians are getting licked is because of their niggardly policy. Look at General Kurapotkin! I read in the papers that he has taken out with him only *eighty* holy images! Just like the Russians! They never make adequate preparation for battle. Why, eighty ikons are not half enough; they ought to have two or three for every private soldier if they expect to beat those clever Japs. But that's just the way the Russians do business; they are economical with their holy images when they ought to order them out by the carload." I remarked that I had just read in the *New York Sun* a poem by Miss Edith Thomas, in which she hotly defended the Russians because they were Christians, and earnestly hoped that they would triumph over the heathen Japanese. He impatiently replied, "Edith doesn't know what she's talking about."

I finally persuaded him to talk a little about

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himself. I asked him which of all his works he thought was the best. In Yankee fashion he asked which I put first, and I said *Huckleberry Finn*. After a moment's hesitation he remarked: "That is undoubtedly my best book." Then I asked if, leaving aside the pleasure of artistic creation, it was not a source of great happiness to him to think that from a river pilot on the Mississippi he had risen to be an honoured and welcome guest at royal courts, and that this change in his circumstances had been wrought not by the accidental acquisition of a great fortune or by success in war, but wholly by the power of his own mind. (For from this point of view Mark Twain's career is unique in the history of America.) He drawled out very slowly: "I do look back on my life with considerable satisfaction."

The truth about his selection of the name Mark Twain has appeared in print before, but nine out of every ten times it is stated falsely, and has so been published since his death. He did not adopt the pen name directly from his experience on the river. On this occasion he said:

"There was a man, Captain Isaiah Sellers, who furnished river news for the New Orleans *Picayune*, still one of the best papers in the South. He used to sign his articles, *Mark Twain*. He died in 1863 — I liked the name, and stole it. I think I have done him no wrong, for I seem to have made this name somewhat generally known."

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I had seen Mark Twain many times since 1876, but this was the first occasion when he looked like an old man. He was tormented with anxiety about his wife's health, for he knew her illness was fatal. The muscles in his right cheek were beyond his control, twitching constantly during the hour I spent with him, and there was something wrong with his right eye. He had not, however, cut short his allowance of tobacco, for he smoked three cigars during the conversation.

If necessity is the mother of invention, misfortune is the mother of literature. When Nathaniel Hawthorne was ejected from the Custom-House at Salem, he went home in a despondent frame of mind, only to be greeted by his wonderful wife's pertinent remark, "Now you can write your book." He responded to this stimulus by writing the best book ever written in the Western Hemisphere, *The Scarlet Letter*. We learn from a famous chapter in *Roughing It* that if Samuel L. Clemens had not gone to help a sick friend, or if his partner had received the note he left for him before starting on this charitable expedition, Samuel L. Clemens would have been a millionaire. This episode has since his death been printed in a list of the misfortunes that marked his romantic and tragic career. But if at that time Mr. Clemens

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had become a millionaire, and he missed it by the narrowest possible margin, he never would have become Mark Twain. He struggled against his destiny with all the physical and mental force he possessed. He tried to make a living by every means except literature, and nothing but steady misfortune and dire necessity made him walk in the foreordained path. Mark Twain always regarded himself as the plaything of chance; professing no belief in God, he never thanked Him for his amazing successes, nor rebelled against Him for his sufferings. But if ever there was a man whose times were in His hand, that man was Mark Twain.

Mark Twain was a greater artist than he was humorist; a greater humorist than he was philosopher; a greater philosopher than he was thinker. Goethe's well-known remark about Byron, "The moment he thinks, he is a child," would in some respects be applicable to Mark Twain. The least valuable part of his work is found among his efforts to rewrite history, his critical essays on men and on institutions, and his contributions to introspective thought. His long book on Joan of Arc is valuable only for its style; his short book on the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy shows appalling ignorance; his defence of Harriet Shelley is praiseworthy only in its chivalry; his attack on Fenimore Cooper is of no consequence except as a humorous

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document; his laboured volume on Christian Science has little significance; and when his post-humous essay on the "Meaning of Life" is published, as I am afraid it will be before long, it will surprise and depress more readers than it will convince.

As a philosopher, Mark Twain was a pessimist as to the value of the individual life and an optimist concerning human progress. He agreed with Schopenhauer that non-existence was preferable to existence; that sorrow was out of all proportion to happiness. On the other hand, he had nothing of Carlyle's peculiar pessimism, who regarded the human soul as something noble and divine, but insisted that modern progress was entirely in the wrong direction, and that things in general were steadily growing worse. Carlyle believed in God and man, but he hated democracy as a political principle; Mark Twain apparently believed in neither God nor man, but his faith in democracy was so great that he almost made a religion out of it. He was never tired of exposing the tyranny of superstition and of unmasking the romantic splendour of mediæval life.

Mark Twain was one of the foremost humorists of modern times; and there are not wanting good critics who already dare to place him with Rabelais, Cervantes, and Molière. Others would regard

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such an estimate as mere hyperbole, born of transient enthusiasm. But we all know now that he was more than a funmaker; we know that his humour, while purely American, had the note of universality. He tested historical institutions, the social life of past ages, political and religious creeds, and the future abode of the saints by the practical touchstone of humour. Nothing sharpens the eyes of a traveller more than a sense of humour; nothing enables him better to make the subsequent story of his journey pictorially impressive. *The Innocents Abroad* is a great book, because it represents the wonders of Europe as seen by an unawed Philistine with no background; he has his limitations, but at any rate his opinions of things are formed *after* he sees them, and not before. He looks with his own eyes, not through the coloured spectacles of convention. *Roughing It* is a still greater book, because in the writing of that no background was necessary, no limitations are felt; we know that his testimony is true. The humour of Mark Twain is American in its point of view, in its love of the incongruous, in its fondness for colossal exaggeration; but it is universal in that it deals not with passing phenomena, or with matters of temporary interest, but with essential and permanent aspects of human nature.

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As an artist Mark Twain already seems great. The funniest man in the world, he was at the same time a profoundly serious artist, a faithful servant of his literary ideals. The environment, the characterisation, and the humanity in *Tom Sawyer* remind us of the great novelists, whose characters remain in our memory as sharply defined individuals simply because they have the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. In other words, *Tom Sawyer* resembles the masterpieces of fiction in being intensely local and at the same time universal. Tom Sawyer is a definite personality; but he is also eternal boyhood. In *Huckleberry Finn* we have three characters who are so different that they live in different worlds, and really speak different languages, Tom, Huck, and Jim; we have an amazingly clear presentation of life in the days of slavery; we have a marvelous moving picture of the Father of Waters; but, above all, we have a vital drama of humanity, in its nobility and baseness, its strength and weakness, its love of truth and its love of fraud, its utter pathos and its side-splitting mirth. Like nearly all faithful pictures of the world, it is a vast tragi-comedy. What does it matter if our great American had his limitations and his excrescences? To borrow his own phrase, "There is that about the sun that makes us forget his spots."

VIII

MARLOWE¹

BIOGRAPHICAL accounts of Marlowe resemble those of all other Elizabethan dramatists in containing two grains of fact in a bushel of conjecture. Had Ben Jonson's library not been burned, or had Thomas Heywood spent the time on his projected *Lives of the Poets* that he squandered on the *Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels*, we should probably know for certain many things that remain shrouded in complete darkness. Nothing in literary history is more depressing to contemplate than the mis-directed energy of Shakespeare's contemporaries; they produced huge folios on impossible themes. Had any one of them spent a half-holiday, in their busy years of quill-driving, in narrating the simple facts of Shakespeare's career, those few sheets would have outweighed in interest for us tons of the controversial, scholastic, and theological stuff that they built with so much toil. Heywood's alert and inquisitive mind seems to have had some notion of the future importance of such a book, for he

¹ Introduction to *Christopher Marlowe* in *Masterpieces of English Drama*. Copyright, 1912, by American Book Company. Used by kind permission of the publishers.

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said positively that it was his intention to produce a biographical history of the poets, ancient and modern, including all his contemporaries. But although he wrote over two hundred plays, and scores of other volumes, this particular one became valuable only as a paving-stone in an oft-mentioned place.

Of the actual facts in Marlowe's life we know little except that he was born in Canterbury in February 1564, that he studied at Cambridge University (if the "Marlin" and "Chrof. Marlen" on the books there be the dramatist), and that he was killed by a person named Francis Archer, and buried at Deptford, 1 June 1593. Nothing whatever is known of his personal appearance. We cannot even prove that he wrote *Tamburlaine*; the external evidence is astonishingly small. We have to assume it on the basis of a variety of contemporary references. We do not know whether or not he wrote any part of the early historical plays usually included in Shakespeare's works. We can form no idea of how many interpolations there may have been in the four plays on which his fame as a dramatist rests. Nor do we know for certain when a single one of these four dramas was composed or first acted; so that all the vast theories that have been erected on their chronological place in the Elizabethan drama rest upon guess-work.

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Besides the four chief plays, two others bearing Marlowe's name may receive passing mention, though as pieces of literature they are unimportant. On 3 January 1593, while Marlowe was still living, *The Massacre at Paris* was put on the boards; this was published somewhat later, but there being no date on the title-page of what is apparently the earliest edition, the year of its first appearance in print is not known. This title-page, however, bears the legend, "Written by Christopher Marlowe." That is the only line in the whole volume of any real interest. Another play, *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*, was published in quarto form so early as 1594, and on the title-page appeared "Written by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe, Gent." This drama contains some verses here and there that seem like faint echoes of the mighty line; but it also includes gems of poetry such as

"Gentle Achates, reach the tinder-box,"

which we may hope supplied some of the fire lacking in the verse.

Marlowe wrote narrative and lyric poetry as well as dramatic. His translations from the Latin are worthless; but his splendid fragment, *Hero and Leander* (entered on the Stationers' Books, 28 September 1593, and published in 1598) in-

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dicates a high order of creative genius. It is one of the most notable expressions of the Pagan Renaissance in England. The dramatist Chapman completed it, and although his part of the work is much finer than ordinary post mortem conclusions, it naturally suffers by comparison with the early portion. Out of the thousands of beautiful lyrical poems produced by the Elizabethans, Marlowe's exquisite *Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, commencing,

"Come live with me, and be my love,"

is one of the very best, and many readers from that time to this have known it by heart. The thrilling music of those spacious times is enchantingly heard in the splendid line,

"Melodious birds sing madrigals."

Although the author of *Tamburlaine the Great*¹ must apparently share with Thomas Kyd some of the glory of discovering the possibilities of dramatic blank verse and of founding the English romantic drama, still the appearance of this play is one of the most important events in the literary history of the English-speaking race. It is not going too far to say that "it worked a revolution in English dramatic art." The irrepressible con-

¹ The first and second parts were each published in 1590.

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flict between the rules of the classicists and the freedom of the romanticists was permanently settled by *Tamburlaine*. He conquered the Elizabethan stage as in real life he conquered the world. The authority of Seneca, the learning of Sir Philip Sidney and his friends, the precedent of *Gorboduc*, were all overthrown by the colossal figure of the barbarian chieftain and the glorious poetry he uttered. At one blow the shackles of pseudo-classicism and vain pedantry were struck off; it took a Samson to do it, but he was at home. It is within the limits of truth to say that the course of Elizabethan drama, the greatest part of the greatest period of the greatest literature of the world, was determined more by *Tamburlaine* than by any other single cause. And, unlike most literary beginnings, which are unconscious, the author of *Tamburlaine* was himself aware of the importance of his achievement — he knew what he was about. Like Milton in the Preface to *Paradise Lost*, like Jonson in the Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*, like Victor Hugo in *Cromwell* and *Hernani*, the poet appeared with a definite programme. Shakespeare was no innovator; he was content to do everything better than anybody else, and let his creations speak for themselves. Not so the maker of *Tamburlaine*. His prologue is a shout of defiance.

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“From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortune as you please.”

Here is a definite and uncompromising attack on rime as a vehicle of dramatic expression: a crack of the whip at professional buffoonery, so dear to Elizabethan spectators, and so despised by the poets; and a contemptuous blow in the face to the public, whose attitude toward the piece is utterly indifferent to the author, for it was written to please no one but himself.

Courage and conviction, backed by genius, had their natural reward. The first *matinée* of *Tamburlaine* was an epoch-making day. The character of the Scourge of God, as portrayed by the great actor Edward Alleyn, himself a man of colossal size and great histrionic ability, fairly dazzled the Elizabethans. We must always remember that people then went to the theatre not to see, but to hear; stage scenery and settings were scanty; the play was the thing. Mouthed in sonorous Elizabethan fashion, this new and magnificent blank verse charmed and electrified the Elizabethans like marvellous music.

