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FRENCH CEMETERIES—AT THE GRAVE OF MAUPASSANT—ANDREW LANG AND THE SPOOKS—"THE ANTIQUARY" ON DREAMS—A PUZZLE OF COLLABORATION—VAGARIES OF A PUBLISHER—OSCAR WILDE AS A DRAMATIST—MR. SAINTSBURY AS A CRITIC.

THE dead have their day in France, but it was not *le jour des morts* when I bethought myself of visiting the grave of Maupassant. I do not care for these crowded "at homes,"—I prefer to pay my respects in solitude. You will not think this remark flippant if you are familiar with French cemeteries, if you know those great family sepulchres, fitted up as little chapels, through whose doors, crowned with the black cross, you may see the great wax tapers in the candelabra at the altar, the stained-glass windows with the figure of the Madonna and Child, the eikons of Christ, the praying-stools, the vases, the busts or photographs of the deceased—worthy people who not only thought life worth living but death worth dying, and did the one and the other respectably and becomingly. Maupassant lies in one art-quarter of Paris, just as Heinrich Heine lies in the other. The cemetery is off the Boulevard Raspail, within bow-shot of the *ateliers* of Whistler and Bouguereau, overlooked by an imposing statue of M. Raspail which sets forth that

scientific citizen's many virtues and services. He proclaimed Universal Franchise in 1830, he proclaimed the Republic in 1848, and his pedestal now proclaims with equal cocksureness that science is the only religion of the future. "Give me a cell and I will build you up all organised life," cries the statue, and its stony hand seems to wave theatrically as in emulation of the bas-reliefs on its base representing Raspail animating his *camarades* to victory. But alas! *tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse*, and not all the residents of the Boulevard are aware of the origin of their address. Chateaubriand survives as a steak and Raspail as a Boulevard.

The cemetery Montparnasse is densely populated, and I wandered long without finding the author of *Boule de Suif*. It was a wilderness of artificial flowers, great wreaths made of beads. Beads, beads, beads, black or lavender, and even white and yellow, blooming garishly in all sizes on every grave and stone, in strange theatrical sentimentality, complex products of civilisation, making death as unnatural as the feverish life of the

Boulevards. Sometimes the beaded flowers were protected by glass shades, sometimes they were supplemented by leaden or marble images. Over one grave I found a little porcelain angel, his wings blue as with the cold; and under him last year's angel in melancholy supersession. Elsewhere, most terrible sight of all in this ghastly place, was a white porcelain urn on which were painted



a woman's and a man's hand clasped, the graceful feminine fingers in artistic contrast with the scrupulously-cuffed male wrist with the motto, *A mon mari, Regrets éternels*. Wondering how soon she remarried, I roved gloomily among these arcades of bourgeois beads, these fadeless flowers, these monstrous ever-blacks, relieved to find a touch of humour, as in a colossal wreath ostentatiously inscribed *A ma belle-mère*. I peeped into the great family tombs, irresistibly reminded of "Lo, the poor Indian," and the tribes who provision their dead; I wondered if the old ghosts ever turn in their graves (as there is plenty of room for them to do) when some daughter of their house makes an imprudent alliance. Do they hold family councils in the chapel, I thought, and lament the growing scepticism of their grandchildren, sighing to see themselves so changed from the photographs in the family album that confronts their hollow orbits? Do they take themselves as seriously in death as they did in life? But they were all scornfully incommunicative. And at last, despairing of discovering the goal of my journeyings, I inquired of a guardian in a peaked blue cap and a blue cloak, who informed me that it was in the twenty-sixth section of the other cemetery. Wonderfully precise, red-tape, bureaucratic, symmetrical people, the French, for all their superficial curvetings! I repaired to the other portion of the cemetery, to lose myself again among boundless black beads and endless chapels and funereal urns; and at last I besought another blue-cloaked guardian to show me the grave of Maupassant. "*Par ici*," he said nonchalantly; and eschewing the gravel walks he took a short cut through a lane of dead maidens—

"What's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms?"—

and, descending an avenue of estimable *pères de famille*, turned the corner of an elegant sepulchre, to which only the most fashionable ghosts could possibly have the entry. Dear, dear, what heart-burnings there must be among the more snobbish shadows of Montparnasse! My guide made me pause and admire, and he likewise insisted on the tribute of my tear before an obelisk to slaughtered soldiers and a handsome memorial to burnt firemen. But perceiving my impatience to arrive at the grave of Maupassant, "*Mais, monsieur*," he protested, "*il n'y a rien d'extraordinaire*." "*Vraiment!*" said I, "*c'est là l'extraordinaire*." "*Rien du tout d'extraordinaire*," he repeated doggedly. "*Sauf le cadavre*," I retorted. He shook his head. "*Très pauvre la tombe*," he muttered: "*pas du tout riche*." Another guardian, wall-eyed, here joined him, and catching the subject of conversation, "*Très pauvre*," he corroborated compassionately. But he went with us, accompanied by a very lean young Frenchman with a soft felt hat, an over-long frock-coat, tweed trousers, and a black



alpaca umbrella. He looked like a French translation of some character of Dickens. At last we arrived at the grave. "*C'est là!*" And both guardians shook their heads dolefully. "*Très pauvre!*" sighed one. "*Rien du tout—rien*," sighed the other. And, thank Heaven, they were right. Nothing but green turf and real flowers, and a name and a date on a black cross—the first real grave I had come across. No beads, no tawdry images, nothing but the dignity of death, nothing but "Guy de Maupassant, 6 Juillet, '93," on the cross, and "Guy de Maupassant, 1850-93," at the foot. The shrubs were few, and the flowers were common and frost-bitten; but in that desert of bourgeois beads, the simple green grave stood out in touching sublimity. The great novelist seemed to be as close to the reality of death as he had been to that of life. Those other dead seemed so falsely romanticist. It was a beautiful sunny winter afternoon. There was a feel of spring in the air, of the Resurrection and the Life. Beyond the bare slim branches of the trees of the





other cemetery, gracefully etched against the sky, the sun was setting in a beautiful bank of dusky clouds. Life was so alive that day, and death so dead. Outside the tomb the poem of light and air, and inside the tomb—what? I thought of the last words of *Une Vie*, that fine novel, which even Tolstoi considers great, of the old servant's summing up: "*La vie, voyez-vous, ça n'est jamais si bon ni si mauvais qu'on croit.*" "Perhaps," thought I, "'tis the same with death." "The *Société des Gens de Lettres* had to buy the ground for him," interrupted the wall-eyed guardian compassionately. The Dickensy Frenchman heaved a great sigh. "*Vous croyez!*" he said. "Yes," asseverated the other guardian—"he has it in perpetuity." Ignorant of the customs of death, I wondered if one's corpse were liable to eviction, and whether the statute of limitations ought not to apply. "*Je pensais qu'il avait une certaine position,*" observed the Frenchman dubiously. "Non," replied the wall-eyed guardian, shaking his head, "*Non, il est mort sans le sou.*" At the mention of coin I distributed *pourboire*. The first guardian went away. I lingered at the tomb, alive now to its more sordid side. Only one row of bourgeois graves, some occupied, some still *à louer*, separated it from an unlovely waste piece of ground, bounded by the gaunt brick wall of the fast-filling cemetery. As I began to muse thereon, I heard a cry, and perceived my guardian peeping from round the corner of a distant tomb, and beckoning me with imperative forefinger. I wanted to stay; I wanted to have "*Meditations at the grave of Maupassant,*" to ponder on the irony of death, to think of the brilliant novelist, the lover of life, cut off in his pride, to lie amid perspectives of black and lavender beads. But my guardian would not let me. "*Il n'y a rien à voir,*" he cried almost angrily, and haled me off to see the real treasures of his cemetery. In vain I persisted that I must not give him trouble, that I could discover the beauties for myself. "*O monsieur!*" he said reproachfully. Fearing he might return my *pourboire*, I followed him helplessly to inspect the pompous bead-covered tombs of the well-to-do, shocking him by

stopping to muse at the rude mound of an anonymous corpse, remembered only by a little bunch of *immortelles*. One of the fashionable sepulchres stood open, and was being dusted by a man and a woman (on a dust from dust principle, apparently). Most of the dust seemed to be little beads. My keeper exchanged a word with the cleaners, and I profited by the occasion to escape. I sneaked back to the grave of Maupassant, but I had barely achieved a single Reflection, when "*Hold, hold!*" resounded in loud tones from afar. I started guiltily, but in a moment I realised that it was the cry of expulsion. The sunset was fading, and the gates were to be locked. I hastened across the cemetery, evading my guardian's face of reproach, and in another few moments the paths were deserted, the twilight had fallen, and the dead were left alone with their beads.

