THE EVERGREEN

PART II.—AUTUMN

1895

THE EVERGREEN

A NORTHERN SEASONAL

THE BOOK OF AUTUMN

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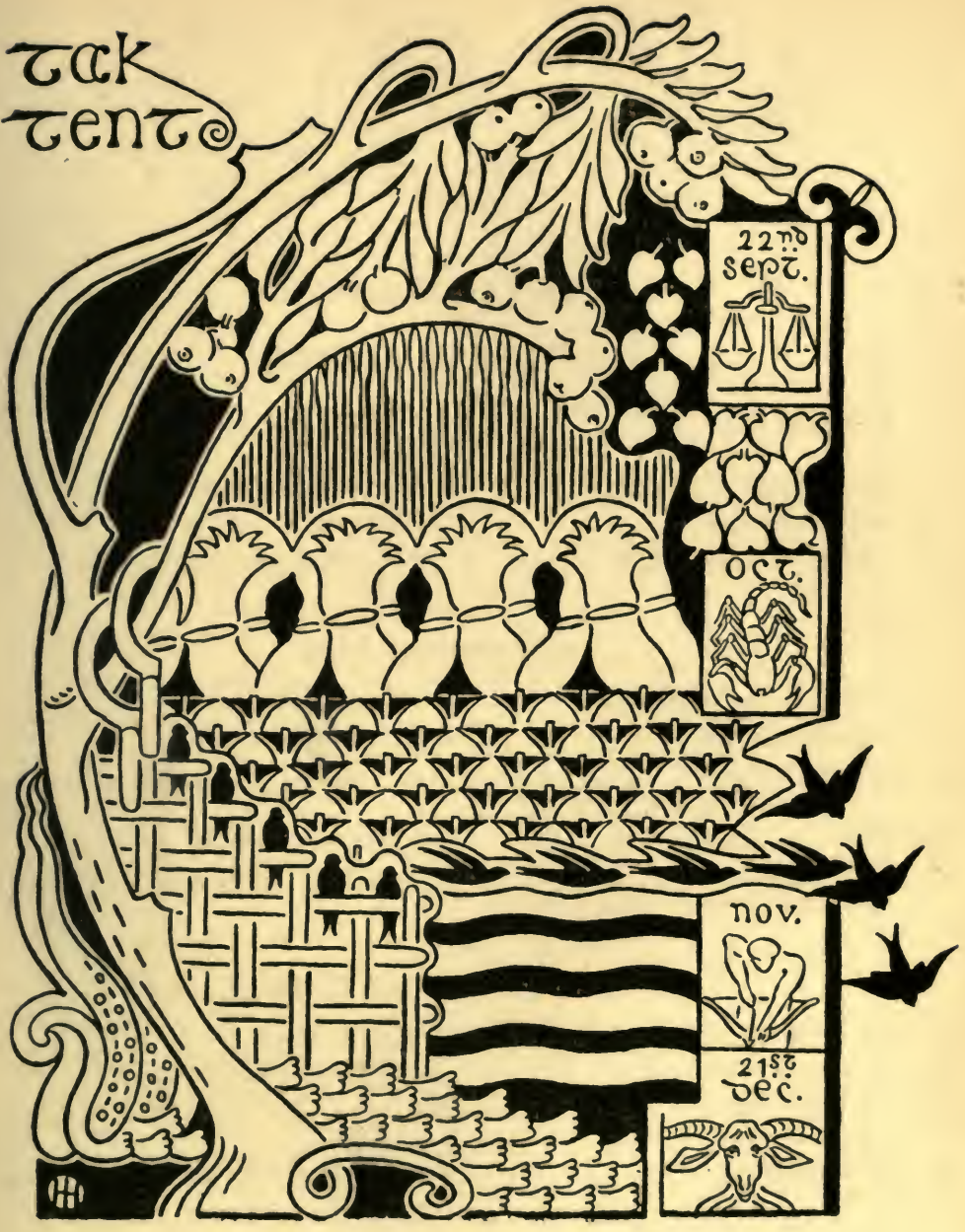
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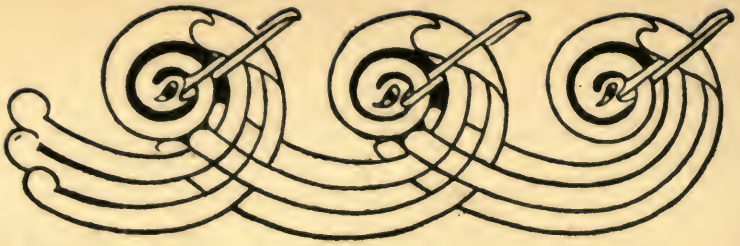

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NELLIE BAXTER, MARION A. MASON, and ANNIE MACKIE.