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Blank verse had been introduced into English poetry by the Earl of Surrey, who, about the middle of the sixteenth century, translated two books of the *Æneid* in this measure. But Surrey's style was naturally rough and halting; and a perusal of his work gives little idea of what possibilities lay in this instrument. The stiff Senecan tragedy *Gorboduc* (acted about 1561) was written in blank verse of monotonous rigidity; it chilled rather than charmed. The playwrights who immediately preceded Marlowe failed in the one thing in which he most emphatically succeeded; namely, expression. They could conceive dramatic situations, but the language accompanying the supreme moment was usually entirely inadequate, and often pitifully weak. Marlowe's characters and events required a "great and thundering speech"; and, needless to say, it was plentifully supplied. It thundered indeed so loudly that some contemporaries laughed it to scorn, but their laughter has the discordant tone of envy rather than the ring of sincerity. In the Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, Nash remarked, "Idiot artsmasters, that intrude themselves to our ears as the alchemists of eloquence; who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of a bragging blank verse." And again, he alludes to what he calls

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“the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon.” Greene, who sneered at Marlowe as a “cobbler’s eldest son,” said with swelling blank verse we should not dare “God out of heaven with that atheist *Tamburlan*.” Ben Jonson said the play had nothing in it “but the scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant [it] to the ignorant gapers.”

Tamburlaine was peculiarly Elizabethan in tone, and it is not at all surprising to find that in Restoration days it had passed almost into oblivion. Charles Saunders, in a Preface to the play *Tamerlane* in 1681, wrote: “It hath been told me there is a Cockpit play going under the name of *The Scythian Shepherd, or Tamburlaine the Great*, which how good it is, any one may judge by its obscurity, being a thing not a bookseller in London, or scarce the players themselves who acted it formerly, could call to remembrance.”

Tamburlaine was a real character in history, whose actual achievements sound like a wild romance. Timur, called Timur Lenk (that is, Timur the Lame), Tamerlane, or *Tamburlaine*, was an Asiatic Napoleon of the fourteenth century. He was born in 1333 in Central Asia, and for some time was merely the chief of a petty tribe. But he finally overran and subdued an enormous stretch of territory, extending from the Chinese Wall to

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the Mediterranean Sea, and from Siberia to the Ganges. His cruelty was as notable as his genius, though not so uncommon. He is said to have built a pyramid constructed entirely of the heads of his foes. He died in 1405, and his empire went to pieces. In 1543, a Spanish biography of him appeared at Seville, composed by Pedro Mexia. This book had great vogue, and was translated into various European languages. The English version was printed in 1571, and it is extremely probable that it is the chief source of the drama *Tamburlaine*. The details are largely the same; the cage, the crumbs of bread, the scraps of meat, and the title, Scourge of God, are all in the original.

It is difficult to speak calmly of this tremendous ten-act tragedy. If its author exceeded all bounds of restraint, the critics from that day to this have unconsciously followed his example. To some it is wisdom, to others foolishness; but both those who condemn and those who praise have drawn heavily on their stock of adjectives. Lamb did not take it seriously; but Swinburne in writing of it had one of his frequent fits of ecstasy. The play, of course, shows no regard for dramatic structure. There is no development, either of plot or of character; there might as well have been a hundred acts as ten. As some one has said of Hauptmann, the play does not end, it quits.

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But the salient virtue of this drama, apart from its superb diction, is that we have, for the first time in English tragedy, one grand, consistent, unforgettable character. We do not ask of romantic heroes, either in Cooper or in Shakespeare, that they shall resemble actual life. All we demand is that they make a permanent impression on the imagination. This Tamburlaine assuredly does. No one who has ever once read the play can by any possibility forget the protagonist. He is the incarnation of the spirit of aspiration — the spirit of Marlowe, and the spirit of the Elizabethan age. He revels in the intoxication of boundless power. His swelling confidence hypnotises his friends, and paralyses his enemies. His most bitter foes feel the resistless fascination of the man. Some of the best things said about him are uttered by his antagonists. Tamburlaine trusts no earthly or divine agent; his God is himself.

His passionate love for Zenocrate is perfectly natural, and not in the least inconsistent. His wild pagan nature has its one ideal side — Beauty. Of beauty in the abstract he speaks in language too familiar to quote, but which Shelley or Keats might have envied. Now beauty in the concrete, beauty incarnate, appears in the fair person of Zenocrate, and the strong man worships. Their marriage is an ideal union, strength and beauty;

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and it is easy to understand how Zenocrate falls under the spell of the man's dominant power, and returns his love with constant devotion.

There is no real humour in the drama, but there is terrible irony. Tamburlaine treats his victims as the cat handles the mouse. His mock courtesy is more awful than his positive cruelty. But there is a far deeper irony than this, and it is here that the drama ceases to be merely a resplendent romance; at this point it reaches the very basis of human tragedy, for it represents nothing less than the irony of life. So far as I know, this appears here for the first time in English drama. Some one has defined happiness as "freedom from limitations." Tamburlaine, drunken with success, believes that he has attained this liberty. The death of Zenocrate bewilders as much as it grieves him. And finally he, too, must yield to a foe stronger than himself. The advance of death is a tremendous shock to his aspiring heart; and he realises, as other conquerors have realised, that instead of controlling fate, he is its plaything. Death is the only "check to egotism."

The passion of this play sweeps the reader along with it now, much as it did in the sixteenth century. Some one has compared the perusal of it to a debauch of mental passion, leaving the reader weak and exhausted. It was written hot from

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the brain, and is evidently full of those magnificent impromptus so frequent in Shakespeare. The late Richard Holt Hutton used to speak of the "sudden solemnising power" of Browning — how after a long pedestrian passage, suddenly, without any approach to it, without any warning or premonition to the reader, the great poet irresistibly carries us off into the ether. Such power is also peculiarly characteristic of the author of *Tamburlaine*. In the midst of sheer nonsense or vain bombast comes a passage that salutes our ears with strains divine.

In Elizabethan times, England knew France, Italy, and Spain very well. But Germany was an undiscovered country.¹ The English of 1540 and the English of 1590 looked at Germany from widely different view-points. In the early part of the century, the great German name was Luther, and the word Germany signified Protestantism. Then as the influence of the Renaissance grew and prevailed (and it should never be forgotten that the Renaissance was pagan, both in spirit and in power) and as England grew in military greatness and began to triumph on land and sea, Germany rather lost its religious significance, and assumed

¹ The next few paragraphs owe much to Professor C. H. Herford's admirable book, *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany* (1886). This is a model of what such a work should be.

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a new and literary interest unlike anything it had possessed before.

In the latter part of the century, the word that Germany expressed in England was *mystery*; partly because it was so little known, partly because it had produced famous physicians who had become already legendary figures, — Paracelsus, Faust, and others. To the Elizabethan dramatists Germany came to be necessarily associated with magic. For news of alchemy, astrology, sorcery, and all specimens of the black art, Englishmen naturally looked toward Germany. A twilight air of mystery enveloped the region of the Rhine.

Meanwhile England in a certain degree lost the respect she had entertained for German Protestantism, for England was now the great champion of the Reform; and in civilisation, colonial reach, political, naval, and military power England felt herself to be the superior to her Teutonic neighbour. Travellers, statesmen, and serious students rather neglected Germany, and devoted themselves to France and Italy, where they thought to learn something. Thus actual political events in Germany do not appear in the Elizabethan drama with anything like the frequency of French.

The literary interest taken in Germany was of a different order, and proved to be fruitful. Strange and startling tales came over the North Sea.

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These were often made into "news-sheets" by enterprising journalists, and in this fashion hawked about the streets of London. Fantastic enough some of these sounded. Mr. Herford gives a number of illustrations:

A Bloody Tragedy Acted by Five Jesuits on Sixteen Young German Frows. 1607.

Account of Executions of Two Hundred and Fifty Witches.

Strange Sight of the Sun and the Elements at Basel. 1566-67.

History of a Fasting Girl.

True Discourse of One Stubbe Peter, a Most Wicked Sorcerer, who in Likeness of a Wolf Committed Many Murders. 1590.

These are fair examples, and we see that they are somewhat similar to the subjects of exploit in yellow journalism of the twentieth century.

But the single greatest contribution that Germany made to literary England at this time — how great no one then dreamed — was the legend of Faust. Dr. John Faust was a real person, who flourished in the same century as Marlowe. He was a rather cheap medical quack, who lived about 1530. Strange stories grew about him, and after his death they rolled along with the cumulative power of a snow-ball.

The relation between Marlowe's play, *The*

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Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, and its original source, is full of unsolved and apparently insoluble problems. The drama was not entered on the Stationers' Books till 1601, and the first known edition is dated 1604, with the inscription on the title-page: "Written by Ch. Marl." But this was eleven years after Marlowe's death. Now the story of Faust had not appeared in book form until 1587, when was published in Germany the so-called *Faustbuch*, which seems to be the source of Marlowe's play. The first known edition of an English translation is in 1592, although that date on the title-page may mean 1591. It is assumed that Marlowe's play was acted in 1588 or 1589; but, as a matter of fact, nobody knows. It is also assumed that Marlowe knew no German, and therefore founded his play on the English translation of the *Faustbuch*; and in order to account for this many scholars further assume that there was an earlier edition of the English translation, and that this earlier edition appeared shortly after 1587 and is now lost. If we possessed this unknown book, and possessed also some definite knowledge as to the first performance of the English play, we should be within the limits of knowledge instead of in the fog of conjecture. The "earliest known reference" to the presentation of the play occurs in Henslowe, by which we learn that it was acted 30 September 1594.

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But whether the date of the composition of Marlowe's *Faustus* be 1589 or 1592, he has the immense credit of having produced the first play in any language on this immortal theme; and the short time (whatever theory we adopt) that intervened between the appearance of the *Faustbuch* in Germany and the play in England is nothing less than remarkable. Marlowe must have instantly perceived the splendid dramatic possibilities of the story, for he made out of them, notwithstanding all the crudities and blemishes, a dramatic masterpiece.

It is not at all fair to Marlowe to compare the imperfect text of his hastily composed *Faustus* with the *Faust* of Goethe. The former was written by a young man with scarcely any literary background. Goethe had all the leisure of ease and mature years, with two centuries of culture behind him. After all, Marlowe's character of Faustus is essentially childish; he longs for magic power, like a boy who has read the *Arabian Nights*. Goethe's hero longs for life, which he has missed, life with all its variety of experience. And into his mouth Goethe put the thoughts of one of the greatest literary geniuses that the world has seen since the death of Shakespeare. The qualities that win our admiration and respect for Marlowe's drama are the thrilling intensity of the climax, which in other hands might have been absurd, the wonderful height of pure poetry reached

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in certain passages, and the extraordinary conception of Mephistopheles. As a boy in Canterbury, Marlowe had in all probability seen frequent representations of the devil on the local stage, for the mysteries and moralities were not extinct; he was of course familiar with the devil of Puritan imagination, and of the conception of hell as a definite place of fire. But instead of making Mephistopheles a grotesque bugaboo, compounded of mirth and horror, he made him a spirit of sombre melancholy, tortured with the eternal memory of his lost estate. And the geography of hell shows that Marlowe was at least two hundred years in advance of his time.

“Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place: for where we are is hell,
And where hell is there must we ever be.”

The fact that the miracles of one age are the commonplaces of another is curiously proved in this drama. The Duchess, on being requested to demand an illustration of the supernatural power of Faustus, asks what to Elizabethan minds was an impossible thing, — grapes in January. Mephisto is gone only for a moment, and returns with the desired fruit, and in reply to the Duke's amazed enquiry, Faustus explains that although it is winter here it is summer in certain parts of the world, and “by means of a swift spirit” the grapes are brought. Both the swift spirit and the eating of grapes in

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January are now so familiar to us as to excite no comment.

The final awful soliloquy of Faustus and the terrific climax of the play raise a rather interesting question in art. Marlowe's reputation in his own time was that of an atheist, and it is highly probable that he was a defiant unbeliever. But no Puritan sermon could have exceeded in religious force and effect the depiction of Faustus's fearful struggles with conscience, and the unspeakable horror of his departure. Now, either Marlowe, like Greene, felt occasional pangs of remorse (of which, however, there is no other evidence than this play) and the last soliloquy came from his own terror-stricken heart, or his artistic temperament was so completely ascendant that he was able to treat this sinner's dissolution with precisely the same artistic aloofness with which we should describe the sufferings of Prometheus. Such an attitude toward the Christian religion at that time is, to say the least, unusual; and it would require two things, the most absolute and assured unbelief, and an extraordinary power of artistic ventriloquism.

The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta was licensed for the press on 17 May 1594, but the earliest known edition is a quarto of 1633, forty years after Marlowe's death. On the title-page appears "Written by Christopher Marlo." In

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spite of many hypotheses and conjectures, no one knows when it was written nor when it was first acted. We know that Alleyn added greatly to his renown by his wonderful portrayal of Barabas; on the stage this Jew was largely a comic character, and wore a huge false nose. The source of this drama is unknown; there seems to have been an earlier play on a similar subject; but as the play is lost, all conjectures built on it are of no moment. This is undoubtedly Marlowe's best acting play, as *Faustus* is perhaps his literary masterpiece. The plot is wildly improbable, like most of the works of Shakespeare; but it is steadily interesting, and crowded with action. The critics seem mostly to have decided that the first two acts are fine, and the last three indicate a sad falling off. With this judgment I find it impossible to agree. The interest in the story is maintained steadily to the powerful and unexpected conclusion; and the climax is of that kind that has particularly delighted spectators in all ages of theatrical history, for 'tis sport to see the engineer hoist with his own petard.