LET us hope that they rest in peace, that they are not liable to be called up like doctors at all hours of the night to turn tables or rap out replies. A complimentary correspondent beseeches me not to give up to the occult what was meant for literature—"like another brilliant *causeur*." But the occult is a subject for literary brilliance, like any other, as that other *causeur*, at least, demonstrates. I cannot pretend, however, to be classed with Mr. Andrew Lang as an investigator of the occult. To Mr. Lang these things are a passion, to me a passing pastime. Spirit-rapping came across my path by accident, and, having in my youth been thoroughly grounded in psychology and the logics, I solved the mystery (to my own satisfaction). When spooks come across my path I shall solve them (to my own satisfaction). I do not expect to satisfy everybody else. Mr. Lang in private letters, and in his amiable criticisms in *Longman's Magazine* and the *Illustrated London News*, has challenged me to a friendly *séance*. To my regret this has not yet come off; for when Mr. Lang came from Scotland to London, I had to go a-lecturing in Scotland. But Mr. Lang has mis-read me. I have no special spiritualistic powers or rather weaknesses, for a "medium" is, on my theory, only



but each and all blank of the consciousness of a crisis. The talk was of everything save art and literature. The critics did not even sharpen their pencils. They looked bored to a man. In vain my eye roved the arm-chairs in search of a fighting figure. I could not even see the musical iconoclast who had carried his pepper-and-salt suit into the holy of holies of the Italian opera. My heart sank within me. When the orchestra ceased I gave one last despairing glance all round the theatre in search of my friend the Apostle. *He was not there!*



THE play was *The Charlatan*,—the work of that other apostle, whose outspoken Epistles to the English chronically relieve the dull decorum of London journalism; the man of whom Tennyson came near writing—

Buchanan to right of him,
Buchanan to left of him,
Buchanan in front of him,
Volleyed and thundered.

But that night it was the audience that volleyed and thundered, in unanimous applause. Hisses or party-cries were not. During the intense episodes, when the house was wrapt in silence, and you could have heard a programme drop, no opposition partisan as much as laughed. The author was called at curtain-fall, and retired uninjured. Next morning the critics were scrupulously suave, with no sign of the battle they had been through. Most wonderful to relate, Mr. William Archer, the risen hope of the stern and unbending Radicals, launched into unwonted praise, and gave an airing to some of the eulogistic adjectives that had been mouldering in his dictionary; nor did he even appear to be aware that he had gone over to the enemy!

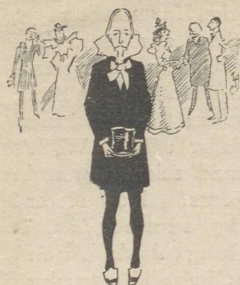
For one thing, Bard Buchanan had given us neither old school nor new, but a blend of both—nay, a blend of all forms of both—a structure at once modern and mediæval, with a Norwegian wing. It combined the common-sense of England with the glamour

of the East, the physiology of the hypnotist with the psychology of Ibsen. More! It was an epitome of all the Haymarket plays, a *résumé* of all Mr. Tree's successes. The heroine was a mixture of Ophelia and hysteria, the hero was a combination of Captain Swift, Hamlet, and the Tempter; the paradoxical pessimist was a reminder of Mr. Wilde's comedies, the bishop and scientist were in the manner of Mr. Jones. How clever! Social satire *à la Savoy*, *séance à la salle Égyptienne*, sleep-walking *à la Bellini*, moonlight poetry *à la Christabel*, a touch of spice *à la Française*, and copious confession *à la Norvégienne*, all baked into one pie. How characteristic! And characteristic, mark you, not only of Mr. Buchanan's chaotic cleverness, but of Mr. Tree's experimental eclecticism. Did I say an epitome of the Haymarket plays? This is but another way of saying an abstract and brief chronicle of the time, to whose age and body Mr. Tree so shrewdly holds up the mirror. For this dying century of ours is all things to all men. We are living in the most picturesque confusion of the old and new known to history—in a cross-road of chronology where all the ages meet. 'Tis a confusion of tongues out-babbling Babel, a simultaneous chattering of the centuries. And, more troubled than the Tower-builders, we understand one another better than we understand ourselves; again, like the "Charlatan," half odic force, half fraud, who is never so honest as when he confesses himself charlatan.

UT this is not what I set out to say. There was a moral to the tale of my friend the absentee Apostle who was so cocksure about the crisis. This moral is that he has Continental blood in his veins. To these foreign corpuscles he owes the floridness of his outlook, his conception of the excited Englishman. The Englishman takes his authors placidly; he is never in a ferment or a frenzy about anything save politics or



religion: these are the poles of his life's pivot; he is not an artistic person. Art has



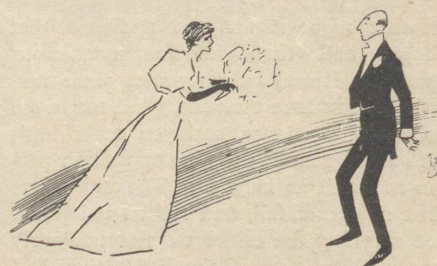
never yet taken the centre of the stage in his consciousness; it has never even been accepted as a serious factor of life. All the

pothor about plays, poems and pictures is made by small circles. Our art has never been national art: I cannot imaginé our making the fuss about a great writer that is made about a second-rate journalist in Paris. A Victor Hugo in London is a thought *à faire rire*. A Goethe at the court of Victoria, or directing Drury Lane Theatre, is of a comic-opera incongruity. Imagine Shakespeare in society! Our neighbours across the border have a national celebration of Burns' birthday—they think as much of him as of the Battle of Bannockburn. We English, who have produced the man whom the whole world acknowledges its greatest poet, have not even a Shakespeare Day. Surely Shakespeare Sunday would do as much good to the nation as Hospital Saturday or Shrove Tuesday! Charles Lamb wanted to say grace before reading Shakespeare, but the Puritans who make England so great and so dull are only thankful for stomachic mercies.

I cannot easily conceive our working ourselves up to such enthusiasm as the Hungarians lately displayed over the jubilee of Jokai, an enthusiasm that resounded even unto this country, and shook the *lacunar aureum* of the Holborn Restaurant with shouts of "Eljen." It is true that the Hungarians are a peculiar people: they put their Christian name after their surname; they conjugate their verb in the middle of their noun; they invited me to their banquet to represent English literature, and they refrained from asking Swinburne because they "didn't know his address" (!). I gracefully assumed that I had been invited because I was a Bohemian, "from the beautiful city of Prague," and took pains to prove that I was not really a gifted mortal by waltzing at the ball, which—with characteristic incongruity—followed the literary speeches. But the ruse failed, for an eminent Hungarian painter told me it was the first time he had

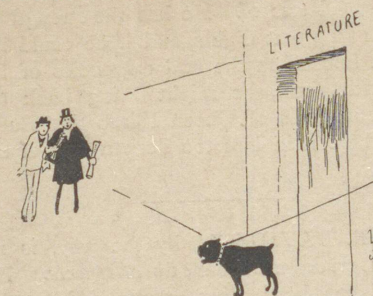
seen a clever man dance, and evidently regarded it as peculiar to English literature. Certainly very few of the clever Hungarians present seemed able or willing to join in the Czardas, but they explained to me that the national dance lost half its effect unless danced in national costume.

The peculiarity of the Hungarian temperament does not, however, entirely explain their joy in Jokai. He is so much more than a mere novelist, poet and dramatist, with three or four hundred volumes (one need not be particular to a hundred with this modern Lope de Vega) to his credit. He is also a soldier and a politician, skilful with the sword as well as the pen, and with the tongue as well as the sword. He has drawn blood with each and all of these weapons, and though nowadays he often votes in the House without inquiring what he is voting for till he has recorded his vote, this does not diminish his claims to practical wisdom. He married the leading actress of Hungary, who, without waiting for an introduction, rushed forward from the audience to present him with a bunch of flowers when a play of his made a hit. Fancy Ellen Terry rushing forward to present Pinero with



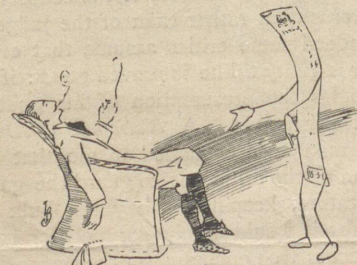
a bunch of flowers at the conclusion of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*! No, the thing is as impossible in England as the combination of rôles in Jokai himself. The idea of letting a man be at once man of letters and man of action! Why, we scarcely allow that a man of letters may occupy more than one pigeonhole! If he is a poet, we will not admit he can write prose—forgetting that is just what most poets do. If he is a novelist, he cannot write plays—the truth being, of course, that it is the playwrights who cannot write plays. If he is a humourist he can never be taken seriously, and if he

not the true critic be an interpreter? For bad work let him award the damnation of



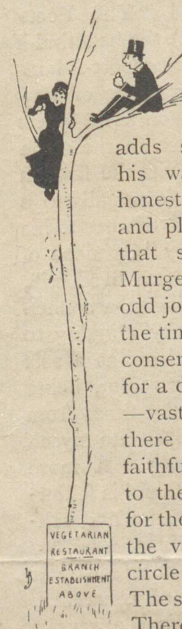
silence. "It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill."