PREFATORY NOTE

In 1724 Allan Ramsay published his 'Evergreen,' desiring thereby to stimulate the return to local and national tradition and living nature. We who inherit Ramsay's old home and would also follow in his steps as workers and writers, publishers and builders, are seeking to gather such traditions as still linger around us, to set down such thought or song as may be in ourselves—hopeful at least of suggesting better things to those who will follow us here.

Amongst the Local and National Traditions which are interesting many Scotsmen to-day, the present issue of the 'Evergreen' is particularly concerned with two. These are the Celtic Renascence, now incipient alike in Literature and Art, and the revival and development of the old Continental sympathies of Scotland—the development of the newer but increasing sympathies of England. The Ancient League with France and the later intercourse with the Netherlands have deeply marked our history, sometimes even theirs, and the 'Evergreen' of 'Spring' and 'Autumn' give evidence that this association is still a living and fruitful one. Hence, while we would renew local feeling and local colour, we would also express the larger view of Edinburgh as not only a National and Imperial, but a European city—the larger view of Scotland, again as in recent, in mediæval, most of all in ancient times, one of the European Powers of Culture—as of course far smaller countries like Norway are to-day. Our first appeal is thus to Magna Scotia beyond Tweed and over sea, but we would also share in that wider culture-movement which knows neither nationality nor race.

The 'Return to Nature' is a rallying call which each age must answer in its own way. The ending century has written its answer large in Science and Industry, in Literature and Art; yet many solutions are still lacking. Many of us are no longer satisfied with analysis and observation, with criticism and pessimism; many begin to ask for Synthesis, for Action, for Life, for Joy. The solution lies through action, through experiment—'vivendo discimus.' Hence our open and growing group with its many activities, educational and civic, architectural and decorative, seeks to realise somewhat of the 'Cité du Bon Accord' of our illustrious guest, the veteran pioneer of synthetic science and of social ideals, M. Elisée Reclus.
But Social Life is not merely built upon the ground of Nature; it is its outcome and growth. Hence the need of fresh readings in Life, of fresh groupings in Science, both now mainly from the humanist side, as lately from the naturalist side. Yet if Man be one with Nature, her evolution is also his, and this not only through the ages and the generations, but through the year and its Seasons.
Here then are some of the ideas of the 'Evergreen.' It makes no promise of perpetual life, but seeks only to link the Autumn of our own age with an approaching Spring, and pass, through Decadence, towards Renascence.

V. V. B.
P. G.

THE BIOLOGY OF AUTUMN

ARGUMENT.—Life is rhythmic and is punctuated by the seasons. The curve of life is undulatory; summer is the crest of the wave, winter the trough, spring and autumn the ascending and descending curves. No one note expresses autumn. It is a time of dying, but the fruits and seeds speak of the abundance and continuance of life. It is a time of withering, decadence, and falling asleep; but also of storing, preparing, and supreme effort. To feel only the sadness of autumn implies a partial view, like that pessimism which exalts itself as a complete philosophy of life.

THE life of plants and animals—and of man himself—is rhythmic. Rest alternates with work, repair with waste, and periods of hunger and self-increase are followed by periods of love and species-continuing. But the internal rhythms, which probably depend on the very nature of living matter, are punctuated by the external rhythms, by day and night, by months and tides, by seasons and cycles of years. Thus we think of an organism as a wave on the sea of life. It rises, grows in strength, breaks, and falls. If it be an annual, summer is an area at the crest of the wave—the limit of its growth and the period of reproduction—winter is an area in the trough; spring and autumn are the ascending and descending curves. Even if the organism be long-lived, it is still a wave—a wave of waves—the seasons marking minor oscillations on the major curve. Moreover, it must be remembered,

though we discern the fact but dimly, that just as the seasons are variable within great cycles of climate-change, so the life of the individual is part of a still larger curve, the life of the species, which also has its periods of rise and progress, of decline and fall.