With reference to the literary value of *The Jew of Malta*, much wordy war has been waged. Swinburne says, "Only Milton has surpassed the opening soliloquy." This is exaggerative, for Shakespeare has surpassed it fifty times, as have other English poets, including Marlowe himself. It

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does not compare for an instant with several passages in *Tamburlaine*, nor with the apostrophe to Helen in *Faustus*. Indeed, I think that the Jew's soliloquy at the beginning of the *second* act is poetically superior.

This drama historically has its place in the Tragedy of Blood school that runs like a red stream through the entire course of Elizabethan drama. The Tragedy of Blood began with Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and *Titus Andronicus*, powerfully affected Marlowe and Chapman, reached a climax in Webster, and an anti-climax in Ford. Not only do the majority of the *dramatis personæ* die violently in the works of this school, but there is usually a hired assassin who believes in crime for crime's sake. He takes a joyous and artistic delight in deeds of the most revolting nature. The scoundrel Aaron, in *Titus Andronicus*, is typical of this stock figure :

“Even now I curse the day — and yet I think
Few come within the compass of my curse —
Wherein I did not some notorious ill :
As kill a man, or else devise his death ;
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it ;
Accuse some innocent, and forswear myself :
Set deadly enmity between two friends :
Make poor men's cattle break their necks :
Set fire on barns and haystacks in the night,
And bid the owners quench them with their tears :
Oft have I digg'd up dead men from their graves,

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And set them upright at their dear friends' doors,
Even when their sorrows almost were forgot :
And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,
Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,
'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'
Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things
As willingly as one would kill a fly :
And nothing grieves me heartily indeed,
But that I cannot do ten thousand more."

Now Ithamore, in *The Jew of Malta*, fills this rôle acceptably ; for Barabas, to test him, describes some of the playful avocations of his own leisure moments :

"As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights
And kill sick people groaning under walls :
Sometimes I go about and poison wells."

To which virtuous sentiments Ithamore cheerfully replies :

"One time I was an ostler in an inn,
And in the night-time secretly would I steal
To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats."

The fact is, that the theatrical villain of the Tragedy of Blood had the same zest in crime that the small boy of all time has in the perpetration of practical jokes on respectable citizens.

Marlowe in this play did not scruple to appeal to the popular prejudice against Jews by representing Barabas as a hellish monster ; but just as

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Milton made a hero out of Satan, so Marlowe created a Jew of such colossal force, both in cunning and in courage, that one feels admiration for his vast ambition and tremendous power, without any sympathy. But Marlowe apparently does not love the Christians any more than the Jews; they too are represented as devoid of truth, honour, and probity. The only decent people in the play are the heathen, whether Marlowe intended them to be so or not.

A comparison of *The Jew of Malta* with *The Merchant of Venice* is even more damaging to Marlowe's reputation than the comparison of *Faustus* with Goethe's masterpiece; for Shakespeare wrote his play under conditions precisely similar to Marlowe's, and not far from the same time. The fundamental difference in the result is that whereas Barabas is an impossible monster, Shylock is wonderfully human. I do not believe for a moment that Shakespeare sympathised with Shylock, or meant his audience to do so. I feel certain that the downfall of the man was greeted with tremendous applause. But none the less, he is a real character, a sharply defined individual, not a racial caricature; and Shakespeare allows him to speak cleverly and powerfully in his own defence, in the method later adopted by Browning. Where Shakespeare excels Marlowe is in his vastly superior power of psy-

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chological analysis, to say nothing of the glorious poetry of the conclusion, which ends in beautiful moonlight and harmonious laughter in Portia's gardens. Shakespeare had one artistic virtue simply unknown to Marlowe — moderation. In the felicitous words of William Watson :

“Your Marlowe's page I close, my Shakespeare's ope.
How welcome — after gong and cymbal's din —
The continuity, the long slow slope
And vast curves of the gradual violin !”

Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare was in all probability very great ; but it is interesting to cite a single famous passage from the latter poet, where it is easy to see which are the lines written in the Marlowesque and which those in the true Shakespearian manner. There can be no doubt which is the greater.

“Where should Othello go?
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock ! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?
Even like thy chastity. —
O cursed, cursed slave ! — Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight !
Blow me about in winds ! roast me in sulphur !
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire !”

There are certain striking similarities in the three plays, *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, and *The Jew*

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of *Malta*. In all three, the emphasis is laid on one character; the others are merely sketched in. Concentration on a single hero was the aim, conscious or unconscious, of the dramatist. And in each instance, this hero is the personification of some mad, devouring ambition. The living breath of aspiration vitalises not only this chief character, but sets the whole play aglow with poetic fire. In *Tamburlaine*, the desire is for earthly power: he will bestride the narrow world like a colossus, and the petty men must walk under his huge legs, and peep about to find themselves dishonourable graves. The critics have generally agreed that the splendid speech of Tamburlaine:

“Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,”

ends in a lamentable anti-climax:

“Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.”

But Tamburlaine did not think so; nor, I am convinced, did the poet. The critics seem to be completely mistaken here; for they approve of the early part of the speech, with which modern thought would sympathise, and condemn the conclusion, because it grates harshly on latter-day ears. But in the days of Queen Elizabeth and Philip II,

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when royalty was surrounded with the panoply of supreme majesty, was it not brave to be a king? A god was not so glorious as a king.

As in *Tamburlaine* the ambition is for earthly power, so in *Faustus* the *summum bonum* is magic — the control of time and space. In *The Jew of Malta*, it is wealth, and the power that wealth brings: he does not wish to be merely a rich man:

“Fie; what a trouble 'tis to count this trash.”

He will not rest until he has everything, until he sways empires with his wealth. The richest merchants must be beggars in comparison with him.

It is a different Marlowe that we see in *Edward II*; and although the play has been extravagantly praised, I believe it to be poetically markedly inferior to the other three. It is universally assumed to have been Marlowe's last dramatic work; but the fact is, no one knows anything definite about this important matter. We do not know when it was written, nor when it was first put on the stage. It was licensed for printing 6 July 1593, about a month after Marlowe was slain; but the first known edition is the quarto of 1594, *The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England: with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer*. And the title-

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page further informs us that it was "written by Chri. Marlow Gent."

In this drama the interest is not concentrated on one character, as it was in the others: the King, the Queen, Mortimer, and Gaveston all stand out sharply, and lesser persons are not crudely set forth. But it deals with a single elemental passion, as did *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, and *The Jew*: this passion is *friendship*. In order to understand it, one must look upon the passion of friendship from the Elizabethan point of view, which in this matter differs very largely from our own. Compared to the friendships of the Elizabethan giants, our best college friendships to-day are pale. The English language has never exceeded in passion the lines of Shakespeare's sonnets; and most of the best ones were written to a man, which, when first discovered by very young students, invariably causes a painful shock. Not infrequently Elizabethans valued their friends higher than their wives, or any of the ties of blood. If one doubts this, he has only to read the words of Melantius, in *The Maid's Tragedy*.

As *Tamburlaine* lost his life in the passion for earthly power, as *Faustus* lost his soul in the passion for forbidden magic, as the Jew died a horrible death in the pursuit of wealth, so Edward loses his character, his position, his influence, his queen, and finally his life, in the vain passion of friend-

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ship. For Marlowe shows the same terrible irony here that we have found in his other works; the King, who longs for Gaveston's friendship, believing that in this one instance he is beloved as a man rather than as a King, is cruelly deceived; Gaveston's love is founded wholly on selfishness. The heart-hunger of royal personages, who so seldom hear the language of frankness and sincerity, has been repeatedly used as a motive in literature; we have only to remember Browning's *In a Balcony* and Daudet's *Kings in Exile*. Marlowe has employed it here with great power and with a closer approach to humanity than in any other drama ascribed to him. From the modern point of view, this weak king seems idiotic; but one must understand Elizabethan ideas of friendship before he can understand that Friendship was a terrible passion, elevating and degrading like other passions; and that just as kings have been ruined by wine and by women, so in the sixteenth century it was quite possible to be ruined by a friend.

King Edward is indeed a pathetic figure in Marlowe's drama, as he was in history, from the contemporary chronicles of which the dramatist probably drew his material; and it is rather strange to find Marlowe, who delighted in representing in his other protagonists the very superlative of will-power, selecting here for portrayal a man damned

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with indecision. It can best be accounted for by remembering what has already been so emphasised, that the King's passion was too strong for his character. His death is horrible and his last speeches are full of pathos, especially the oft-quoted one in which he compares his present squalor with his former splendour, and wishes his wife to remember the contrast. But Charles Lamb's comment on this passage, which practically all editors of Marlowe quote as though it were Holy Writ, is the merest fustian and nonsense: "The death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." Twenty superior scenes might be cited, but we need think for the moment only of Lear's whisper :

"Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little."

Lamb deserves the homage of all students of the Elizabethan drama for his incomparable services in making that drama known; but his hyperbole of criticism is as absurd in this instance as his ridiculous comparison of the death of Calantha in the *Broken Heart* with Calvary and the Cross. The time has come for a protest.

Edward II belongs to the group of Chronicle-histories in English dramatic literature; it was one of the first, and ranks deservedly high. Had

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Marlowe lived to middle age he might have done splendid work in this field; but at his best, and if he had lived to be a hundred, he could never have written a play like *Henry IV*, for the simple reason that he has given not the slightest indication of possessing a sense of humour. And the absence of this is not merely a positive loss, — it destroys, as Mr. Saintsbury has pointed out, the power of self-criticism. Marlowe had no check on his own work; like Victor Hugo and Wordsworth, he could not always tell when he was sublime and when he was something very different. Yet self-control, which was apparently lacking in Marlowe's own life and character, might have prevented his muse from soaring to the vertiginous heights reached in *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus*. The real glory of Marlowe as a poet is his boundless aspiration; we may grant that *Edward II* shows a commendable absence of the rant and bluster that sometimes disfigure his other plays; still it unfortunately exhibits also an absence of his supreme gifts as a poet. Other men could have written *Edward II*; but no one but Marlowe could have written *Faustus*. Therefore, if I had to give up any one of his four great dramas, I would most willingly spare the history of the forlorn king.

Marlowe's reticence in all his plays on the subject of the love between men and women is as

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notable as was Stevenson's, and more difficult to explain. So far as we can guess, this topic, which has been the mainspring of the drama among all nations, did not interest him. Possibly he was so masculine in temperament that men's ambitions and powers were enough to draw all his intellectual attention. Perhaps in his short life he had never met a good woman. He has certainly created not a single feminine character that interests us deeply, or who seems in any complex way true to life. Sin is the basis of his dramas; he has drawn no remarkable women, and created no good men.

In summing up his great contributions to the development of English drama, we find that more than any other one man he established blank verse as the medium of expression, and splendidly illustrated its fitness: he set the pace for dramatic passion: he freed England from the tyranny of pseudo-classic domination, and made the drama of our race romantic and free. Had there been no Marlowe, no one can tell what the Elizabethan stage would have been; but it probably would not have been what it is, the chief glory of English literature, and the wonder of the whole world. Marlowe is not the morning star; he is the sunrise.

We hear in his plays the voice of Elizabethan England; he represents its overweening pride, the enthusiasm of discovery and conquest, the

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shout of success, the sky-piercing ambition which dared God out of heaven, the limitless aspiration of passion and of intellect, and the inflexible power of an abnormally developed will. In the twentieth century, whether for good or for evil, we are much closer to the Elizabethans in temperament than any of the generations that stand between. Marlowe is a writer whom we can perfectly understand, even while we secretly realise the folly of such spiritual leadership. As a deeply thoughtful writer ¹ of to-day has remarked: "It is by their will that we recognise the Elizabethans, by the will that drove them over the seas of passion, as well as over the seas that ebb and flow with the salt tides. It is by their thoughts, so much higher than their emotions, that we know the men of the eighteenth century; and by their quick sensibility to the sting of life, the men of the nineteenth. . . . For, from a sensitive correspondence with environment our race has passed into another stage; it is marked now by a passionate desire for the mastery of life — a desire, spiritualised in the highest lives, materialised in the lowest, so to mould environment that the lives to come may be shaped to our will. It is this which accounts for the curious likeness in our to-day with

¹ Miss M. P. Willcocks, in her admirable novel, *The Wingless Victory*.

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that of the Elizabethans; their spirit was the untamed will, but our will moves in other paths than theirs, paths beaten for our treading by the ages between."

Such words as these are well worth reflection, for they contain profound wisdom. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas — probably Marlowe himself — were nothing more nor less than Nietzsche's Superman; and we know very well what he is and what he wants. But his influence is already on the wane; for he is not only no God, he knows less of the meaning of life than a little child.