It is a great privilege to praise. It is a great joy to give an artist the joy of being understood. Not every artist arrives at the divine standpoint: "And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good." The human creator is not always content with the rapture of creation. He sits lonely amid his worlds. Neglect may be the nurse of strength, but as often it is the handmaid of idleness. The artist without an audience will smoke the enchanted cigarettes of Balzac. The rough labour of execution is largely the labour of conveying to others what the artist already feels and sees. Why should he toil thanklessly? It is sweeter to dream. Even the money that art produces may be a valuable incentive. Not, of course, if the artist aims at the money; but art wrought for love may bring in money, like a woman married for love. In so far as the lover has his eye on the dowry, in so far his love is vitiated; and in so far as the artist has his eye on the profits, in so far is he untrue to a mistress who demands undivided allegiance. Natheless, the *auri sacra fames* may be his salvation.



What subtle sympathy connects *fama* with *fames*? The butcher's bill may drive him

from the dreamland of luxurious meditation to the practical embodiment of his dreams. Only, while he is at work, the laws of art alone must be his masters; he must not alter or abate a jot by way of concession to the great cash question. When he has completed his work, then indeed he may sell it in the best market. But the least preliminary paltering with the spirit of commerce is a degradation. Does this seem an ideal demand? Let us remember, then, ideals are goads and goals, counsels of perfection. No one expects people to quite come up to them, but it is better for human nature that they should be there. For there *is* something in hero-worship, despite Carlyle's grandiosities, provided you choose your hero wisely. We do, in this valley of doubt and confusion, touched with false sparkles, follow men who speak from their souls sincerely, who work from their hearts. Instinctively we feel it degrading and disillusionising that inspiration shall be paid in hard cash, and genius entered on the credit side of a ledger. Does a man plead that he has to support his wife and children? Well, in the first place, he need not have got them. In the second, one may be admirable as a man, but as an artist abominable. Still it is better that a man should write Adelphi dramas than that his starving family should qualify for scenes in them. All honour to the artist who lives on



bread and water in a garret rather than prostitute his art! but less honour to the man who lives on *my* bread, and adds somebody else's whisky to his water, rather than earn an honest living by dishonest books and plays. This was the question that split up the Bohemians of Murger. While the majority did odd jobs for the Philistines, to have the time for real art, the very poet consenting to write Alexandrines for a dentist at fifteen sous a dozen—vastly cheaper than oysters—there was an inner band of the faithful who preferred starvation to the desecration of their genius for the unsaleable. Even so among the vegetarians there is a holier circle that eats only nuts and fruits. The sensible artist will compromise. There is in political economy a

in a recent *Contemporary Review*. What a chance for a much-needed onslaught on our minor prophets! It might have been "English bards and Scotch reviewers" over again. But no! the Scotch reviewer's weapon is merely a rose-water squirt. The only thing that perturbates him (as Mr. Francis Thompson would say) is my assertion in this Magazine that a ray of hopefulness is stealing again into English poetry (a position whose defence I must postpone). Since the days of Jeffreys we have only had one really 'first-class fighting man' (Henley); but even with him there is no real party fighting, for he is catholic in his antipathies, and those whom he chastises love him, and swear that his is the least jaded Pegasus of the century. In token whereof I hereby recommend all and sundry to taste the honey of the Henley rod in the dainty two-volume edition of his poetry published by Nutt. You see, therefore, how well-balanced we are in this "happy isle, set in a silver sea." The Fogeys are respectful to the young men, and the young men actually admire the Fogeys. That the young men admire one another goes without saying. Here surely is "the atmosphere of praise" of Mr. Pinero's hortation.

BUT literary men *have* always admired one another. Read "The Poets' Praise" (Elliot Stock), the beautiful if bulky volume that Miss Davenport-Adams has edited so charmingly, and see of how much fine feeling and true criticism poets are capable when praising men in the same trade. At one time it was quite the fashion to append to a poet's verses (especially to a minor poet's) a set of poetical tributes to his greatness; now superseded by "Opinions of the Press." I would the custom lived still, for having sufficient skill to indite a sonnet, I might go down to posterity clinging to the skirts of, say, John Davidson, as a sort of rhyming tag to his *Plays*. But, being debarred by the coldness of the times from a parasitic immortality, I compensate myself by a more discriminate eulogy. A more complex and fantastic genius than his fellow-Scot, Henley, he is also less sure and self-possessed. Brimful of thought and beauty as his plays are, they are marred by a whimsical perversity, a lack of coherence, grip, and characterisation. His is always a

Random Itinerary, and he has not yet found himself. But when found he should be made a classic of. He has the strength of pinion for great flights, and if he could but adapt himself to the real exigencies of the dramatic form, he might bring back the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth. But I fear there is in him too deep a vein of the cryptic.

MR. DAVIDSON, by the way, is no crude craftsman, no *dilettante*. He has been duly apprenticed to the Muses; and now, I hear, Mr. Francis Thompson is also learning in suffering what he will presently be teaching in song. Let us hope the special form of suffering inflicted by incompetent critics will teach him to shed his Latin polysyllables and to be content with the public dictionary. It is a triumph for Mr. Thompson that, writing in bad English, he is yet able to achieve a frequent stateliness and massiveness of effect. But how much better he is in his lucid moments, how dainty, how true a poet! If Mr. Besant's school of literature were in existence, Mr. Thompson should be sent there and placed with the babes and sucklings, and allowed to write only in monosyllables. After a month of monosyllables he might be conceded a few dissyllables (strictly Saxon). Even when he rose to the sixth form he should be sternly forbidden the hyphen, else he would be eternally playing double-sixes.

WHILE, you see, I do not believe that art is best nourished in an "atmosphere of praise," preferring to read instead "an atmosphere of appraisal," I believe that of this appraisal the more important element is "praise." Criticism with the praise left out savours of the counsel for the prosecution rather than of the judge,—and indeed some critics assume that every author is guilty till he is proved good: if he is popular the presumption of his guilt is almost irresistible. A *National Observer* young man once explained to me that the function of the critic was to guard the gates of literature, keeping at bay the bulk of print, for it would surely not be literature. This last is true enough; yet the watch-dog attitude generates a delight to bark and bite, and turns critic literally into cynic. Should

"Of course, when one lives in foreign parts, one may die there; but I always thought, in cases like that, they was brought home to their family vaults."

It may seem strange for me to think of anything funny at a time like this, but when Miss Pondar mentioned family vaults when talking of Lord Edward, there came into my mind the jumps he used to make whenever he saw any of us coming home; but I saw what she was driving at, and the mistake she had made.

"Oh," I said, "he was not a member of the British nobility: he was a dog. Lord Edward was his name. I never loved any animal as I loved him."

I suppose, madam, that you must sometimes have noticed one of the top candles of a chandelier, when the room gets hot, suddenly bending and drooping and shedding tears of hot paraffine on the candles below, and perhaps on the table; and if you can remember what that overcome candle looked like, you will have an idea of what Miss Pondar looked like when she found out Lord Edward was a dog. I think that for one brief moment she hugged to her bosom the foolish belief that I was intimate with the aristocracy, and that a noble lord, had he not departed this life, would have been the first to welcome me home, and that she—she herself—was in my service. But the drop was an awful one. I could see the throes of mortified disappointment in her back as she leaned over a bed of pinks, pulling out young plants, I am afraid, as well as weeds. When I looked at her I was sorry I let her know it was a dog I mourned. She is such a good woman, and has tried so hard to make everything all right for Jone and me while we have been here, that she might just as well have gone on thinking that it was a noble earl who died.

To-morrow morning at breakfast we shall have our last Devonshire clotted cream; for they tell me this is to be had only in the west of England, and when I think of the beautiful hills and vales of this country I shall not forget that.

Of course we would not have had time to stay here longer even if Jone hadn't got the rheumatism; but if he had to have it, for which I am as sorry as anybody can be, it is a lucky thing that he did have it just about the time that we ought to be going away, anyhow. And although I did not think, when we came to England, that we should ever go to Buxton, we are thankful that there is such a place to go to—although, for my part, I can't help feeling disappointed that the season isn't such that we could go to Bath and Evelina and Beau Brummel.

FRANK R. STOCKTON.

(To be continued.)