Just as it was the sun which quickened the seeds, raised the sap, unpacked the buds, and opened the flowers and our hearts as well in spring, so it is the lack of sun which is now casting a spell upon life and making us melancholy in the autumn. But the complexity of the problem lies in the fact that the external changes—more oblique light, a shorter day, increasing cold, and rising storms—act upon living creatures predestined by their protoplasmic nature to be rhythmic. Just as the fatigue of evening and the sleep of night express an external punctuation of an internal rhythm, so is it with the decadence of autumn and the rest of winter.

I

Even the most careless who pause to listen to the curfew of the year must perceive the sadness of the notes, 'Decay, Decay,' 'Farewell and Death.' They are heard in the calls of the passing birds who 'wail their way from cloud to cloud,' in the rustle of falling leaves, and in the piping of a mournful wind which bears birds and leaves away. It is a time of withering and decadence, of leave-taking and death.

But a more careful listener will hear other very different notes, which tell of the continuance of life in spite of death, of preparation for the future amid the withering of the present. The 'farewell' which seemed for ever is more accurately 'Au Revoir.' For the tide of life, which has now turned in ebb, is not one which sinks sullen and empty from a rocky shore; it is rather like that which bears from some great seaport a fleet of richly-laden ships. The ebb of the year is the time when fruits ripen and seeds are scattered, it is not an end, but a new beginning. There is indeed stranding and wreckage, as the dead birds among the jetsam tell us plainly, but the

autumn fruits are more characteristic. They crown the plant's work for the year, and form the cradles of next spring's seedlings; they protect the young lives within the seeds, and also secure their dispersal. Many of them harden, crack, and split like withered leaves, as they often are; others swell and soften into succulence. The nectaries, through which surplus sugars overflowed during flowering, and formed feasts of honey for the bees and other fertilising visitors, have now closed, and the sweetness is drafted into the ripening fruit. Even the fragrance of the flower may be redistilled in the flavour of the fruit, and the cheerful glow of the rosy-cheeked apples is due to the same pigment as that in the withering leaves of the Virginian creeper, or in the gorgeous petals of the viper's bugloss, which is still erect like a standard amid the dead and dying on the moor.

The drops of water rise to the top of the sunlit fountain, enter for a brief moment into the formation of a rainbow, and hurry to the earth again. Such is life. The organism rises to the crest of the wave, reproduces at its limit of growth, and hurries from the climax of loving to the crisis of dying. So all around us in autumn, we see the little child Love holding the door against stalwart Death. The curfew tolls, the fires of life burn low, the lights of love die out, the petals of the last poppy are shed, the butterflies disappear with the sunbeams, Proserpina goes down to Hades—many a man and beast with her—and lowering clouds draw a shroud over the earth. The music of L'Allegro has died away, hushed are Pan's merry pipes, there is no lilt of bird; Il Penseroso begins to prose: 'Dun sky above, brown wastes around you are; from yon horizon dim stalks spectral death.'

But in the very midst of death, one is impressed with the abundance of life. It is the time of seed-scattering. The cotton-grass has unfurled its white sails on the moor, clouds of thistledown and ragwort nutlets with equally dainty parachutes are swept over the waste; the hooked fruits of burdock, cleavers, houndstongue, and how many more, cling to our clothes and to the sheep's fleece; all sorts of pods and capsules

have opened, and gusts of wind—how much more the equinoctial gales—have scattered the seeds. The prodigality is as unmeasurable as it is providential. One oyster survives out of a million embryos; these thistles on the moor are also the elect out of thousands. They survive not so much because they are strong as because they are many, and they are many because it is of the nature of simple life to be prolific. It is a stream which is always overflowing its banks. And so, on this autumn day, the harvest carts pass heavily laden with sheaves, strong coveys of partridges darken the stubble, the links are crowded with rabbits, the air is full of whirling seeds, the apples fall in showers in the orchard, and we wonder, as men have wondered for thousands of years, at the abundance of life.

II

It would be idle to deny that there is in autumn—the fall of the year—an irrepressible note of decadence; it is echoed in a whisper by the rustle of falling leaves. Beneficent in their life, for all the plant's wealth is due to them, they are beautiful in their dying. They have worked themselves out, for it is hardly a metaphor to speak of the industry of the leaf; supplies are running short, the sun's rays are fewer, the first shock of frost has come, and the leaves must die. But before they die they surrender to the plant all that they have still left that is worth having. There is a retreat of particles down the leaf-stalk into the stem. Thus the leaves fall virtually dead, almost empty except of waste. They are like empty houses from which the tenants have flitted, breaking, and burning some of the furnishings as they went, leaving little more than ashes on the hearth. But nature is ever generous of beauty, for the dying leaves have a literal 'beauty for ashes.' Theirs is an euthanasia, and if we are at first inclined with the poets to weep with the withering, listening mournfully to 'the ground whirl of the perished leaves of hope, the wind of death's imperishable wing,' we must learn a deeper plant-lore, that the leaves which by their living have made the plant rich, make it