IX

THE POET HERRICK

“What mighty epics have been wrecked by time
Since Herrick launched his cockleshells of rhyme!”

ROBERT HERRICK died in 1674, and the first biography of the man appeared in 1910. The reason why no “Life” of Herrick was published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was because nobody cared anything about him; the reason for the absence of such a work in the nineteenth century is because there was so little to say. Now the appearance of the first biography of a well-known poet more than two hundred years after his death is a literary event of some consequence, and calls for more than a passing comment. I open the beautiful volume with keen anticipation, read it with steady attention, and close it with disappointment. It is written with considerable skill, contains much good and sound literary criticism, indicates clearly the relation of Herrick’s lyrics to the production of his predecessors, and properly appraises his historical significance. But Professor Moorman’s *Life of Herrick* resembles the many lives of Shakespeare in the disparity between the slenderness of fact and the fatness of the book.

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This history of Robert Herrick covers over three hundred pages, and the known events of his life could be printed in about the same number of words. That such a work should be undertaken, however, is proof — if any were needed — of the permanence of the poet's fame. That a biography should appear within three years of a man's death is a sign that he has made some noise in the world, but it is no indication of how long the echoes will resound. But that the first biography of a seventeenth century poet should appear in the twentieth century looks like immortality.

About all that we really know of Robert Herrick is this: his father's name was Nicholas, who married Julian Stone 8 December 1582. The poet was born in Cheapside, London, in August 1591. The next year his father fell from a window and was killed. On 25 September 1607, the boy was apprenticed to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, a goldsmith. Professor Moorman publishes the full text of the indenture, which is interesting. In 1613 the young man entered Cambridge, and took his B.A. in 1617, and his M.A. in 1620. Whether he remained in residence from 1617 to 1620 is unknown. Where he was, and how he spent the years between 1617 and 1629, is unknown; part of the time he must have been in London, for his poems show an intimate friendship with Ben

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Jonson. In 1629 he was appointed to the living of Dean Prior, in Devonshire, and became a country parson. In 1647 he was ejected from this position by the Puritans, and made his way to London. There he published in 1648 the single volume of his poems, *Hesperides*; a separate title-page in the same book, prefacing the *Noble Numbers*, has the date 1647. Where and how he lived between 1647 and 1662 is unknown, except that for a part of the time he seems to have been in Westminster. In 1662 he returned to Dean Prior, having been reinstated by the crown. The last twelve years of his life are shrouded in absolute silence. He was buried at Dean Prior, 15 October 1674. No stone is left to mark the spot.

We have a portrait of him, engraved by William Marshall. It looks more like a bartender than a poet. Let us hope it is a caricature, for we know what Milton thought of the same artist's presentation of himself. Although Herrick prophesied immortality for his poems over and over again, the little volume of 1648 attracted no attention, and made absolutely no impression either on contemporary men of letters or on the public. Whether presumptive readers were terrified by the frontispiece-portrait, or whether the poems were choked by the excitement of the political revolution, we do not know; no second edition was called for,

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and none appeared until 1823! Our ignorance of Herrick's career is matched only by the puzzle of his character. There are over twelve hundred poems in his book which baffle all attempts at chronological arrangement. Scholars have made all sorts of guesses at the dates of their composition, editors have "assigned" this and that poem to this and that period, and we remain in ignorance. Seldom has there ever lived a poet who prattled so much about himself; he has no reserve; he is very confidential, very garrulous; yet the fundamental traits in his character remain unknown; pleasant subjects for speculation, like metaphysics, because incapable of proof. Dr. Grosart said he was an earnest Christian; Mr. Gosse says he was a pagan; and Mr. Saintsbury says that, whatever he was, he was not a pagan. He talks constantly about various fair women, and nobody knows whether these girls existed in life or only in his imagination. Following the custom of his time, he wrote poems of deep piety, poems of licentious abandonment, and poems of unspeakable filth. Seldom has a poet written more charmingly of the rural beauty of country life, of fresh fields and wild flowers; and yet his real love of the country may be reasonably doubted, for he speaks of Devonshire with loathing, and seems to have longed passionately for London. At the beginning of the *Hesperides* we

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find "The Argument of his Book," which is certainly a good overture to the music it contains :

"I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers ;
I sing of May poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes ;
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness ;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris ;
I sing of times transshifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white ;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the fairy king ;
I write of hell ; I sing (and ever shall)
Of heaven, and hope to have it after all."

But later on we find poems like these :

"More discontents I never had
Since I was born than here,
Where I have been and still am sad,
In this dull Devonshire."

The second poem in the *Noble Numbers* reads :

"For those my unbaptized rhymes,
Writ in my wild unhallowed times ;
For every sentence, clause, and word,
That's not inlaid with thee, my Lord,
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book that is not thine."

And yet in the same volume he published many poems that are not only cynically anti-religious

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in spirit, but almost inconceivably coarse. A professional clergyman and country parson, he often writes like a profligate. Then at the end of the *Hesperides* he put this couplet :

“ To his book’s end this last line he’d have placed :
Jocund his muse was, but his life was chaste.”

Were the last line original, we might form some true notion from it, but, unfortunately, it is a translation from Ovid !

The only way to approach an understanding of the man and his philosophy of life is to remember, first, last, and all the time, that he was a lyric poet. Lyrical poetry does not betray the character of its author, it simply reveals his moods. Every individual has all kinds of moods, some religious, some worldly ; some prudent, some reckless ; some showing a love of retirement, some showing a love of crowded streets ; some ascetic, some sensual. It is not in the least inconceivable that the same man should at times have felt like the country Herrick, again like the city Herrick, again like the parson Herrick, again like the lover Herrick, and again like the Herrick of the *Epigrams*, though a modern writer would never dare to print such thoughts. With all the conscious art of the trained literary expert, Herrick thinks out loud with the artlessness of a child. With one exception Herrick

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almost never alludes to contemporary literature, and he seems to have been quite deaf to its voice.

The two Englishmen who most strongly influenced the lyric poetry of the seventeenth century were the Rev. Dr. Donne and Ben Jonson. The author of the *Hesperides* belonged to the tribe of Ben, and owed more to him than to any other British poet; like his master, he loved the Latin classics, and knew them well. Out of the whole range of the world's literature we find that the two writers to whom in spirit and in form Herrick was most closely akin were Horace and Jonson. He had in large measure their devotion to art, their intense power of taking pains, their hatred of careless and slovenly work. Even the slightest poems in the *Hesperides* show the fastidious and conscientious artist. Then, in spite of the *Noble Numbers*, the great majority of Herrick's verses breathe the spirit of Horace — the love of this world and the celebration of its delights, all the more precious because so transitory. The influence of Jonson both in thought and in metre is evident everywhere. One of the most celebrated of Herrick's poems is directly imitative of Ben Jonson, who in turn borrowed his lines from the Latin. In Jonson's *Silent Woman* we find the graceful lyric :

“ Still to be neat, still to be drest
As you were going to a feast,

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Still to be pou'dred, still perfum'd :
Lady, it is to be presum'd,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a looke, give me a face,
That makes simplicitie a grace ;
Robes loosely flowing, haire as free :
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art.
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart."

Number 83 of the *Hesperides* reads :

" A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness ;
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction ;
An erring lace which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher ;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly.
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat ;
A careless shoestring, in whose tie
I see a wild civility —
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part."

This poetic idea is not exactly in harmony with the advice recently given to the students at a college for women : — " Girls, stand up straight, don't look at the boys, and keep your shoestrings tied."

It is interesting to observe once more that in all forms of art little depends on the subject and much on the treatment. Herrick was not a deep thinker,

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and only rarely touched on great subjects; in reading him we do not wrestle with challenging ideas, we simply walk happily and aimlessly in a sunlit garden. The perfume of flowers exhales from his old pages, and many of his poems are as perfect in form and beauty as the flowers themselves. He talks intimately about the little things in life, but his art is so exquisite that his slender volume has outlived tons of formidable folios. A great theme in itself has never made a book live; but often a good style has defied death. Swinburne, who knew poetry when he saw it, said that Herrick was the greatest writer of songs in the English language. We cannot forget him, either in a light or in a serious mood.

From the *Noble Numbers*:

TO KEEP A TRUE LENT

“Is this a fast, to keep
The larder lean
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look and sour?

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No; 'tis a fast to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.
It is to fast from strife,
From old debate
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.
To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent."

From the *Hesperides*:

TO PRIMROSES, FILLED WITH MORNING DEW

"Why do ye weep, sweet babes? can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew?
Alas! you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt th' unkind
Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years
Or warp'd as we
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears before ye have a tongue."

The first of these poems is as eternally true in the sphere of morals as is the second in the domain of art.

X

SCHOPENHAUER AND OMAR

THE intellectual delight I find in reading Schopenhauer is caused partly by the splendid consistency of his pessimism. One does not often meet a writer who has the courage and the candour seriously to elaborate a whole system of thought, logically leading up to the conclusion that the world is worse than nothing. Jonathan Swift was a consistent pessimist, both in his writings and in his conduct; he regularly kept his birthday as a day of fasting and mourning; but Swift left no philosophical system. Carlyle often spoke like a pessimist, but his pessimism was not inseparably connected with the order of the world: it sprang simply from a belief that the tendencies of the age were bad. Many writers are pessimists — or think they are — in times of special misfortune, or when absorbed in a morbid train of thought. Lyrical poetry is often pessimistic, because it is so often the outcome of a melancholy mood, or the expression of unsatisfied desire. In a general reading of Shakespeare's plays, we should not class him among the pessimists: but some of his sonnets

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are steeped in pessimism. Perhaps there is no one who has not at some time, for a long or short interval, been a pessimist; who has not deeply felt what the Germans call *Weltschmerz*; but the peculiar mark of Schopenhauer is that he is a pessimist in cold blood. His system is indeed just the reverse of that of Carlyle, who denounced the age and the men of the age, but who believed in a beneficent order of the universe and in the divine potentiality of human nature: it is altogether different from the pessimism of the Book of Ecclesiastes, emphasising the vanity and suffering of life, but finding one key to the mystery in fearing God and keeping His commandments. Schopenhauer's pessimism is coldly philosophical, one might almost say mathematical. Except in places where he flings mud at the professors of philosophy, his book nowhere sounds like the tone of a soured or disappointed man; the writer is in mental equipoise, in perfect possession of his wits. It took him four years — from the age of twenty-six to the age of thirty — to complete his work for the press, and he wrote only during the first three hours of the morning, when the cream of his rich mind rose to the top. We can easily imagine him seated before a warm fire, with his dressing-gown and slippers on, placidly writing off his theory that the world is a mirror of hell; that life and suffering

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are identical; that consciousness is the cardinal error of nature; that human existence is a tragedy, with the dignity of tragedy taken away. His temperament may be accurately described in the words of a biographer of John Randolph, "His was a nature that would have made a hell for itself even if fate had put a heaven around it." The relative goodness and badness of men does not affect Schopenhauer's pessimism. He would say that human character has little enough good in it, but even if it had ten times the amount it possesses, it could attain to no more happiness. Man is so constituted as to make worldly existence constant pain; we are but the manifestation of a blind Will, which multiplies itself in millions of forms, each one transient, expiating the error of its existence by death. It is far better not to be; before our sad eyes stands only the nothingness from which we sprang into the light; and this nothingness is the only goal of the highest human endeavour. Schopenhauer has, of course, a practical philosophy, an ethical solution: it is the complete denial of the will to live. The only way of salvation is to escape from one's tormenting and tormented self; in asceticism one will find, not indeed happiness, but a calm contemplation of the world-tragedy, and the only worthy preparation for the paradise of annihilation.

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It is interesting to compare and to contrast Schopenhauer's dramatic system with the philosophy and advice of Omar Khayyám, the astronomer-poet of Persia. The sick World is the patient; and these two learned doctors agree in the diagnosis, and differ as to the remedy. Both men were greater in literature than in either science or philosophy. Schopenhauer's sincere and noble style, so musical, so melancholy, with its flexibility of movement and brilliancy of illustration, with its sparkling wit and its solemn earnestness, has placed him forever among the few great prose writers of Germany. It is indeed his literary genius that accounts primarily for his prodigious influence on so many native and foreign authors — an influence that began shortly before his death in 1860, and which shows to-day no sign of diminishing power. The Persian, after a sleep of many centuries, had a glorious reincarnation in Edward Fitzgerald. The English poet draped old Omar in a garment of such radiant beauty as to make the ideas in the *Rubáiyát* seem infinitely more stately and imposing than they appear when stripped of all adornment.¹ Both Schopenhauer and Omar

¹ This may easily be seen by comparing Fitzgerald's with a literal prose translation, in Nathan Haskell Dole's admirable variorum edition of the *Rubáiyát*; one of the most important of the vast number of services that Mr. Dole has rendered to English students of various foreign literatures.

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are fatalists, believing in the despotism of destiny; both believe that the soul of man is ultimately lost in death's dateless night. Yet their ethical solutions of the eternal problem are contrary. Schopenhauer says, "You must escape from yourself by asceticism." Omar says, "You must escape from yourself by plunging into pleasure."