THE GREAT DRAMATIC CRISIS—THE CHARLATAN—ART IN ENGLAND—THE JUBILEE OF JOKE—LITERATURE AND LIFE—IN PRAISE OF SOME POETS—THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM—SHOULD ARTISTS WORK FOR MONEY?—BOOKS BY NON-UNIVERSITY MEN—SPRING IN THE STRAND.

MY friend the Apostle was in hot haste, and would not stay to be contradicted. "Not going to-night!" he cried, in horror-struck accents. "Why, to-night is the turning-point in the history of the British drama! To-night is the test-battle of the old and the new; it is the shock of schools, the clash of nature against convention. This play will decide the fate of our drama for the rest of the century. Here you have a play by a leader of the old school produced at a leading theatre. If it succeeds, the old drama may linger on for a year or two more; but if it fails, it will be the death-blow of the old gang. They may pack up!" The Apostle was at the other end of the street ere I had taken in the full import of these brave words. What! there was a crisis in the drama, and I, living in the heart

of art, had heard nothing about it! Fortunately it was not too late. I could still make amends for my ignorance. It was still open to me to assist at this historic contest, for the arena was to be the Haymarket, where I am a *persona gratis*. Visions of the great first night of *Hernani* thronged tumultuously before me; my blood pulsed with something of its ancient youthful ardour as I girded my loins with black trousers for the fray, adjusted my white tie with faltering fingers; I had half a mind to don a *gilet rouge*, in the reflection that my wardrobe did not boast of coloured waistcoats gave the victory to the other half. I dashed up to the theatre. All was placid. The stalls were packed with a brilliant audience in correct and unemotional costume. There were classic faces, and romantic faces, and faces that were realistic,

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a person with an easily disengageable sub-consciousness. Mr. Lang's logic is curious when he argues that my explanation is shaky because physical causes should be invariable. Of course physical causes are invariable in their action, but not in their presence. It may be that, with some very hard-headed persons, the sub-consciousness cannot disengage itself at all. Mr. Lang appears to be one of them. His fingers cannot even produce raps from a table. Perhaps they have produced too much. But even the average medium never professes to get raps unaided. Circles are formed more or less mystic, and no self-respecting spirit will appear without being received in state with extinguished lights and creepy accompaniments. The unconscious revelations made by the sitters are the sole genuine foundation of the spiritualists' influence. Consciousness holds converse with deceased relatives, and sub-consciousness, which knows all about them, answers for them. This, with the supposition of involuntarily produced movements of the table (table-turning) and molecular disturbances in its substance (table-rapping), constitutes all my theory. The idea that the hands become suckers I lay no store by. It is a mere suggestion to account for *alleged* complete raisings in the air, though several of my correspondents have misunderstood me, with much technical accuracy; and one, a consulting engineer, says: "Shall I be rude if I say that you are utterly, hopelessly misinformed?" However, I forgive this insulting engineer, because he agrees with the rest of the theory and buys my books instead of getting them from Mudie's. "I remember how in my younger days," says he, "I found out these and many other dodges, and thereby passed as a medium until I laughed in the faces of my innocent dupes, and thereafter passed as a derider of all things holy and good, including the pious pastime of spirit-rapping. I have changed and outdone many of the media, and shown them all to be frauds, but I have not lost publicity, as thereby comes obloquy." Another of my many correspondents objects to my sub-consciousness *spelling out* "The Road to Fortune," words which I had received as sounds. But I might have seen them, and in any case the sound of a word is for me inextricably mixed up with its spelling. He refers me to an interesting parallel case in Scott's *Antiquary* (chap. x.),

which is explained by Oldbuck in chap. xiv. Lovel sleeps in the haunted Green Room at Monkbarrow, and is visited by a vision of the first proprietor, who points out a passage in a volume he holds in his hands. This passage, in a language unknown to Lovel, remains riveted in his memory. Afterwards (chap. xi.) he recognises it in the motto—"Kunst macht Gunst"—of a book shown him by Monkbarrow, and the latter explains the mystery thus: he had repeated the motto earlier in the evening in Lovel's hearing. Lovel's mind was bent elsewhere, but his ear had mechanically received and retained the sounds, and his "busy fancy" (as Sir Walter calls the sub-consciousness) had introduced the scrap of German into his dream. Here there is a translation from sound to image, which seems to me to be quite in accordance with psychology. The sound, spelling, and sight of a word are all mentally intertangled. Indeed, I am quite of the Antiquary's opinion: "It is thus we silly mortals deceive ourselves and look out of doors for motives which originate in our own wilful will." Sub-consciousness is quite enough to account for all the curious phenomena that really occur. It is a greater marvel in itself than any that it explains, and beats the spooks hollower than they are. Just consider the phenomena of dreams, what things we do, what sights we see. It is only the commonness of dreams that blinds us to the fact that they are more marvellous than ghost-stories. Mr. Lang thinks the theory of the sub-conscious self that uses our muscles for its own ends is "the most startling thing ever offered to the public; and that it should be regarded as true by a sceptic, is staggering to our judicial faculties." But why? Our noble selves—are they not already exposed to the indignity of dreams? What matters another insult? We need not be greatly put out if sub-consciousness is busy in the day-time too. And what about somnambulism? What about musical or literary creation? Are not our ideas made for us in the kitchen of our sub-consciousness? Our consciousness is only a small part of ourselves. What produced De Quincy's opium dreams was certainly not consciousness. I can see visions, myself, without opium. In certain excited states of the brain I can travel in my chair, or bed, perfectly awake; through an endless and variegated series of scenes

—domestic interiors with people talking or eating or playing cards, battle-fields with glittering phalanxes, beautiful tossing seas, gorgeous forests, melancholy hospitals, busy newspaper offices, etc., etc. These are almost entirely detached from my will, and the chief interest of the spectacle is the unexpectedness of its episodes. The scenes and the people have all the concreteness and detail of actuality, although I never forget that I am observing my own hallucinations. Just fancy what ghosts I could see in the dark if I lost my central control and let my sub-consciousness get the upper hand. Sociologists say, the seeing of dead people in dreams gave rise to the idea of ghosts. I would suggest that the same process as that of dreaming gives rise to the ghosts themselves. There is probably no story in Mr. Frederick Greenwood's interesting gossip, *Imagination in Dreams* (John Lane) which cannot be explained by sub-conscious processes, not including telepathy. Great is the sub-consciousness! Who shall say what it does not contain, either *in esse* or *in posse*? Till we have exhausted the sub-consciousness let us not talk of spooks.

And in talking of the sub-consciousness, mind you, I do not pretend to any scientific precision. I could write you fine-drawn metaphysical objections to the term by the yard. But it does loosely express a great region of our mental life, and to confound the spiritualists 'twill serve.

"Free as the whim
Of a spook on a spree,"

the poets who have collaborated in *Vagabondia* describe themselves. And the ways of their collaboration are certainly mysterious as those of spooks.

For how can two people write poetry together? Collaboration in prose I partly understand. I have done it myself, and my experience of collaboration is that either one

person does all the work or neither does any work. Collaboration in dramatic poetry I can faintly conceive, as with Michael Field, Michael doing, say the plot, and Field the poetry. But how can the lyric be done in conjunction? How can two persons, not twins, thrill simultaneously with the same

subjective emotion? They must truly be "hail fellows, well met," this Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, who have combined to produce *Songs from Vagabondia*, one of the most exhilarating volumes of poems that have reached me for many a day. It is emphatically of the *plein air* school. Here you may catch again that ecstasy, that fine careless rapture, which palpitates in Whitman's "Song of the Road," or Stevenson's essay on "Walking Tours." These woodland truants blend their joyous whoops to so single a note that you cannot tell one from t'other. They are sweet and lovely in their lines, and even in their dedication they are not disentangled:

"To H. F. H. for debts of love unpaid
Her boys inscribe this book that they have made."

Besides "H. F. H." our troubadours eulogise an Isabel and various other ladies, all of which is woundily perplexing. Are these singers synchronised to fall in love—



and with the same woman? And is it not awkward?

"O love, how came I here?
Shall I wake at thy side and smile at my dream,
The dream that grips me so hard that I cannot wake nor stir?
O Love! O my own love! found but to be lost."

On which the natural comment is "which?" For the rest, these lines are an unfair specimen of the book, which, although it contains roughnesses of workmanship it would have been worth while to remove, rarely falls to such a blank level of pseudo-Whitmanese as this. The main note of the book is, on the contrary, its careless rush of rhyme.

O that mine enemy had written a book! Mr. Heinemann, my publisher-in-chief, has not indeed written a book, but his play, *The First Step*, having been prohibited by the Censor, he has had to publish it in a book. The Lord Chamberlain hath delivered him



is accepted seriously he must be careful to conceal his sense of the humour of the position. Not only so, but we insist on the sub-sub-specialisation which Adam Smith showed to be so profitable in the making of pins, and which, passing from the factory to the laboratory, now threatens to pass from science into literature. Having analysed away the infinitely great, we are now concentrating ourselves on the apotheosis of the infinitely little.