no poorer when they die, that their flush of death is a prophecy of the petal's glory, for what is a petal but a transfigured leaf? and that even when fallen they may serve as cradle-clothes for next year's seedlings. The fact remains that just as the progressive life of the species demands the death of individuals, and is within limits unmoved thereby, so the forest-tree, fit emblem of Igdrasil, lives strongly on though the leaves fall from its thousand branches.

III

We hear another note of autumn when we listen to the calls of the migratory birds as they pass overhead by night or congregate with excited clamouring before starting. It is the note of autumnal restlessness. Many little spiders feel it and pass from field to field on silken parachutes of gossamer which the Germans call 'Der fliegende Sommer.' There are also strange autumnal flights of certain beetles and moths, the deer leave the heights for the low ground, and the Greenland seal comes south to Iceland. Man himself feels it, for how many pilgrims are there at this season who journey southward seeking the sun.

Most sensitive, however, to the breath of approaching winter, and to hints of scarcity, are the birds whose presence made the summer glad. Many are already gone, for the tide turned in midsummer; 'the last spent pulses of the great vernal wave of migration have scarcely ceased to flow before the first ripples of the autumn tide begin to be apparent.' Many have slipped away, singly or in pairs, without a good-bye; others are still making up their minds, making many last appearances, telling us excitedly day after day, 'We are going, we are going!'

That they should go we do not wonder, for the leaves are falling from the trees shaken by the cold winds, the fruits have been gathered or scattered, the seeds are sown, most insects are dead or in safe resting places. We draw our cloak about us shiveringly, as we wish the last swallows 'Bon Voyage.'

The history of the habit is wrapped up with the evolution of climates; thus many see in the autumnal retreat a reminiscence

of the Ages of Horror—which made whole faunas shudder—the Glacial Epochs. The impulse to migrate seems to be inborn or instinctive, for even comfortably caged birds beat their wings restlessly when the time of wandering draws near; moreover, after we have allowed all we dare allow to experience, education, and social tradition, we have still to fall back on the supposition that the power of migrating successfully is also in great part inborn. In other words, it seems that a sense of direction, developed in many animals, not yet wholly lost in man, has been brought to perfection in birds.

Of all pilgrimages—and there are many animals who travel, such as reindeer and lemmings, whales and seals, salmon and sturgeon,—this of birds is certainly the most marvellous. Picture the rush of the feathered tide, spreading for many square miles in the heavens, continuing for days at a time without interruption.

> 'Who can recount what transmigrations there
> Are annual made? What nations come and go?
> And how the living clouds on clouds arise?
> Infinite wings! till all the plume-dark air,
> And rude resounding shore, are one wild cry.'

Think of the velocity of the flight, an exaltation of the birds' usual powers, often far exceeding a hundred miles an hour. Thus the dotterel is said to sup at sunset on the North African steppes, and breakfast next morning on the Arctic Tundra; and the Virginian plover is said to pass in one long flight of fifteen hours from Labrador to North Brazil. Consider the extent of the migration, often ten thousand miles, and it may even be from the Arctic Ocean to New Zealand; the breadth of the flying phalanx which may simultaneously strike upon British shores from the Channel Islands to the Shetlands; the altitude of the flight which seems often to be conducted in the rare calm air found at an elevation of ten thousand feet or more. Realise the difficulties of a journey over the pathless sea and in the darkness of night. Contrast the 'wild mad rush' of spring, when the birds fly northwards and eastwards,

at their utmost speed, by the shortest route, and almost without a break, as if love called them clamantly, with the less urgent westerly and southerly flight in autumn when the young birds, reversing the spring order, are the first to leave and often linger by the way. Nor forbid the shadow which falls over the picture, but remember of the birds as they fly that theirs is 'no pleasant path in the wake of retreating summer or in the van of advancing spring,' for migration is the great effort of their life, and to many it is the last. Must we not confess that the swallow flying south is 'too wonderful for us'?