Both Schopenhauer and Omar were able to lead independent intellectual lives; each had a sufficient income, which left him free to devote his whole time to thought. This was probably one cause of their pessimism. As many a man is an atheist with a brilliant book in his hand, and a theist in activity, so men are pessimists in solitary hours when they contemplate the stage of life, and behold what looks like a great tragedy: when one leaves the auditorium for the stage, when one plays one's part actively with others, pessimism sometimes vanishes, and life becomes significant and important. For pessimism is not begotten of pain, but of the awful fear that the world has no meaning.

Schopenhauer's life was singularly uneventful: Omar's existence was flavoured with romance. When a youth, he agreed with his two most intimate friends, that whichever of them became rich should divide his property equally with the others. One of them rose to be Vizier, and Omar, in a pleasant and quite natural inconsistency with his teach-

ing, asked simply for a competence, that he might devote his life to intellectual pursuits. Strange to say, his friend was willing to divide up; and Omar became a devotee of science and philosophy, giving special attention to astronomy. The pleasure he found in study did not diminish his zeal for theoretical debauchery. His *summum bonum* is wine and women, while he may have taken care to avoid both. Schopenhauer solemnly preaches asceticism, but was a saint only at his desk. He showed the steep and thorny way to heaven, but recked not his own rede. Now the instinct of humanity is correct in testing the value of a doctrine by the practice of the man who utters it. As Emerson remarked, "What you *are* thunders so loud I cannot hear what you say." A physician cannot speak impressively against tobacco with a cigar in his mouth.

The three questions which every thoughtful man asks, What am I? Why am I? Whither am I going? were ones to which Omar could find no answer. His philosophy, which has been, is now, and perhaps always will be popular, amounts simply to this: We find ourselves in a world full of beauty and physical delight, but which is an enigma. By the highest part of our nature, we are driven to questionings which lead us into the darkness and leave us there. Of our origin, of our destiny we know absolutely nothing: the past and the future

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are blank: but we do know that our present life is short: that we have opportunities for positive pleasure of the senses: to postpone this is to lose it. The wise man will grasp pleasure while he has the power, instead of laying up treasures in a mythical heaven.

To an austere mind whose religious faith has never been shaken, such a doctrine as Omar's seems unworthy of so profound a scholar: one must have tasted the bitterness of scepticism before one can have much charity for the Persian poet.

Schopenhauer in prose, and Omar in verse, are in melancholy agreement in their estimate of the significance of the individual life. Listen to the German:

It is really incredible how meaningless and void of significance, when looked at from without, how dull and unenlightened by intellect when felt from within, is the course of the life of the great majority of men. Every individual, every human being and his course of life, is but another short dream of the endless spirit of nature, of the persistent will to live: is only another fleeting form, which it carelessly sketches on its infinite page, space and time. And yet, and here lies the serious side of life, every one of these fleeting forms, these empty fancies, must be paid for by the whole will to live, in all its activity, with many and deep sufferings, and finally with a bitter death, long feared and coming at last. This is why the sight of a corpse makes us suddenly so serious.¹

¹ Citations from Schopenhauer are from Lord Haldane's translation.

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The voice of the Persian :

“ 'Tis but a tent, where takes his one day's rest
A Sultan to the realm of death address :
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another guest.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more :
The Eternal Sáki from that bowl has poured
Millions of bubbles like us, and will pour.”

Both men are fatalists: each believes in some force which is the ground of the world of things, and which works itself out regardless of the human race: deaf to all human cries of pain: inevitable and inexorable: of which man is but the plaything. Fatalism rules the world and the actions of men, and the sooner we recognise this truth, the better for our peace of mind.

Schopenhauer says:

It holds good of inward as of outward circumstances that there is for us no consolation so effective as the complete certainty of unalterable necessity. No evil that befalls us pains us so much as the thought of the circumstances by which it might have been warded off. Therefore nothing comforts us so effectually as the consideration of what has happened from the standpoint of necessity, from which all accidents appear as tools in the hand of an over-ruling fate, and we therefore recognise the evil that has come to us as inevitably produced by the conflict of inner and outer circumstances: in other words, fatalism.

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Omar calls us a moving row of shadow-shapes, impotent pieces on the chequer-board; and there is no use looking to the sky for help, for the sky is as impotent as we.

We find then our two philosophers in complete agreement as to the insignificance of man and the hopelessness of his future: there remains, however, this question. The two doctors have both condemned us: our case is indeed hopeless: but what are we going to do? Although of no importance to our neighbours, and of no interest to God, still, here we are: and here we must stay until merciful annihilation relieves us. What shall we do to make ourselves as comfortable as possible? Now to this question, which surely has some value to us, Schopenhauer and Omar give precisely opposite answers.

Schopenhauer says the problem is to escape from personality, from selfhood, from the domination of will: and strangely enough he makes this retreat possible only through the intellect, by means of that very consciousness which he has declared to be the mistake of our being. Men of genius are freed at intervals from the will, because of the high order of their intellect, which permits them to be lost in æsthetic contemplation of the Universals, the Platonic Ideas: to attain to this state of blessedness, all willing and striving for pleasure must be absolutely abandoned, for it is only as one

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contemplates one's self in the third person that one finds any respite from suffering. The wise man will cut off everything that connects him with the world, will resolutely sacrifice the longing for happiness, and, by the examples of saints and martyrs, will endeavour to become as unworldly and as impersonal as they. This is the gospel according to Schopenhauer: this is the only way to overcome the world.

Omar does not only dislike this remedy, he specifically condemns it. He wishes indeed to escape from self, but in a quite different sense: we must escape from self-introspection, from philosophical meditation, from the subjective life. The shortest route to this refuge is the alcoholic one, which he earnestly recommends. Increase of knowledge increaseth sorrow. Why throw away the short time we have in ascetic negation? The positive pleasures of life are within our reach. To see the total difference in the practical philosophy of our two guides, let us compare their eloquence.

From Schopenhauer:

True salvation, deliverance from life and suffering, cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will. . . . If we turn our glance from our own needy and embarrassed condition to those who have overcome the world, in whom the will, having attained to perfect self-knowledge, found itself again in all, and then freely denied itself and who then merely wait to see the last trace of it vanish with

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the body which it animates: then, instead of the restless striving and effort, instead of the constant transition from wish to fruition, and from joy to sorrow, instead of the never-satisfied and never-dying hope which constitutes the life of the man who wills, we shall see that peace which is above all reason, that perfect calm of the spirit, that deep rest, that inviolable confidence and serenity, the mere reflection of which in the countenance, as Raphael and Correggio have represented it, is an entire and certain gospel: only knowledge remains, the will has vanished.

From Omar :

“You know, my friends, with what a brave carouse
I made a second marriage in my house :
Divorced old barren Reason from my bed,
And took the daughter of the Vine to spouse.

Come, fill the cup and in the fire of spring
Your winter-garment of repentance fling :
The bird of time has but a little way
To flutter — and the bird is on the wing.”

The German's way of salvation is from the will to the intellect: the Persian's from the intellect to the will.

Goethe permitted Faust to try both systems, and to find salvation in neither; and for our edification there are many people walking in each way at this moment, whose experiment we may observe. Faust discovered that asceticism and sensuality both led to misery; that the only course which brought true happiness was faith in God and active devotion to man, which is the teaching of Chris-

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tianity. Schopenhauer's philosophy is perhaps greater and grander than Omar's, but while they both interest us, neither can save us. Absolute pessimism cannot lead to a rational or noble way of life : and there is hardly more virtue in asceticism than there is in pleasure.

XI

LESSING AS A CREATIVE CRITIC

GERMANY did not become a world-power in literature until after 1750. This is a remarkable fact, in view of what had been going on for centuries in Italy, France, Spain, and England. So far as a nation can owe a whole literature to one man, Germany owes hers to Lessing.

The realistic picture of depravity which Paul drew in the first part of his letter to the Romans would fairly represent the condition of Germany at the close of the Thirty Years' War. The civilisation of the Fatherland relapsed fully two centuries. There was nothing remotely resembling a national spirit. The unscrupulous selfishness of the petty princes, who had cynically abandoned even the semblance of virtue, had its harsh counterpart in the condition of the common people, where ignorance was linked with despair. With political and social affairs on such a level, the standard of literature was flat. For if literature is the life of history, how can we have activity in the former when the latter is dead? How can the spirit of healthy and vigorous life breathe out of decay?

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There was no literature, because there was no soil from which literature might spring. War had smitten the earth with a curse, and Germany was the abomination of desolation.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, German literature got a false start. The best men of letters seemed to believe that the only way to accomplish successful results was to follow the French. Even the mother tongue was despised, her most cultivated sons speaking a language that sounded more polite. Everything that could act as a check on creative activity was in full operation. Art was tongue-tied by authority. Pedants had made a beaten path, which must be followed by aspirants to literary fame. Gottsched, the literary autocrat, professing himself to be wise, became a fool. With the perversity of all scholars whose learning exceeds their wisdom, Gottsched attempted to force a native literature into a foreign mould; and he was worshipped as an oracle. It was the dark hour before the dawn.

Lessing has been well called the Luther of German drama. As the great Protestant released men from the bondage of forms and ceremonies, so Lessing, by rebelling against the tyranny of French rules of art, showed his countrymen, both by precept and by practice, what a national drama should be. Luther attacked Rome: Les-

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sing attacked Paris. The criticisms of poetry and painting in the *Laokoon*, and the dramatic theories expounded and developed in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* opened up far vistas of thought and imagination, and roused to life all the sleeping energies of the German mind. These books made epochs. The *Laokoon* revealed the beauty of Greek art and literature in their simple grandeur; the *Dramaturgie* struck off forever the shackles with which the French had bound poetry and the drama. These works prepared the way for that great burst of splendour which brightened the whole world.

It is not easy to exaggerate the difficulties with which Lessing had to contend. As Mr. Lowell said, "He began his career at a period when we cannot say that German literature was at its lowest ebb, only because there had not yet been any flood-tide." Lessing saw that before he could build, the French superstructure must be ruthlessly destroyed. To attack Gottsched and his followers was to attack the Supreme Court, but Lessing did not hesitate. In addition to the great obstacle formed by the consensus of men of letters, Lessing felt the chill of penury, which in other men has repressed the noble rage. His life was a constant struggle with poverty. The King, who professed friendship for authors as ardently as

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politicians profess love for the workingman, was strangely blind to the new literary movement. Frederic saw no potential energy in German literature. The French and Italian theatres at Berlin were handsomely supported by the crown; the German theatre was a booth on the street. The King was an enthusiastic student of French literature; he even attempted to add to it; he worshipped Voltaire while hating him; but he did nothing for Lessing.

Lessing's nature shows the rare union of two elements — he had all the fiery zeal of the reformer with the deep insight of a thoroughly disciplined mind. He seems to have seen clearly the actual possibilities of the future; and he never faltered in his purpose to make it the present. Added to his natural wisdom and strong common-sense, he was a sound scholar, especially in the literature and art of the ancients. With the rich material of Greek literature at his full command, he determined to lay a foundation for the German classical movement. He recognised what no other man of his time had seen, that the French, who claimed to be in apostolic succession from Aristotle, were really out of harmony with the spirit of the master. They were enclosed in self-made walls, and could not see anything beyond those narrow limits. They abhorred Shakespeare as the Greeks abhorred

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the barbarians. But Lessing was convinced not merely that Shakespeare was greater than the French dramatists, but that he was in spirit a truer follower of Aristotle. To Lessing belongs primarily the honour of making Shakespeare a familiar name in Germany. Weisse had translated some of Shakespeare's plays; and later Wieland made translations, and Augustus Schlegel in his Vienna lectures interpreted the glories of the great Englishman; but Lessing introduced Shakespeare to the popular heart. Gottsched declared that the way to produce a work of genius was to follow the rules. Lessing studied what genius had done, to discover the principle of success. He wrote one sentence that gives the key to his critical work. "Much would in theory appear unanswerable, if the achievements of genius had not proved the contrary."

Lessing determined to make his countrymen understand that German drama could not walk naturally on French stilts. By regarding French tragedy as the only model, the way to a knowledge and appreciation of Shakespeare was hopelessly closed: and the free spirit of Shakespeare was needed in Germany as the very breath of life. Lessing showed that there could be a great German literature; he showed it in two ways. He proved it in theory by his unanswerable criticisms,

and he proved it in practice by composing two masterpieces of dramatic construction, *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilia Galotti*.

Minna von Barnhelm was the first German comedy of any importance; though I do not agree with the common statement that it is the best in the language. It is, however, Lessing's greatest play, and is to-day on the German stage more popular than ever. It seems to survive all changes in taste, to delight every generation. For technically it is almost flawless; and its characters move and speak with the authority of flesh and blood. The development of the plot is the despair of many dramatists. The scenes succeed each other in logical order, and the unity of the piece as a work of art — the only unity for which Lessing had any reverence — is sustained. Its humour is irresistible, but is like its author in being robust rather than delicate and subtile. Lessing's observations during the Seven Years' War gave him abundance of material for *Minna*, and the play came at the right moment to awaken popular enthusiasm.