A priori, one would think action the salvation of the literary man, the corrective of "the fallacies of the den," the provider of that experience which is the raw material of literature, and prevents it from being spun out of the emptiness of one's own entrails. But the practical Briton knows better. He has never forgiven John Morley for going into politics (though I doubt not "honest John" would now find much to revise in his essay on *Compromise*); and he finds Socialism ever so much more Utopian since William Morris went into it. Can you imagine a true-born Briton following the flag of Swinburne, or throwing up a barricade with George Meredith? To the last Beaconsfield was suspected of persiflage because he wrote novels and was witty. Walter Besant gives half his time to philanthropic organisation on behalf of his fellow-authors and other lowly creatures; and his guerdon is to be called busybody, and to hear a proverb about a cobbler and a last; while as a reward for his exertions in bringing about the People's Palace somebody else is knighted. America makes her authors ministers and envoys, but England insists that brains are a disqualification for practical life. "Authors are so impractical: we don't want them to act—we only want them to teach us how to act." A chemist or an astronomer must needs isolate himself from the world to supply the pure theory on which the practical arts are founded, and so the *littérateur*, too, is expected to live out of the world in order to teach it how to live. But the analogy is false.

You can work out your mathematical calculations by the week, and hand over the results to the navigator. But the navigation of the stream of time is another matter. There is no abstract theory of life that can be studied without living oneself. Life is always concrete; it is built up of emotions, and you cannot have the emotions brought

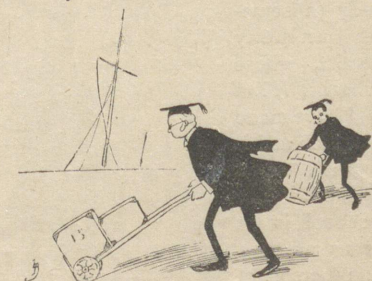
into your study, as you can order in your hydrochloric acid or your frog's leg. As well expect anchorites to set the tune for men in the thick of the fight! They will chant Masses when they should be shouting Marseillaises. In despair our men of letters leave the country, and become politicians in little savage islands; or they leave the town and become invisible behind their haloes; or they take to golf in small Scotch cities, and

pretend that this satisfies their thirst for activity. Sometimes they turn market-gardeners



and fob off the interviewer with remarks about caterpillars. Browning was reduced to dining out. It may be contended that the writer must sequester him-

self to cultivate the Beautiful. But the Beautiful that has not its roots in the True is not the Good. Or it may be urged that active life would limit the writer's output. Exactly: that is one of the reasons that make active life so advisable. Every writer would write less and feel more. The crop of literature should only be grown in alternate years. As it is, a writer is a barrel-organ who comes to the end of his tunes, clicks, and starts afresh, just as a scholar is a revolving bookcase. Consider, too, how a holiday of action would disenthral the writer from the pettiness of cliques and coteries, with their pedantic atmosphere and false perspectives. I would have every University don work in the docks six months



a year (six months' idleness is surely quite enough for any man); every platonic essayist should attend a course of music-halls; and if I could afford it I would set up all the superfine critics in nice little grocers'

shops, with the cosiest of back parlours. Why, bless my soul! it is your man of culture, your author, your leader of thought, who is parochial, suburban, *borné*, and the rest of it! It is a commonplace that the Londoner is the most provincial of all Englishmen, living in sublime ignorance of what is thought and done in the rest of the kingdom; and in similar wise, when a man sneers at the *bourgeoisie*, I never think of looking up his pedigree in Debrett. It is, no doubt, extremely exasperating that the world was not created for the convenience and to the taste of artistic persons, but unfortunately the thing had to be turned out before their advice could be obtained.

That young England is more interested in life and football than in literature and arrangements in black and blue, is amply



My arrangement
is black and blue.

proved by the lethargy about the Laureateship. On the Continent the claims of the rivals would have set the students brawling and the journalists duelling; here it barely causes a ripple in the five-o'clock teacup. My friend the Apostle was not wholly wrong: there *is* a development of native drama ahead of us; only it will come about peaceably,—we shall not hear the noise of the captains and the shouting. And the old conventions have a long run yet before them. They cling even to the skirts of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Indeed, the new school can scarcely be said to have appeared. The literary quality of our plays has improved, thanks to Jones and Pinero, and not forgetting Grundy (a somewhat unlucky dramatist, whose *Sowing the Wind* should have made him as rich as his *Old Jew*). And that is all. The old school is as vigorous as ever. In the person of *Charley's Aunt* it is alive and kicking up its petticoats, and the audience rolls in helpless laughter at Mr. Penley's slightest movement. Talk of literature, indeed! Why, the fortunate



The 2nd Mrs. T.
and Charley's Aunt

comedian assured me that if he liked he could spin out *Charley's Aunt* from a two-hours' play to a four-hours' play, merely by eking out his own "business." Think of this, aspiring Sheridans, ye who polish the dialogue with midnight oil; realise the true inwardness of the drama, and go burn me your epigrams!

IN literature, where the clash of new and old is more audible, it is still the same story. On the conservative side, the real fighting is done by Messrs. Smith, who refuse to sell the too daring publication, or by the Government, which prosecutes the too prosperous publisher. The radicals are crippled by the timidity of editors, and cajoled by the fatness of their purses. That gifted young story-teller, Mr. Hubert Crackanthorpe, has been lecturing on the Revolt of the Authors. But it seems to me our literature has already as wide a charter as is desirable. The two bulwarks of the British library are Shakespeare and the Bible, and both treat human life comprehensively, not with the onesidedness of self-styled Realism. I would advise my young literary friends to emblazon on their banner "Shakespeare and the Bible." Real Realism is what English literature needs. "*Le Bête Humaine* is a poem," says John Addington Symonds in that delightful volume "In the Key of Blue." "Zola yields consciously to the incorrigible idealism of the artist." Mr. Symonds is thinking of the artificiality of his plot; but to my mind the unreality of his picture of the human beast lies in his failure to be just to the humanity of the beast. "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*," though timid, has far more proportion than French novels of the same type. The one undoubted development in recent English literature is the short story. But this is less due to any advance in artistic aspiration than to the fact that there is a good serial market for short stories, and the turnover is quicker for the trader than if he turned out long novels. Small stories, quick returns! In verity, this much-vaunted efflorescence of the *conte* is due to the *compte*. It is quite characteristic of our nation to arrive at a new art form through this practical channel. But if you want a proof of the half-heartedness of our literary battles, turn to the "Fogey's" article on "The Young Men"

into my hands. Why a work of art which is unfit for ears polite may be disseminated by respectable tradesmen I do not pretend to understand, though the same nice distinction prevails in France, where the libretti of the annual *Revue*s ostentatiously announce themselves as containing all the verses *supprimés par la censure*. What can have possessed Mr. Heinemann, I wonder, to have entered the lists of authorship? Did he, with so many skulls for champagne-cups, grow weary of his purple splendours? Did he hire a garret in Grub Street, and, another Haroun al Raschid, go the round of the publishers? Did his manuscript come back



to him, like the dove to the Ark, to settle at last upon the Bodley Head? Did he fail to publish his own work from the prudence of the author or the prudence of the publisher? And when he drew up his contract, did he draw it up in the usual form, or did he discover that it was not so equitable to authors as he had imagined? My fancy fondly dwells upon Mr. Heinemann's encounter with Mr. John Lane, Greek met with Greek. Perhaps Mr. Heinemann has had to pay the expenses of publication—"The First Step" always costs. Mr. Heinemann sub-entitles his play "A Dramatic Moment." It is certainly a dramatic moment in his career. Whether it is the first step to the stage, the workhouse, or the fourpenny-box, time alone can show. Up to the present he has received mainly abusive misunderstanding. For one thing, his play proves that Mr. Heinemann, in associating himself so largely with the "new" fiction, the fiction that faces life "without opium," as George Eliot puts it, has had more than a pecuniary interest in his publications, and this is surely the right function for a publisher. Every publisher worth his salt should stand for something. His business should be a sort of magazine which he edits. Thus no one can doubt how the Bodley Head has influenced English poetry.