IV

Some one has defined life as a slow dying. For apart from the quasi-immortal Protists, whose simplicity makes it possible for them to make good their waste by constant and perfect repair, organisms always tend more or less rapidly to run into physiological debt to themselves. Autumn is the time for balancing accounts, and then Death often claims what Love has placed in pawn. Thus of the wasps whose nuptial flight we observed one of those harvest-days, the drone-lovers are already dead, their mates have found sheltered nooks for maternal and hibernal slumbers, and the residue, almost automatic Spartans, have turned out all the remaining grubs from their cradles, and are themselves awaiting death in the first night's frost.

Life has also been described as a struggle to avoid death, or as an effort towards continuance, and here again there is truth. For apart from parasites, who live in drifting ease, life means effort and struggle between the poles of love and hunger. We miss part of the biology of autumn if we do not recognise it as a time of preparation for continued life.

The plant has been storing all summer, and now the reserves pass from the more perishable parts, from leaf to stem, from stem to root. There are stores in many buds, well-protected by scales which, dying away, save the delicate life within; there are stores in seeds, similarly protected by dead husks; and so is it with tuber and root-stock, corm and bulb, all are stores.

The beavers store branches, the squirrels nuts, the field-mice grain, the mole worms, and so on through a long list. Hundreds of insects have stored provender for offspring which they will not survive to see. Some ants store grain, biting at the embryo and thus preventing germination; a few take their cows—the aphides—with them into winter-quarters. It is said that hive-bees become lazy in countries where there is practically no winter, which corroborates the suggestion that the success of north temperate peoples is partly due to that discipline in foresight, as well as to the emphatic punctuation of life, which the marked seasonal changes impose.

Autumn is the evening of the year, the beginning of rest, and we must correct the oppressive vision of a dying world with a thought of the reparation which is given in sleep. The trees, some of them already bare, the inert buds formed some months ago on the boughs, the seeds buried in the ground, the chrysalids hidden in quiet resting-places, the eggs and larvæ under the still waters, the lethargic frogs in the mud of the pond, the reptiles and mammals who have found their winter nests—they are not dead but sleeping. They await the good-morning of another spring, and though to some this never comes, of most it may be said that if they sleep, they shall do well.

V

'As is the world on the banks, so is the mind of man,' and no one at all sensitive can avoid a feeling of sadness in autumn. For some, indeed, this is apt to sink into pessimism. Of this as a philosophic system, the biologist has nothing to say—it is probably as good as another. He is too matter-of-fact a person to understand the philosopher's dictum—'This is the best of all possible worlds, but it is worse than none at all.' Nor would he disturb those who enjoy the comforts of pessimism, which consist, according to Von Hartmann, in being completely disillusioned as to the present, and in contemplating the painlessness of the no-life to come. The biologist knows, however, that those who find only pessimism

in autumn, have been but partial students of the season, and he fancies that this may be true of larger things. He would rest on the fact that the tree stands while the leaves fall, that there is fruition in the midst of decadence, and continuance of life in the midst of death. He knows that the apparent 'Vergehen' is the beginning and condition of a new 'Werden.' Even when dying he sees as much as he wants of himself living on in his children. His vision of the past shows a cumulative progress of things, and gives him a sustaining hope for the future; and his evolutionary postulate that there is nothing in the end which was not also in the beginning expresses his speechless faith that in the beginning was the Logos.