Emilia Galotti is a tragedy full of native power and occasionally rising to a high pitch of dramatic intensity, as in the dialogue between Claudia and Marinelli in the third act, where the words are repeated with cumulative effect, *Der Name Mari-*

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nelli war das letzte Wort des sterbenden Grafen! Like *Minna*, the play is well constructed, but it is not so great in tragedy as the other is in humour. The character of the heroine is not naturally consistent; and the gravest dramatic fault is committed in there being no sufficient cause to bring about the climax. Yet with all its defects, *Emilia Galotti* has the stamp of genius, and I have seen it rouse a German audience to enthusiasm. It revolutionised German tragedy, and by indicating correct methods of dramatic composition, it became an inspiration for greater plays that followed. For the first time, the German people possessed a fine tragedy in their own tongue. No one will question the truth of Kuno Fischer's statement, that *Emilia Galotti* was *die Geburt der modernen deutschen Tragödie*.

But Lessing was not a creative genius of the first order. His dramatic pieces all smell of the lamp. His plays are constructed rather than created. How totally different, in this respect, is *Emilia Galotti* from *Macbeth!* And Lessing's other dramas are not ideal. In *Miss Sara Sampson* he showed that the playwright need not confine himself to court scenes and noble personages,—an opinion which it is needless to say was current at that time. This play was once popular in Germany; but it is too close an imitation of English melodrama; it is characterised by the

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English love of cheap moralising and is lachrymose enough to satisfy the most sentimental reader; it is also artificial, sags heavily in places, while some scenes are positively dull. The character Marwood is apparently from the original Millwood in the English play *George Barnwell*, a play that once had a fabulous reputation, but which one reads nowadays with a yawn and a smile. . . . Lessing's great work, *Nathan der Weise*, though cast in a dramatic form, and though still produced on the German stage, is a philosophical poem rather than a drama, and does not strictly fall under the present subject of discussion. It expresses the religious tolerance as well as the reverence of its author, being written immediately after Lessing's bitter controversies with Pastor Goeze and others.

The chief reason why Lessing's plays are so unsatisfactory is because he was no poet. Many of his admirers would make him one, but the effort is vain. His nature was of too logical a cast, too strongly marked by shrewd common-sense, to vibrate sympathetically to poetic inspiration. The phases of human nature reflected in his dramas we often recognise as true pictures; but there are elements of character he never reflects at all. He strikes the chords with a firm and true touch, but he does not sound the deepest notes. In his

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hatred of obscurity he perhaps failed to appreciate the power of mystery. If his characters are sad, we always know why; if they are passionate, the cause is as plain as the result. Lessing's plays do not probe deeply into the mystery of life. A nameless melancholy, a heart-consuming yet vague passion, such as is portrayed in *Faust*, was apparently beyond the range of Lessing's powers.

But Lessing the critic is a greater man than Lessing the playwright. The latter arouses our admiration but rarely our enthusiasm; the former keeps us in perpetual surprise by the penetration of his thought and the charm of his style. The world has seen better dramas than Lessing's best; but I should hesitate to name his superior as a critic. May we not explain his inferiority as a dramatist in the same manner in which he accounted for Shakespeare's mediocrity as an actor? "Wenn Shakespeare nicht ein eben so grosser Schauspieler in der Ausübung gewesen ist, als er ein dramatischer Dichter war, so hat er doch wenigstens eben so gut gewusst, was zu der Kunst des einen, als was zu der Kunst des andern gehört. Ja, vielleicht hatte er über die Kunst des erstern um so viel tiefer nachgedacht, weil er so viel weniger Genie dazu hatte," and then he comments upon the excellent wisdom of Hamlet's speech to the players. A similar thought may be applied to Lessing; per-

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haps his reflections on the playwright's art were the more profound, because he had so much less genius for it than for dramatic criticism. In battles of logic, he marshals his arguments with the skill of an experienced general. He uses the same plan that the great Theban introduced into military tactics: he selects a weak point in the array of the antagonist, and by concentrating the mass of his strength at that place, the whole line of his enemy appears in confusion. The orderly ranks of his sentences move like an army in the sunshine, all bristling with the keen and polished weapons of his wit and satire.

The *Laokoon*, in which Lessing showed that the laws governing poetry and painting are not identical, was the work which first revealed its author's critical genius. In the course of his reasoning, he made clear the superiority of Greek literature over the Latin. Men turned anew to Homer and Sophocles, and read the great poets in the strong light of Lessing's mind. The effect produced on German literature was incalculable. Descriptive poetry had been the most common and the most admired: it scarcely survived the *Laokoon*.

But the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* — the dramatic papers written for the Hamburg theatre — is the most important critical work of Lessing's; and it may not be impertinent to review briefly

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the circumstances which called it into existence. Before the opening of the great play-house at Hamburg in 1767 there were no standard German theatres; the performances were given by strolling players, who travelled from town to town, and played wherever they saw an opportunity to win the daily bread. The nature of the pieces they presented and their methods of acting were necessarily determined by the prospect of pecuniary reward. Owing to the adulation of the French by the cultured classes, the common people had been accustomed to nothing but horse-play and clown filth. The tireless though misguided efforts of Gottsched had slightly raised the ideal, and for this German literature surely owes him something; but the popular idea of a good play was exceedingly low.

Some of the leading citizens of Hamburg determined to have in that city a national theatre, where a stock company of first-rate players should present only plays combining dramatic excellence with high moral tone. An invitation was sent to Lessing to act as theatrical critic; they seem also to have expected that he would write plays for special production. In the spring of 1767 the theatre was opened, but before two years had passed the project was abandoned, owing to jealousies among the actors and to popular disapproval of the severity of the moral tone.

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Thus in one sense the attempt to support a standard theatre at Hamburg was a disheartening failure. But from a broader view it was a permanent blessing to the literature of Europe. It brought into existence the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. Lessing began these papers with criticisms of the acting as well as of the plays; but after a number of visits from irate actresses, he abandoned this part of his task. Lessing had in view two great objects. He meant to destroy utterly the supremacy of the French drama and to prove that their rules were not, as they had claimed, the rules of the ancients; and in the second place to create a German drama by expounding in the most liberal manner the true Greek ideals. He was eminently fitted for this great undertaking. His learning and command of it were phenomenal, and constantly surprised his contemporaries; his dramatic experience had been wide and varied, and the critical bent of his mind had been trained to perfection by his studies in the history and theory of æsthetics.

His attack on the French theatre was fierce and unsparing. The general worship of the French provoked him to the highest degree; but it was an inspiration. No man ever enjoyed a literary fight more than Lessing. Voltaire, in his capacity as a playwright, was a shining target for Lessing's shafts of wit; and his plays were high

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in fashion. To an acute and hostile critic they presented many vulnerable points; and Lessing seldom missed. His famous comparison in his eleventh paper between the Ghost in *Hamlet* and the Ghost in *Semiramis* was a master stroke, and was enough to ruin the reputation of Voltaire's play. The genius resplendent in the comedies of Molière Lessing fully recognised. Upon Corneille, however, he made many vigorous charges. He proved that stickler for artistic rules to be a truant from Aristotle. Lessing accepted the Greek theory that the aim of tragedy is to excite pity (*Mitleid*) and fear (*Schauder*); and he showed that the fear is not for the characters, but for ourselves. The French had substituted *terror* for both of these emotions; and Corneille had so far misinterpreted Aristotle and misunderstood his theory of the drama as to imagine that either of these emotions by itself was sufficient for a tragedy.

Lessing's destructive criticism was effective even beyond his hopes: it destroyed Gallic influence on the German stage. Schlegel, in his Vienna lectures, made a passing allusion in 1808 which shows how completely the work had been done. "When the *Dramaturgie* was published, we Germans had scarcely any but French tragedies on our stages, and the extravagant predilection for them as classical models had not then been

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combated. At present the national taste has declared itself so decidedly against them, that we have nothing to fear from that quarter."

But the essential aim of Lessing's criticisms was not to tear down, but to build up; it was well worth while to clear the ground of rubbish; but only that a good superstructure might be built on the right foundation. Lessing's work was not half done when he had revealed the mistakes of the French; he then developed his own theories of dramatic art, based on a free interpretation of Aristotle. In his discussions of the three unities — which will never trouble us any more — he exhibited his common-sense as well as his profound learning. These unities had been a stumbling-block to the French. They insisted that by the unity of time was meant a day of twenty-four hours; and that the unity of place required that the spot where the drama opened must suffer no change till the final curtain. Corneille had racked his brains over the unity of time until he made the discovery that the dramatic day should last thirty hours; a rather arbitrary limit, adopted for personal convenience. Lessing insisted that Aristotle never intended to lay down hard and fast lines for the unities of time and place. They were observed in the Greek drama, owing to the presence of the Chorus, which could not be well conceived

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to appear at times far apart or in distant places ; but that the master meant to make an absolute *dictum* for all time to come, Lessing declared was absurd. The only unity necessarily required in every dramatic piece was the unity of action, which means simply logical unity ; the scenes must succeed each other in an orderly fashion, and every event must follow the law of causation. By clearing up this subject, Lessing laid a broad foundation for the German theatre.

Lessing's discussion of the great question, Should there be an ethical purpose in the drama ? shows how truly philosophical was his conception of dramatic art. Few who seriously reflect on the subject to-day will maintain that a tragedy ought to teach a direct moral lesson ; but in Lessing's time contemporary thought gave to this question an unhesitating affirmative. The moral hitched on to the end of tragedies was regarded as the *raison d'être* of the whole play. Voltaire boasted that in his *Semiramis* horrible deeds were punished in extraordinary ways. Lessing proved such an idea to be a fundamental error. He argued that the effect was more powerful when crime and punishment were bound up together in a natural chain of events. His view of the working of natural law in the drama is of course in harmony with our modern spirit.

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Lessing's idea of the relation between the drama and historical truth was far ahead of his time; it fairly staggered the German literary public. Many had expressed the opinion — many still express it — that the poet in his representation of past events must strictly follow history. Lessing showed that there was no reasonable ground for such a notion; the dramatist might be faithful to history in his characters, otherwise there would be no assignable reason for their appellation. But in minor matters the poet must be free to arrange the details of his plot, so long as they are consistent and have the appearance of truth. He wisely remarked, "Er braucht eine Geschichte nicht darum, weil sie geschehen ist, sondern darum, weil sie *so* geschehen ist, dass er sie schwerlich zu seinem gegenwärtigen Zwecke besser erdichten könnte." Lessing also strongly combated the theory that one aim of the drama was to preserve the memory of great men, showing the narrowness of such a conception, and its cramping effect on the production of plays. "Die Absicht der Tragödie ist weit philosophischer als die Absicht der Geschichte: und es heisst sie von ihrer wahren Würde herabsetzen, wenn man sie zu einem blossen Panegyrikus berühmter Männer macht, oder sie gar den Nationalstolz zu nähren missbraucht." He concluded this subject with the remark that poetic truth is of more im-

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portance than historical truth in giving us a knowledge of human nature; in the works of the great masters of tragedy we see reflected more clearly than anywhere else the character of man.

Lessing's influence on English literature has not been notable. We did not need him so acutely. It was through the *Dramaturgie* that he began to impress literary Europe, but he was not well known in England before 1830. His influence on English drama in the nineteenth century might have been great had there been anything to influence. But there was no real dramatic movement in England until the close of the century; and by that time Lessing's ideas had become largely axiomatic. But the English-speaking people ought to feel a special interest in the life and work of Lessing; he was greatly influenced by English models; and his criticisms of Shakespeare are not the least valuable part of his writings.

Lessing's style was like the man: straightforward, virile, combative, sometimes sarcastic, yet always betraying great depths of sympathy. Every line he wrote has the ring of sincerity. In a letter to his father he said, "If I write at all, it is not possible for me to write otherwise than as I think and feel." These heartening words are the echo of his life. To Lessing the pursuit of truth was not a duty; it was a passion. Narrow-

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ness and intolerance were hateful to him, and insincerity was the unpardonable sin. He loved truth because he could not help loving it, and it made his blood boil to see truth distorted and used to advertise false ideas. He had that freedom from prejudice which characterises every great critic. But he was preëminently a man of strong convictions.

XII

SCHILLER'S PERSONALITY AND INFLUENCE

SCHILLER was born at Marbach on the tenth of November 1759, the birthday of Martin Luther and the birthyear of Robert Burns. It is one of nature's rare felicities that Burns and Schiller should have entered the world together, since each was destined to enrich lyrical poetry and to stand forever as a fiery advocate of the claims of the heart against the conventions of society. Friedrich was intended by his parents for the ministry, but as he developed he passed through the intellectual struggle eternally symptomatic of youth, which resulted for him in the complete rout of theological dogma and the abandonment of clerical ambition. In January 1773, he was sent to the military school at Castle Solitude, founded and controlled by the capricious Duke of Württemberg. To boys of independence this institution resembled a jail rather than an academy; the rigour of its discipline seemed galling in its pettiness, and its curriculum dull and harsh. Its unintentional effect on the boy's theories of political and social liberty was profound and permanent.