Mr. Heinemann's play has four characters, all bad. There are two male friends and two sisters, all sinners and mostly vulgar. The love-making of Jack Durwen, man about town, and Lizzie, who is pert seventeen, is conducted in the commonplace dialogue

of real life. The selfish sensuality of Frank Donovan, dramatist and tippler, faithless to the girl who gives up all for him, may be matched in a hundred types in the London Bohemia of to-day, some of whom have, not improbably, denounced the play. In spite of some awkward Germanic turns of phraseology, *The First Step* develops inevitably, from the inherent stress of the position, with a rare grip of reality and with grim dramatic irony, and the tragedy of it all is only the more pitiful for being so sordid. But it is less by its matter than its form that Mr. Heinemann's play deserves attention. Unlike our professional dramatists to a man, he understands construction. He elects for the classical rather than the romantic form, and the influence of Ibsen is as evident as that of the Greeks. He is Greek in his careful preservation of the Unities both of Space and Time, and in the shadow of Nemesis which hovers over his conclusion. He follows Ibsen in his focussing of the moment, in his method of progression by retrospection. Ibsen always works backwards, gradually revealing through dialogue all that has led up to the crucial moment, which is the real subject of his play. An ingenious gentleman, Mr. Austin Fryers, once wrote a play to prove that Ibsen had blundered in *Rosmersholm* by choosing the period after Beata's suicide instead of "the really dramatic period" when Rebecca was egging on the poor wife to her grave in the millpond. But as that subtle critic, Mr. Addison Bright, pointed out, these were just the undramatic moments of the position, for Rebecca's method of getting Beata to efface herself must have consisted in a long series of insinuations, glances, shrugs at every other moment of the day, and this process could not be represented realistically upon the stage. The real dramatic moment was the one chosen by Ibsen, and his English publisher has imitated him in seizing the true dramatic moment of his own story; though for the rest Mr. Heinemann's work is quite on another plane than the great Norwegian's. It is simply a piece of life put down objectively. Imagination has not touched it with its transfiguring finger. It does not vibrate with significance—in short, it gives one all the pity and terror of tragedy, but somehow not the *katharsis*, not the purification which comes when the soul has been shaken. Mr. Heinemann is a man of culture, and it is his culture alone which has made his

play an agreeable variation on the stock puppet-show. It is a pity he did not choose a more cheerful "moment" for his first play, but having chosen the theme he did, it is a pity he cannot see it damned on the boards.

THE only man of culture who has avoided damnation on the boards, Mr. Oscar Wilde, has brought no such breath of novelty across the footlights as Mr. Heinemann attempted. There could be no greater antithesis to *The First Step* than Mr. Wilde's comedy *An Ideal Husband*, which has not even been forbidden by the Censor. Mr. Heinemann's dialogue is for the most part as dull as it is real, and Mr. Wilde's as witty as it is false. Mr. Heinemann's drama evolves, Mr. Wilde's happens; the one is an organism, the other a patchwork. Mr. Wilde goes to the first nights of his plays to see if his audience succeeds. I am sorry to admit that at the Haymarket Theatre I was a failure. I started very promisingly. The relation between Sir Robert Chiltern and his wife seemed an admirable theme for comedy. That a wife shall discover her political hero, whom she has married, her type of stainless probity in public life, has built his career upon the dishonourable sale of a Government secret to a speculator in Suez Canal shares, and that she should thus be brought to a wider catholicity and a readjustment of her conceptions of human perfectibility,—this struck me as an excellent dramatic theme, a conception so in the big vein of comedy that one expected an answering adequacy of execution. True, I failed a little to understand how any man could have been such a fool as to tell this secret in an ordinary letter, instead of whispering it bird-like in Baron Arnheim's ear, or at the very least conveying it through a cryptogrammic code. However, I reflected that it had to be a letter, and also that Baron Arnheim would not burn it, in order that, "twenty years after," it might fall into the hands of the stage-adventuress, who is wicked even to the point of cigarettes; and so I hoped there might still be a gleam of success for me. But as the play progressed, despair gained upon me, modified only

by my success in seeing, and sometimes even in foreseeing, the epigrams, though here again I trembled apprehensively at my failure to perceive their relevancy to the character of the utterer or to the movement of the piece. When I found that the wicked adventuress lost a jewel, that the friend of the hero picked it up, that it was the very same jewel



he had given ten years ago to a girl, from whom it had been stolen by the wicked adventuress, who was thus unmasked and outwitted, ha, ha!—when I saw this amalgam of Sardou and the penny novelette,—my suspense as to Mr. Wilde's verdict on me grew so intolerable that I was sorry I had not passed the anxious hours smoking my cigar on the Embankment. And when I found that the grave moral problem propounded by the position had been finally solved by wrong ladies in bachelors' rooms at improper hours, after the fashion of a Criterion farce, I broke down so utterly that I almost felt like asking for my order back. I asked myself in amaze how this brilliant man of letters, this poet, this wit, this thinker, whose Socratic influence upon our youth has set them all sowing their Oscar Wilde oats, could lose his sense of literature the moment he passed through the stage door. Can it be that he believes in the Scribe formula, or in the bad old British formula of external machinery? Can it be that he does not perceive that lost, stolen and found bracelets are almost indecently irrelevant to the explication of the psychical position of Sir Robert and his wife? Can it be that he writes serious comedy for trivial people only, just as he writes trivial comedy for serious people, and that earnest is nothing but a name to him? Perhaps it is a piece of Mr. Wilde's paradox to be unconventional only in his epigrams. That I succeeded splendidly with these I have already boasted. Some of them even had the last relish of wit—truth. Perhaps



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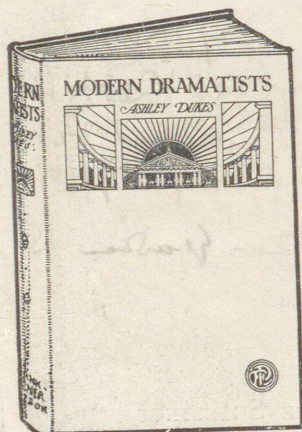


FIVE SHILLINGS

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THE translation and publication of plays, and the spread of the repertory theatre movement, have brought the work of many modern dramatists within the reach of readers and theatre-goers in England. A real awakening of the Theatre is taking place, and a new group of authors has appeared to challenge the supremacy of the commercial drama in England. So far, however, apart from occasional performances of Ibsen, Maeterlinck and others, little has been known of those dramatists who are now carrying on the same modern movement abroad. In his book, Mr. Ashley Dukes, without neglecting the English theatre, has attempted a critical study of the work of these authors. A feature of the book is a list of the plays of each dramatist dealt with, and of such English Translations as have appeared.

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Foreign Literature

LETTERS FROM GERMANY

I.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A FORTNIGHT of cloudless sunshine, with a clear and bracing atmosphere, shows Berlin in its most sympathetic aspect. When the weather changes one notices more easily that, owing to the shortage of petrol and the shortage of labour, the streets are in a disgusting state of filth, if not impassable owing to subterranean railway enterprise. Many streets have remained in this state of chaos throughout the war; works were begun and then abandoned; a certain amount of progress is being made now, but it is thought that many excavations will have to be filled up again. Houses and public buildings are encrusted with grime; the British Embassy alone flaunts a fresh coat of paint. Berlin has taken on that air of provincial dowdiness which in old days was the characteristic of Vienna. Many of the large cafés, and with them the social life of the café, have disappeared altogether; their old customers cannot afford such a luxury any longer. On the other hand, there have sprung up recently a number of snug little bars called *Likörstuben*, and what was once the quiet and modest *Conditorei* has become an elegant and more or less expensive teashop. There are plenty of people in Berlin with money to spend, but money has passed into different hands. Berlin has become more and more dependent on provincial visitors. People who live in Berlin say that they cannot afford to go to cafés and theatres, hardly even to concerts, though the prices of admission to concerts have risen less than those of other things.

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It is none the less surprising that there should be so little opportunity here of becoming acquainted with the most recent productions of German composers. Our own nationalistic efforts, whatever their ultimate artistic value may be, seem to have borne fruit in very much larger

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To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

October 25, 1920.

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

SIR,—May I address an appeal to O. R. D., who made a passing reference last week to the London Group of artists, for some guidance towards a proper understanding of what the Group is really driving at? I do not make the request flippantly, nor with a mind prepared with any animus towards the Group or its mission, but with a serious desire to escape from a sensation of bewilderment produced by an un instructed attempt to find out for myself. I am merely a person from the provinces, living remote from the mysterious impulses that stir some of the members of this and other Groups to produce works which seem—but may not be—remarkable for outrageous disregard of convention, for deliberate hideousness and apparently unblushing incompetence. In my ignorance I feel liable to the characteristically provincial error of heaving a brick at a stranger merely because he is strange, from which, however, I am saved by the hope that he may not be as strange as he looks. I have earnestly tried to give this strange art a welcome, and in pursuance of this effort have studied its prophets, only to find the bewilderment intensified. They

November 1, 1920.

AN UNKNOWN MAGAZINE ARTICLE BY
THOMAS HARDY

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

In the advertisements of a weekly periodical called *Light*, which was issued also in monthly parts as *Light Magazine*, 1878, the name of Thomas Hardy is given amongst recent contributors. No copy of *Light* (which is not to be confused with the "Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research" with the same name, which first appeared in 1881) is to be found in the British Museum, nor have I ever succeeded in finding one, so it is possible that an "altogether forgotten" poem or story by the greatest of living English writers remains buried "in the files of an extinct and obscure publication."