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His personal appearance was as unconventional as his ideas. He was rough, uncouth, *unrein*, his very hair a flag of revolt, so that many times when he appeared at the breakfast table the boys exclaimed, "Aber, Fritz, wie siehst du wieder aus?"

"Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought," he would often leap up in the middle of the night to read and write. Stumbling clumsily over furniture, he would arouse his sleeping schoolmates and add more to his knowledge than to his popularity. Most of the boys regarded him as a freak, but he naturally had a few dear and intimate friends. He was a sentimental, morbid young German, and he wrote: "I am not yet twenty-one years old, but I can tell you frankly that the world has no further charm for me. . . . The nearer I come to the age of maturity, the more I could wish that I had died in childhood." He never had anything of Goethe's repose. One of his schoolmates said, "Sein Geist rastete nie — stand nie still — sondern suchte immer vorwärts zu schreiten." Thoroughly characteristic even then was his fierce rebellion against the ruling powers. As Professor Chuquet says: "Charles Moor est plus tragique que Goetz: l'un combat les évêques et les princes: l'autre combat l'ordre social tout entier."

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His reading at school and in his early years influenced him deeply, the books that produced the greatest effect being Werther, Götz, Ossian, Klopstock, Plutarch, Shakespeare, and Rousseau. In Schiller's literary activity, as in that of every other influential writer since 1775, we can trace many things back to Jean Jacques, who is perhaps the source of more literary, political, and social movements than any other writer of modern times.

While he was at school he secretly wrote his first play, *The Robbers*. After leaving the academy he borrowed money and published the work at his own, or rather at his friend's expense, in the spring of 1781. Many things in this play seem absurd to-day, and one must not forget the remark of the German prince to Goethe: "If I had been God and about to create the world, and had I foreseen that Schiller would write *The Robbers* in it, I would not have created it." Still the appearance of this drama is one of the events in the history of literature. It was a genuine eruption of the *Sturm und Drang*, and in its wild passion it expressed and relieved the overcharged heart of Germany. Kuno Fischer said, "Sein erstes Selbstbekenntnis sind *Die Räuber*, sein letztes *Die Künstler*." The difference between the two is really more a difference of intellectual development than any actual change. The words

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in Schiller's *Künstler*, beginning "Mich hält kein Band," reveal the same man who wrote *Die Räuber*.

When Schiller left the academy in 1780, he was not much better off. He received an appointment as surgeon to a regiment of soldiers at Stuttgart, and was compelled to wear a military uniform, which seemed to him as degrading as a livery. Having endured this hateful routine till he could stand it no longer, he fled with a helpful friend to Mannheim. This was in September 1782. Professor A. H. Palmer has pointed out that from this time on Schiller was generally dependent on others for the necessary resources. It has become a commonplace to say that Goethe was selfish and Schiller unselfish; but with due regard to Schiller's noble altruism, he, like many idealists and reformers, was chronically unable to pay his bills. His was the particular kind of genius that required support.

In the spring of 1784 appeared Schiller's second notable play, *Kabale und Liebe*. This was another plea for the individual against the hypocrisy and tyranny of social convention. Kuno Fischer will have it that the young lover is Schiller himself. "Ferdinand ist des Dichters Spiegelbild." The last scene of this tragedy on the stage to-day is sometimes greeted with unrestrained guffaws. Lemonade as a beverage has its merits, but it lacks dignity.

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Sentimental tragedy, of course, came from England, making its first important appearance there in 1732 in the play *George Barnwell*. This stream of sentimentality was enormously swollen by the novels of Richardson and by the genius of Rousseau, and in Germany is not yet dry. Lessing, in his play, *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755), shows the direct influence of England; and Schiller learned much from Lessing.

In 1787 appeared *Don Carlos*, which made the poet's reputation far more secure than the wild excrescences of *Die Räuber* and *Kabale und Liebe*. Here again Schiller reincarnated himself. All the despair, romantic passion, and vain longings of the prince are Schiller's own, as any one may see by reading the dramatist's letters of this period. The fact that the friend of Carlos cheerfully dies for him perhaps adds to the reality of the portrait. With all its serious faults in technique, *Don Carlos* is a noble dramatic poem and one of the imperishable glories of German literature. Nor is it ineffective on the modern stage.

In 1791 Schiller's health broke down, and the great works of the next fourteen years were written under circumstances of cruel pain and physical weakness, while the mind and heart of the poet remained as bold and exalted as ever, betraying no trace of the malady that was steadily destroy-

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ing his vitality. We echo the cry of Carlyle: "O Schiller, what secret hadst thou for creating such things as Max and Thekla, when thy body was wasting with disease?" The Wallenstein trilogy with its superb prologue certainly shows no trace of decay. *Wallenstein's Camp*, which exhibits on nearly every page the influence of Goethe, was performed at Weimar in October 1798, the *Piccolomini* on 30 January 1799, and *Wallenstein's Death* on 20 April. These reëstablished Schiller's position on the German stage, and on the flood-tide of his genius he produced *Maria Stuart* in 1800, and the *Maid of Orleans* in 1801. Actresses in many nations are still speaking the lines of his Queen of Scots, and I regard his Joan of Arc as the most purely charming of all his creations. I dissent from the common verdict that Joan's falling in love with the Englishman is a fatal error; I particularly admire this episode, because it gives to the Inspired Maid the irresistible touch of nature. Her love for the Englishman is more surely divine than her visions of angels. Could anything be more characteristic of the difference between the French and the German temperament in general, and between that of Voltaire and Schiller in particular, than their respective treatment of this wonderful historical figure?

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In 1803 appeared his classic drama *The Bride of Messina*, which exhibits his passion for the study of Greek æsthetics and his powers in sustained poetry, which to be sure is at times dangerously near declamation. In 1804 came his last and perennially popular work, *William Tell*. The local colour of this astonishing play is so accurate that it seems hardly conceivable that Schiller was not personally familiar with the scenes he portrayed; yet they were the results of his reading and particularly of his conversations with Goethe. Twenty-eight years later Goethe said to Eckermann, "Was in seinem Tell von Schweizer Lokalität ist, habe ich ihm alles erzählt." It is fitting and natural that Schiller's last drama should be the incarnation of the spirit of Liberty.

Schiller died in his house at Weimar on the afternoon of the ninth of May 1805. No one dared tell Goethe until the next day, when he enquired, "Schiller was very ill yesterday, was he not?" The messenger wept and Goethe knew the truth.

Schiller had first arrived at the village of Weimar, the intellectual capital of Germany, on 21 July 1787. He was introduced to Goethe on 7 September 1788, and for some time neither man suspected the intimacy that was to crown the later years. Their first impressions were mutually unpleasant, for in truth they were as unlike as Tur-

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genev and Tolstoi. But their friendship was one of the best things that ever happened to both men, one of the best things that ever happened to German literature, and one of the most beautiful things to contemplate in the history of humanity. It is impressive to stand in front of the theatre at Weimar, to gaze at the splendid statue of the two friends, and then to visit the crypt and see the two coffins side by side that hold the remains of the mighty dead. Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in death they are not divided. . . . One August afternoon I stood by the old stone table in the garden at Jena, where Goethe and Schiller used to sit and talk together, and I read the inscription, taken from the words spoken to Eckermann at this place on the eighth of October 1827: "Sie wissen wohl kaum, an welcher merkwürdigen Stelle wir uns eigentlich befinden. Hier hat Schiller gewohnt. In dieser Laube, auf diesen jetzt fast zusammengebrochenen Bänken haben wir oft an diesem alten Steintisch gesessen und manches gute und grosse Wort miteinander gewechselt. . . . Das geht alles hin und vorüber: ich bin auch nicht mehr der ich gewesen."

The comparison between Schiller and Goethe is a well-worn theme. Everyone realises now that Schiller was national, and Goethe universal. Perhaps the difference between the two may be

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more definitely expressed by saying that Goethe had the literary temperament and Schiller the rhetorical. Schiller was ardent, noble, striving: Goethe wise, profound, and calm. The latter called himself a *Weltkind*, and to Schiller's passionate talk on art and ethics, I seem to hear Goethe say:

“Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie:
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”

Schiller had the defects of his qualities, as is true of every man, and to-day among the young decadents of Germany it is as fashionable to despise Schiller as it is the rule to despise Longfellow among the literary young aspirants in America. In Otto Ernst's brilliant play, *Jugend von Heute*, one of the keenest and most delightful of all stingless satires, we are introduced to a charming family table where the honest *pater-familias* listens with horror to the conversation between his son, fresh from the university, and the two youthful *poseurs* he has brought home with him, who calmly declare that Schiller is no longer read by intelligent people.

Although Schiller received from English literature much more than he gave to it, his influence on our literature both in England and in America was wide and deep. At the end of the eighteenth and during the first years of the nineteenth century Schiller as a dramatist was completely over-

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shadowed amongst English-speaking people by the resounding fame of Kotzebue, who turned out later to be only a sham giant. Kotzebue was called the "German Shakespeare," and his dramas were read and acted on both sides of the Atlantic, producing veritable thrills. In the United States, between 1793 and 1814, appeared nine translations of Schiller, two of Lessing, and over fifty of Kotzebue! The New York theatrical manager, Dunlap, was so excited by the success of a play of Kotzebue's, that he learned German, made translations, and brought out both Kotzebue and Schiller on the American stage. Dunlap was a highly intelligent and gifted man, who did his best to give American audiences real literature on the stage. He actually took more interest in dramatic poetry than in stage spectacles.

And Schiller, though lacking the popularity of Kotzebue, was by no means unknown to English and American readers during these years. English versions of *The Robbers* appeared at London in 1792, at Philadelphia 1793, at Baltimore 1802; *Fiesko*, London 1796, Baltimore 1802; *Kabale und Liebe*, London 1795, 1796, 1797, Baltimore 1802; *Don Carlos*, London 1798; *Wallenstein*, 1800; *Piccolomini*, 1805; and *Maria Stuart*, 1801. In the Preface to the English translation of *Don Carlos*, 1798, we find, "The comparison which has

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been made between him and our own Shakespeare is, perhaps, not too highly exaggerated." A copy of the second edition, which appeared the same year, has bound up with it (in the library of Yale University) a translation of Kotzebue's *Sacrifice of Love*, 1799; in the Preface German literature is declared to be superior to contemporary English literature (as it certainly was); and then we find the familiar worship of Kotzebue. He is "Shakespeare without his quibbles, his negligences, his incongruities, his violations of the most indispensable probabilities."

In 1796 Coleridge planned to translate all the works of Schiller; on 16 September 1798, in company with Wordsworth, he sailed for Germany, and remained there over nine months. On 30 September 1799, in England, he received the manuscript of *Piccolomini*, which differed somewhat from the now standard text. At first he was impressed not at all favourably. He called it a "dull, heavy play," and spoke of his unutterable disgust in translating it. His translation was not popular, and Carlyle could not find a copy in 1823-1824 when writing his *Life of Schiller*. Scott, however, said that Coleridge's translation was greater than the original, an opinion which has been supported by some English critics of to-day.

The Preface to a translation of *The Robbers*,

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which appeared in 1795, advertises the work by saying, "A distinguishing feature of this piece is a certain wildness of fancy." This was in the flood-tide of English Romanticism, when the surest road to popularity was "wildness."

Schiller was the first German dramatic poet to appear from the American press, with the notable exception of Lessing. *Miss Sara Sampson* was published in English at Philadelphia in 1789, and in 1793 appeared *The Robbers*. The first appearance of Kotzebue in America was as late as 1799; and Scott's translation of Goethe's *Götz* came in 1814. Schiller's romance, *Der Geisterseher*, was published in English at London in 1795 and at New York in 1796, and apparently influenced the American novelist, Charles Brockden Brown, in his story *Wieland* (1798), which some one has called the first important original fiction written in the United States.

One of the earliest significant critical essays on German literature that appeared anywhere in English was a long article in the *North American Review* for April 1823, two years before Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* was published at London. This was a review of Döring's *Schillers Leben*, and developed into a lengthy, thoughtful essay on Schiller and German literature. Carlyle's book, of course, exerted a powerful influence, and he

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was one of the elect few that could not be deceived by the glamour of Kotzebue. Discussing *Kabale und Liebe*, he said, "The same primary conception has been tortured into a thousand shapes, and tricked out with a thousand petty devices and meretricious ornaments, by the Kotzebues, and other 'intellectual Jacobins,' whose productions have brought what we falsely call the 'German theatre' into such deserved contempt in England." Carlyle's general summary of Schiller is still accepted by all except idolaters or calumniators of the poet: "Sometimes we suspect that it is the very grandeur of his general powers, which prevents us from exclusively admiring his poetic genius. We are not lulled by the syren song of poetry, because her melodies are blended with the clearer, manlier tones of serious reason, and of honest though exalted feeling."