Your obedient servant,
STUART MASON.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM DE MORGAN

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

DEAR SIR,—I am engaged in writing a Life of my brother-in-law, the late William De Morgan, and I should be very grateful for the loan of any correspondence written by him or his wife, or any personal reminiscences of either.

Thanking you in advance for any help which you may give me in making my request known to the public,

Yours faithfully,
A. M. W. STIRLING,
Author of "Coke of Norfolk," etc.
Place, Kensington W.8.

JUST PUBLISHED.

Modern Dramatists

BY

ASHLEY DUKES

Crown 8vo.

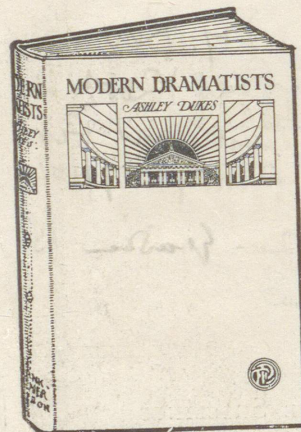
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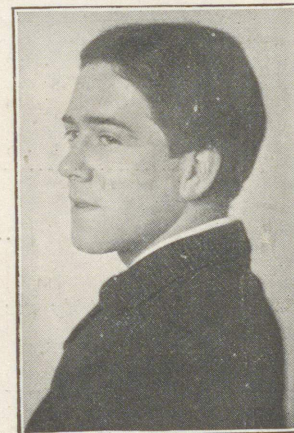
little has been known of those dramatists who are now carrying on the same modern movement abroad. In his book, Mr. Ashley Dukes, without neglecting the English theatre, has attempted a critical study of the work of these authors. A feature of the book is a list of the plays of each dramatist dealt with, and of such English Translations as have appeared.

THE translation and publication of plays, and the spread of the repertory theatre movement, have brought the work of many modern dramatists within the reach of readers and theatre-goers in England. A real awakening of the Theatre is taking place, and a new group of authors has appeared to challenge the supremacy of the commercial drama in England. So far, however, apart from occasional performances of Ibsen, Maeterlinck and others,

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Foreign Literature

LETTERS FROM GERMANY

I.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A FORTNIGHT of cloudless sunshine, with a clear and bracing atmosphere, shows Berlin in its most sympathetic aspect. When the weather changes one notices more easily that, owing to the shortage of petrol and the shortage of labour, the streets are in a disgusting state of filth, if not impassable owing to subterranean railway enterprise. Many streets have remained in this state of chaos throughout the war; works were begun and then abandoned; a certain amount of progress is being made now, but it is thought that many excavations will have to be filled up again. Houses and public buildings are encrusted with grime; the British Embassy alone flaunts a fresh coat of paint. Berlin has taken on that air of provincial dowdiness which in old days was the characteristic of Vienna. Many of the large cafés, and with them the social life of the café, have disappeared altogether; their old customers cannot afford such a luxury any longer. On the other hand, there have sprung up recently a number of snug little bars called *Likörstuben*, and what was once the quiet and modest *Conditorei* has become an elegant and more or less expensive teashop. There are plenty of people in Berlin with money to spend, but money has passed into different hands. Berlin has become more and more dependent on provincial visitors. People who live in Berlin say that they cannot afford to go to cafés and theatres, hardly even to concerts, though the prices of admission to concerts have risen less than those of other things.

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or that all Religions point to one Truth? I think myself that the poetry never showed itself more exquisitely than among the hill-cities of Italy. The preaching of Bernardin, the death of Fina—it is there that I dare to detect the new Nazareth, and it is, as I believe, the Banner of the Five Wounds that will yet become the mystical symbol of the agony and the triumph of man.

Sincerely yours,
WILFRED R. CHILDE.

JOHN CLARE

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

SIR,—A few days ago I spent an afternoon in browsing over an old scrapbook of poems, evidently collected by a metrical enthusiast who flourished about the period 1800-50. Therein I found, sandwiched between an epigram on a dandy and a poem by Coventry Patmore, an article on John Clare. It was printed over the initials "J. N." of Worcester, and followed by the date, "August, 1844." Unfortunately, I have been unable to identify the newspaper from which it was taken. The article is lengthy. I will therefore briefly outline its purport.

"J. N." visited Clare at Northampton, knowing that he was on most subjects "tolerably rational . . . and not unfrequently visited by the Spring of Song." He found, after inquiries, that the peasant poet was allowed to absent himself from the Asylum, and was told that his favourite haunt was in "a niche of All Saints' Church. Outside this edifice he found Clare soothing his disquietude by the aid of pipe and tobacco. He conversed with the poet for some time, and discovered that his mental delusions were protean. Clare was permitted to do as he pleased, had an unlimited supply of books, and only slept in the Asylum. Before ending his article, "J. N." gives publicity to two new poems of Clare. They are "Sleep and Spring" and "The Nightingale." I do not know if these verses are included in any edition of Clare's poems, as I have not them at hand. They are both of unusual beauty, and if they have not been recently reprinted it is not because they are unworthy of remembrance.

I communicate this information because it may interest Mr. Edmund Blunden, who recently resurrected Clare, and possibly some of your readers.

Faithfully yours,
A. STANTON WHITFIELD.

October 25, 1920.

[Mr. Whitfield's reference is new, and valuable. About 1844 several admirers visited Clare, and I have in my possession an account, the substance of which is similar to the present, by "C. P." of Boston. The poems "Sleep and Spring" and "The Nightingale," which Mr. Whitfield mentions, are included in J. L. Cherry's "Life and Remains" of John Clare, 1873, though the title "Home Yearnings" is there substituted for "Sleep and Spring." This beautiful poem is included in the edition now almost ready; and Clare himself regarded it as one of his best, as the various existing versions, given to his friends, would imply.—E. B.]

THE LONDON GROUP

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

SIR,—May I address an appeal to O. R. D., who made a passing reference last week to the London Group of artists, for some guidance towards a proper understanding of what the Group is really driving at? I do not make the request flippantly, nor with a mind prepared with any animus towards the Group or its mission, but with a serious desire to escape from a sensation of bewilderment produced by an uninstructed attempt to find out for myself. I am merely a person from the provinces, living remote from the mysterious impulses that stir some of the members of this and other Groups to produce works which seem—but may not be—remarkable for outrageous disregard of convention, for deliberate hideousness and apparently unblushing incompetence. In my ignorance I feel liable to the characteristically provincial error of heaving a brick at a stranger merely because he is strange, from which, however, I am saved by the hope that he may not be as strange as he looks. I have earnestly tried to give this strange art welcome, and in pursuance of this effort have studied its prophets, only to find the bewilderment intensified. They

do not explain, or if they do, they use terms which appear to be their own copyright—terms rich in mystery, swollen with some kind of portentous suggestion, very tantalizing to a plain man who has had no practice in their use or meaning, who feels that behind all that wonderful pageant of decorative phrase there must be something if only someone would come along and tell him in ordinary English what it really is.

Turning to the criticism of the London Group in your issue of October 22, I find that O. R. D. arrived at my own conclusion when he said "not all our sprats are whales, spout and thresh as they may." At least, if I am mistaken in his conclusion, I am fairly confident of my own. If the imagery be intended to convey the fact that certain members of the London Group are artists of a comparatively small degree of achievement, as yet, in an art which has large possibilities, I shall congratulate myself upon having stumbled upon one portion of the truth. At the moment I am concerned not so much with the degree of attainment as the end to be attained. Is it, to quote O. R. D. again, "the faculty to recreate in novel terms"? Is that the heart of the mystery—the purpose of Futurism, Cubism, Vorticism and all the other puzzling developments of the once eminently simple art of making pictures? If so, there can be no question as to the novelty of the terms in which pictorial ideas are being expressed. The effect, unfortunately in this connection, of extreme novelty is merely astonishment. The disciples of novelty may be content with that and forgo the sympathetic understanding of the lay mind. What other construction can be placed upon the intention of a drawing I saw publicly exhibited recently in which a figure like a badly proportioned baboon, with three legs, was said by the catalogue to represent a human creature dancing? One felt, in the Mansard Gallery, intellectually unequal to the novelty of an alleged landscape, painted apparently with a spade, which for sheer brutality of colour will be remembered when more gracious things are forgotten. Are we to take it then that an artist is justified in adopting the methods of frightfulness if he cannot secure your attention else; that if he fail to charm you with artistic blandishment, he may take means to scare the life out of you? If not, will some critic, out of pity for the uninformed outsider, explain it all in plain English?

Yours faithfully,
R. R. CARTER.

November 1, 1920.

AN UNKNOWN MAGAZINE ARTICLE BY THOMAS HARDY

To the Editor of THE ATHENÆUM.