One of the most important books that was both a result and a cause of the influence of German literature on English was *A Historic Survey of German Poetry*, in three volumes, by William Taylor of Norwich, published at London in 1830. The Preface is dated May 1828, and he mentions there that he has been for a long time engaged in the task of translating German poetry. The work devotes 124 pages to Kotzebue, 75 to Schiller, and 138 to Goethe, who was yet alive, or, as Taylor

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states it, "He continues to reside there (Weimar) a bachelor, in dignified affluence." Taylor did not share De Quincey's low estimate of Goethe's powers, and Carlyle's exposure of Kotzebue had, alas, not convinced him. He said, however, that Schiller's historical tragedies were equal to those of Shakespeare, and of *William Tell* he remarked, "Indeed it may be doubted whether any gothic tragedy (we do not except *Macbeth* or the *Conspiracy of Venice*) is equal to this *Tell* for majesty of topic, for compass of plan, for incessancy of interest, for depth of pathos, for variety of character, for domesticity of costume, for truth of nature, and for historic fidelity."

In the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, De Quincey said of Schiller, "For us who are aliens to Germany, Schiller is the representative of the German intellect in its highest form; and to him, at all events, whether first or second, it is certainly due that the German intellect has become a known power, and a power of growing magnitude for the great commonwealth of Christendom." Such testimony at that time is historically interesting.

The first American edition of Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* appeared in 1833. In the July number of the *Christian Examiner*, 1834, Dr. F. H. Hedge reviewed the book, and this led to a number of articles on Schiller, Goethe, and German litera-

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ture in general. But the most important single work was probably George Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, nine volumes, Boston, 1838-1842. This collection, of course, contained selections from Schiller's lyrics and dramas. In 1856 Dr. Hedge said that in America Schiller was the best known, "or least misunderstood," of all German writers.

Longfellow had an exalted opinion of Schiller, as one might expect. He called him "by far the greatest tragic poet of Germany," and admired the "moral elevation" of his works. It is generally believed that the *Building of the Ship* was influenced by the *Song of the Bell*. The poet Bryant delivered an address at the great Schiller festival in New York, on the one hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth, 1859. In this he spoke particularly of Schiller as the poet of freedom. This address was translated into German and published in the *Schiller Denkmal*, Berlin, 1860, which included a collection of centenary addresses made in all parts of the world. It would indeed be difficult to exaggerate the range of Schiller's influence on world literature and world politics.¹

¹ For his influence on French literature, see Von Rossel, *Histoire des Relations Littéraires entre La France et L'Allemagne*, 1897; Suepfe, *Geschichte des deutschen Kultureinflusses auf Frankreich*, 1886; Sachs, *Schillers Beziehungen zur französischen und englischen Literatur*, 1861. The best *Life of Schiller* in Eng-

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Schiller's personality was particularly charming, in its frankness, honesty, noble ideality; there was a combination of Spartan simplicity with singular sweetness that endeared him to those who knew him well. When he was a boy at school, he wrote of himself, "You will hear that I am obstinate, passionate, and impatient; but you will also hear of my sincerity, my fidelity, and my good heart." Madame de Staël gave excellent testimony to the moral worth and personal charm of Schiller. She arrived at Weimar in December 1803, and her coming was awaited by both Goethe and Schiller with terror; they looked for a combination of the blue stocking and the new woman, and were fearful of boredom. Goethe was at Jena, and was so afraid of her that he did not dare to return to Weimar. Schiller wrote that God had sent this woman to torment him! But familiarity bred just the opposite of contempt.

Professor W. H. Carruth says, in an admirable article on Schiller's religion, "He believed stead-

lish is by Professor Calvin Thomas, of Columbia, 1901; and all students are grateful to Professor Learned of the University of Pennsylvania for the work done under his direction, which has contributed immensely to our knowledge of the influence of German literature on early American writers. For example, see *Translations of German Poetry in American Magazines* (1741-1810), by Dr. E. Z. Davis.

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fastly, with no more hesitation and intermission than many a patriarch and saint in one God, All-Wise, All-Knowing, Loving Power, immanent in the Universe and especially in man. . . . Schiller had a true feeling in his youth when he believed himself called to preach. . . . Everyone . . . was impressed with this sense of his priestly and prophetic character, using the words in their best sense."

The great English scholar of the seventeenth century, John Selden, wrote in Greek in every book in his library the words, "Above all, Liberty." These eloquent words might have been placed on the title-page of each book that Schiller produced. The mainspring of his life, the central theme in every drama from *The Robbers* to *William Tell*, is Liberty. He was an ardent individualist, and nearly all his works as well as his own life illustrate the combat between the individual and the social order. No writer has perhaps ever stood more consistently for intellectual freedom. In 1827 Goethe remarked to Eckermann: "Durch alle Werke Schillers geht die Idee von Freiheit, und diese Idee nahm eine andere Gestalt an, sowie Schiller in seiner Cultur weiter ging und selbst ein anderer wurde. In seiner Jugend war es die physische Freiheit, die ihm zu schaffen machte und die in seine Dichtungen überging, in seinem

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spättern Leben die ideelle." Goethe also said that Schiller, in his love for the Ideal, had no rival in German literature, nor in the literature of the world. The man most similar to him in this respect, said Goethe, was Byron, and Goethe expressed the wish that Schiller might have lived long enough to read the poetry of the Englishman.

Schiller had an aspiring soul; there was, as Goethe once remarked, not a trace of the common or the vulgar in his mind. He longed ever for greater heights, and the fiery energy of his soul consumed his physical vitality. His body simply could not stand the imperious demands of his genius. To him the tragedy of life was the sad disparity between the spiritual ambition, the longing of the lonely heart, and the limitations of the flesh. He expressed all this in his fine poem, *Das Ideal und das Leben*.

We Americans ought to love Schiller, for the salient qualities of his soul — energy, courage, virility — are the characteristics that we like to think belong to the American temperament. And we can learn much from the life and works of Schiller — simplicity, honesty, fearlessness before the tyranny of convention, purity of motive. To the strong and reverent man — in whose character dwells a combination of Faith and Energy — the heavenly vision is never absent. In Schiller's

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beautiful poem on Columbus, a poem that rouses the heart like the sound of a trumpet, Schiller has given us the essence of his soul.

“ Steure, mutiger Segler! Es mag der Witz dich verhöhnen
Und der Schiffer am Steu'r senken die lässige Hand —
Immer, immer nach West! Dort *mus* die Küste sich zeigen,
Liegt sie doch deutlich und liegt schimmernd vor deinem
Verstand.

Traue dem leitenden Gott und folge dem schweigenden
Weltmeer!

Wär' sie noch nicht, sie stieg' jetzt aus dem Fluten empor.
Mit dem Genius steht die Natur in ewigem Bunde:
Was der eine verspricht, leistet die andre gewiss.”

XIII

CONVERSATIONS WITH PAUL HEYSE

PAUL HEYSE died on the second of April 1914, at his home in Munich, having reached the age of eighty-four years. His literary career began in 1850, and he wrote steadily to his last hour; his publications covered an immense range — novels, short stories, poems, plays, with a great number of essays in philosophy and criticism. The King of Bavaria in 1854 offered him a home in Munich, with a pension of five hundred dollars a year, so that nearly the whole active life of this Berliner was identified with the intellectual centre of South Germany. In 1910 he received the Nobel Prize.

When I was a very young man, I came across an old paper-cover translation of Heyse's long novel, *The Children of the World*. I read it with such delight that I remember my first waking thoughts every day were full of happy anticipation. I lived with that group of characters, and whenever I open the book now, I find their charm as potent as ever. My hope of sometime seeing and talking with the man who had given me so much pleasure was satisfied in 1904.

CONVERSATIONS WITH PAUL HEYSE

It was Sunday, the fifth of June, and a bright, warm afternoon, when I walked along the Luisenstrasse in Munich, and stopped at Number 22. Almost before I knew it, I was talking intimately with the famous novelist. He was then seventy-four, but remarkably vigorous and fresh-faced, an abundant shower of dark hair falling on his neck and shoulders, and his full beard slightly grizzled. He was immensely interested in the criticisms of his play, *Maria von Magdala*, which Mrs. Fiske had been presenting with great success in America. He told me with ardent satisfaction of the large cash royalties that had steadily poured in from across the sea. He wished to know infinite detail about Mrs. Fiske. "She is a most beautiful woman, is she not?" asked the old man, eagerly. "On the contrary," said I, "she is decidedly lacking in physical charm, both in face and figure." This seemed a cruel disappointment to him, as he had evidently pictured a superbly handsome creature as the incarnation of his work. I explained to him that so soon as Mrs. Fiske had spoken a dozen lines on the stage, no one knew or cared whether she were beautiful or not; her personality was so impressive, so compelling, that she drew irresistibly the most intense sympathy; that this seemed to me her greatest triumph, by sheer brains and art to produce the illusion of a

lovely, suffering woman. But Heyse was not satisfied. "Man hat mir gesagt, dass sie sehr schön ist." Several other visitors entered, and Heyse, forgetting he was a dramatist, and remembering only that he was a doctor of philosophy, plunged into an excited discussion about the work of Professor Justi, of the University of Bonn. Not being particularly interested, I have forgotten everything he said about this philosopher and art-critic. I waited patiently for a change in the weather.

It came. The conversation suddenly shifted to American literature. "Who is your greatest living writer?" I knew that Heyse was a grave, serious, melancholy man, but I boldly answered, "Mark Twain." Heyse shook his head, more in sorrow than in anger. "I have always heard of Mark Twain's humour — that he was the funniest man on earth. I therefore read with the most conscientious attention every word of *Huckleberry Finn*. I never laughed once. I found absolutely not a funny thing in the book."

Before going, I asked him to write his name in my copy of *Kinder der Welt*. He complied most graciously, though he was surprised, and not over-pleased to learn of my enthusiasm for this particular novel. He gave me a really affectionate farewell, and asked me with the most charming courtesy to come and see him whenever I should be in Munich.

CONVERSATIONS WITH PAUL HEYSE

On the twenty-first of January 1912, a glorious winter day, I went to see him again, and literally sat at his feet. He was over eighty years old; he occupied a huge carved chair in the centre of his library; the winter sunlight streamed through the windows, crowning his noble head with gold. The walls of the room were entirely lined with books, and he made such an impressive picture in these surroundings, that for a time I hardly heard a word he said, so absorbed was I by the dignity and beauty of the scene.

I took a little chair, directly in front of him, looking up with real reverence into his face. "I have lived in this same house nearly sixty years. When I first came here, everyone said, 'Why do you live in the country, so far from the city?' But you see the city has come to me, and now I am in the very heart of Munich. I love this house and this street, for I have known no other home since I came to Bavaria." Once more I told him of my youthful enthusiasm for *The Children of the World*. He said with the utmost sincerity: "I never read any of my own works. I have forgotten practically everything in the book you admire. But I do remember that it does not express my real attitude towards life, only a certain viewpoint. Everyone who reads that story ought also to read my *Merlin*, as it supplies exactly the proper anti-

dote. The fact is, I read no novels at all, and have not for years. My reading is entirely confined to works on philosophy and metaphysics, which have been the real passion of my life." He mentioned, however, a number of the young poets, novelists, and dramatists of to-day, without a single jealous or disparaging word. "I have not time to read much of these young fellows, but from all appearances, I think the outlook for German literature in the next generation exceedingly bright. The air is full of signs of promise. For me — *ach, ich bin alter Herr!*" He said this with indescribable charm.

I reminded him that on the coming Wednesday night a new play of his was to have its first performance at the Residenz Theatre. I told him how keenly I enjoyed *Uraufführungen* in Munich, and remarked that of course he would be present. "*Aber nein!* I never under any circumstances attend the first performances of my plays. It is too painful. How can I be sure, no matter how intelligent the actors may be, that they will interpret correctly my real meaning in my characters and dialogue? And to be in the least misinterpreted is as distressing to me as a typographical error in one of my printed works. When I take up a new book of mine, fresh from the press, and find a single typographical error, I lie awake all night."

Then the conversation turned to religion. "Now that I am an old man, I have changed somewhat my views about religion. I used to think that perhaps we could get along without it. Now I know that humanity can never exist without religion, and that there is absolutely no substitute for it. How are the poor and the sick to live without the hope and comfort of faith in God? Suppose a poor seamstress has consumption, who would wish to take away from her the only hope she has — her belief in religion? Science and Monism can never fill any place in the human heart. Religion alone can satisfy human longings and human aspiration."

When I rose to go, he accompanied me to the door. I was deeply affected, as I knew I should see his face no more. He seemed to read my mind, for he said very affectionately, but very gravely, "Wenn Sie in Amerika wieder sind, *denken Sie an mich.*"

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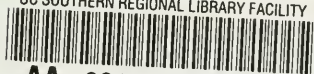
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