SIR,—In your column of "Literary Gossip," October 22, p. 556, is recorded the story of a forgotten novel by M. Anatole France having come to light in an old French magazine; and you add that "If someone can make a similar find for Mr. Hardy we shall be pleased."

In the advertisements of a weekly periodical called *Light*, which was issued also in monthly parts as *Light Magazine*, 1878, the name of Thomas Hardy is given amongst recent contributors. No copy of *Light* (which is not to be confused with the "Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research" with the same name, which first appeared in 1881) is to be found in the British Museum, nor have I ever succeeded in finding one, so it is possible that an "altogether forgotten" poem or story by the greatest of living English writers remains buried "in the files of an extinct and obscure publication."

Your obedient servant,
STUART MASON.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM DE MORGAN

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DEAR SIR,—I am engaged in writing a Life of my brother-in-law, the late William De Morgan, and I should be very grateful for the loan of any correspondence written by him or his wife, or any personal reminiscences of either.

Thanking you in advance for any help which you may give me in making my request known to the public,

Yours faithfully,
A. M. W. STIRLING,
Author of "Coke of Norfolk," etc.
30, Launceston Place, Kensington W.8.

For

6 S Millard

Some of Wilde's friends who have seen it declare that the face is reminiscent of him. But Mr. Epstein stoutly denies any intention of a resemblance to Wilde, whom he had never seen.

"The figure is intended to be the Messenger of Beauty, and to express Wilde's idea of his own vocation," said the sculptor to a "Pall Mall Gazette" representative.

3, "The idea was to make a grand monument worthy of Wilde for his grave at Père-la-Chaise. It will stand on a block bearing the inscription on a height overlooking Paris.

"The donor is a lady who wishes to remain anonymous. The memorial was entrusted to me a couple of years ago by Robert Ross, Wilde's executor. I had no model. The block has been carved by me direct in the stone without preliminary clay models.

"The figure is not meant to express any particular period of Wilde's work, but merely its spirit, and both Mr. Ross and the giver of it are satisfied with the result."

Mr. Epstein is still carving at the flying messenger, and will be doing so for about a month more.

The figure has a curious compelling power which makes one strangely loath to leave the scene of its making—even with the implements of its being in evidence.

As the shadows fall on the mobile face its expression grows sardonic, and the huge wings seem warm with life. If the veil of the world could lift, and Wilde, nonchalant, fur-coated, with a perfect and ridiculous flower in his button-hole, could step into the Chelsea studio, one can hardly doubt that the messenger of beauty would please him: it expresses what he wished his public to believe—his own opinion of himself!

The Sculptor.

And as it will record Wilde's fame it will most certainly add to Mr. Epstein's. The beauty of the conception, its power and its enigma, quite apart from the technical perfections of execution (which are Mr. Epstein's sops to Cerberus), make one greatly regret that its future home will be that Paris which Wilde loved and which was kind to him.

tings,

E,

DUCT,

ORN CIRCUS,

tte.

13 Feb 191

Pall Mall MAY 19, 1913

Letters to the Editor

THE RECENT WILDE CASE

SIR,—The writer of the note in your issue of Friday dealing with the new shilling edition of Mr. Arthur Ransome's critical study of Oscar Wilde is under a misapprehension in stating that the original edition of the book contained "the text of the now famous letter to the plaintiff" in the recent libel action. Not only was no single line of the suppressed portion of "De Profundis" included in Mr. Ransome's book, but I believe I am right in saying that until the remarkable document was read in Mr. Justice Darling's court, Mr. Ransome was entirely ignorant of the contents of the letter. The passages deleted in the new edition of Mr. Ransome's book are those which formed the subject of the libel action, and the reason why they have been omitted is sufficiently explained in the new preface which you have quoted.

In your issue of April 26 was a note expressing "the general expectation of an edition of Wilde's 'De Profundis,' which shall be practically complete, or as nearly so as possible, certainly twice or thrice the length of the present version"; but in all probability the present generation will have to be content with such passages of the suppressed portions as were printed in the daily papers during the hearing of the action.—Yours, etc.,

May 17.

C.S. Millard

M. A.

For

6 S Millard

Durrant's Press Cuttings,

St. ANDREW'S HOUSE,

32 TO 34, HOLBORN VIADUCT,

AND

3, ST. ANDREW STREET, HOLBORN CIRCUS,
E.C.

Pall Mall Gazette.

NEWTON STREET, HOLBORN, E.C.

Cutting from issue dated

13 Feb 191

MEMORIAL

TO

OSCAR WILDE.

—
MESSENGER OF BEAUTY
FOR PARIS.
—

—
SCULPTOR'S CONCEPTION.
—

"P.M.G." Special.

Since the day when a Philistine passing down the Strand on the top of a 'bus looked up from his evening paper and experienced a thrill of horror at the eighteen lightly-clad figures which ornament the exterior of the British Medical Association, every work that has passed from the chisel of their sculptor, Mr. Jacob Epstein, has been the object of extraordinary interest.

The newspaper controversy which raged around the decency or indecency of the strange figures, though it had nothing to do with their artistic value, drew attention to the fact that there was a new sculptor with power and originality producing work in London, of all places in the world!

Almost completed, Mr. Epstein's latest work, the long-expected memorial to Oscar Wilde, is likely to arouse, if not criticism, at least a fire of battling interpretations from those who admired Wilde and from those on whom his art had a repellent effect.

It is a bas-relief in Hopton-wood stone, the warmth of the mottled brown tinge giving a feeling of life to the strange figure which is expressed in it. A demon-angel, 9ft. in length, with a double mystical crown, a sphinx face, and powerful wings, is shown in flight. A go-between of earth and heaven, but with wings for flight stronger than the lithe earth limbs, the face wide, oval, and full, with more of the earth than heaven in it, part-Isis, part-Celt, inexplicable, sensuous without being sensual, and as wholly secretive of its own thoughts as the eternal Sphinx—this is the spirit chosen to keep Wilde's memory green.

• Not a Portrait.

The more one looked at the strange figure the more difficult it is to say whether the great wings dominate it or the power of the earth on the spirit shown in the face.

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Pall Mall MAY 19, 1913

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161

uttings,
ADUCT,
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SCENE IN MID-AIR. LADY PASSENGER IN HYSTERICIS. TERRIBLE ORDEAL FOR AVIATOR.

NEW YORK, Tuesday.

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The aviator, realising his danger, had already begun to make a rapid descent, but now his passenger began to scream and cry, and finally she became so hysterical that only by main force was Mr. Beatty able to restrain her from jumping from the car.

His position was now a terrible one, for the machine, not properly under control, had commenced to descend with great rapidity. The aviator, with rare resource, however, forcibly held down the lady with one hand and with the other obtained control over the biplane, which he ultimately succeeded in bringing safely to the ground.

The unusual evolution had been witnessed by hundreds of horrified spectators, though, of course, the full significance of the biplane's erratic movements was not apparent to them.

—Central News.

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Durrant's Press Cuttings,

ST. ANDREW'S HOUSE,
32 TO 34, HOLBORN VIADUCT,
AND
3, ST. ANDREW STREET, HOLBORN CIRCUS,
E.C.

Pall Mall Gazette.

NEWTON STREET, HOLBORN, E.C.

Cutting from issue dated *13 Feb* 191*1*

MEMORIAL TO OSCAR WILDE.

MESSENGER OF BEAUTY
FOR PARIS.

SCULPTOR'S CONCEPTION.

"P.M.G." Special.

Since the day when a Philistine passing down the Strand on the top of a 'bus looked up from his evening paper and experienced a thrill of horror at the eighteen lightly-clad figures which ornament the exterior of the British Medical Association, every work that has passed from the chisel of their sculptor, Mr. Jacob Epstein, has been the object of extraordinary interest.

The newspaper controversy which raged around the decency or indecency of the strange figures, though it had nothing to do with their artistic value, drew attention to the fact that there was a new sculptor with power and originality producing work in London, of all places in the world!

Almost completed, Mr. Epstein's latest work, the long-expected memorial to Oscar Wilde, is likely to arouse, if not criticism, at least a fire of battling interpretations from those who admired Wilde and from those on whom his art had a repellent effect.

It is a bas-relief in Hopton-wood stone, the warmth of the mottled brown tinge giving a feeling of life to the strange figure which is expressed in it. A demon-angel, 9ft. in length, with a double mystical crown, a sphinx face, and powerful wings, is shown in flight. A go-between of earth and heaven, but with wings for flight stronger than the lithe earth limbs, the face wide, oval, and full, with more of the earth than heaven in it, part-Isis, part-Celt, inexplicable, sensuous without being sensual, and as wholly secretive of its own thoughts as the eternal Sphinx—this is the spirit chosen to keep Wilde's memory green.

Not a Portrait.

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