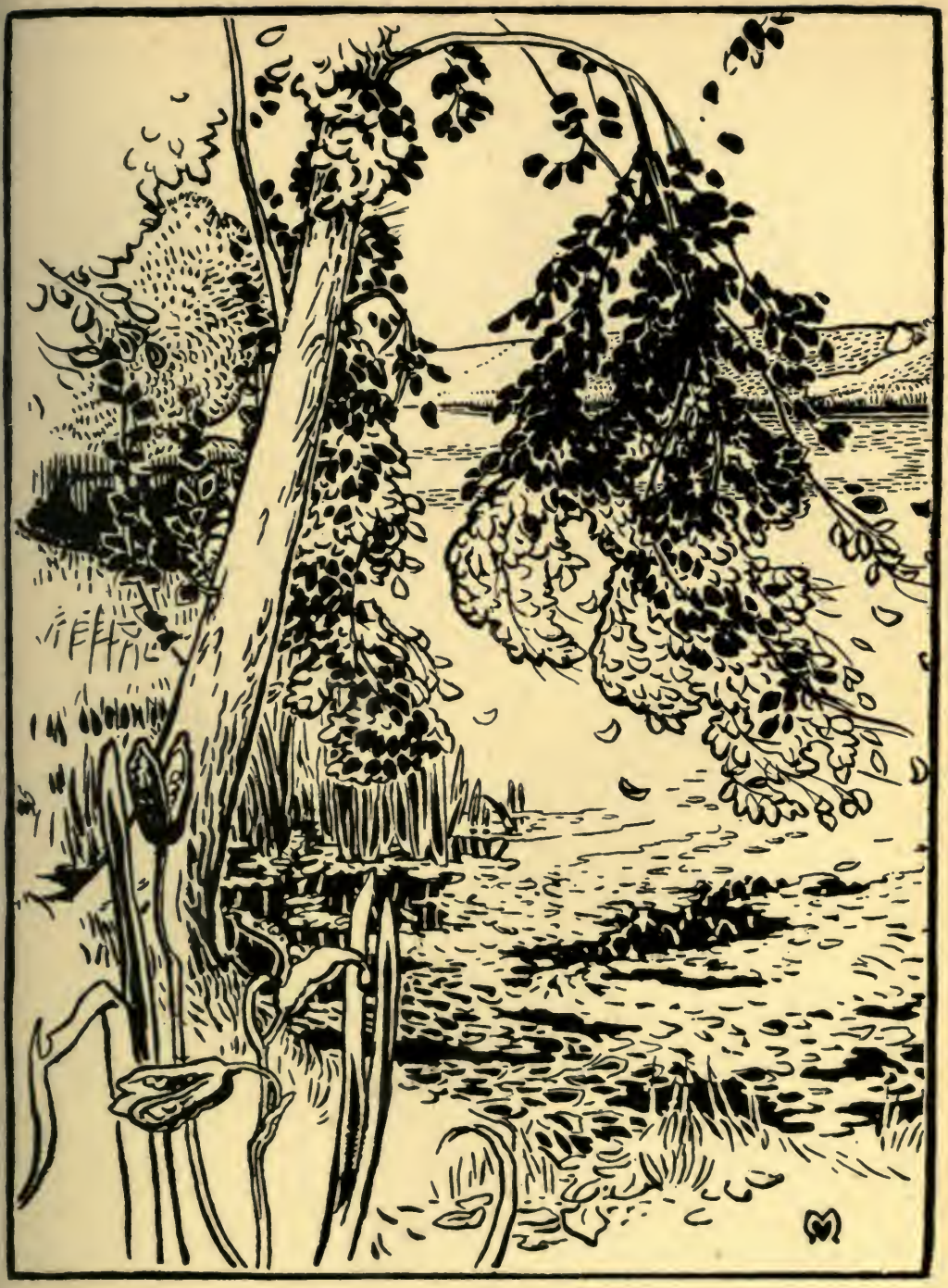
Climb the hill above the village, and watch the sun set over the withering woods. Look out over the sea of gold, mingled with fire, and broken by dark rocks which you know to be pines. Accept the withering but see also the harvest-fields; even on the bare boughs there are buds. Hear the birds pass overhead, quite a Babel of good-byes, but many at least will return. Watch the seeds drift off the dead plants as the wind sighs along the hillside, and know that the race continues. Look death in the face, and see that he is kindly and wise. Wait till the cows are driven home lowing, till the sheep are herded off the exposed moorland, till the colours pale in the brief twilight, till the birds that remain cease to sing, till the lamps are lit in the cottage windows. Wait on till the curfew tolls, till the lights are put out one by one,—then know the rest and silence of autumn.

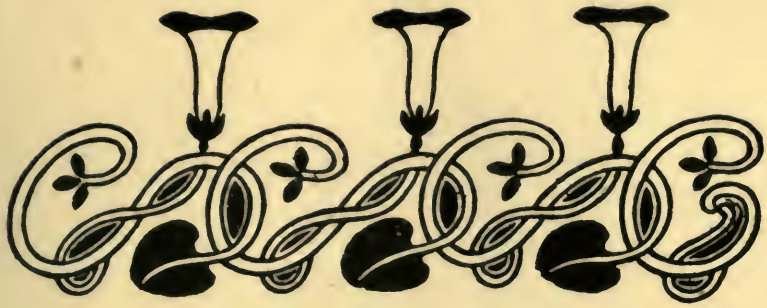
'Ueber allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.'

J. ARTHUR THOMSON.

LYART LEAVES

BY CHARLES H. MACKIE





LOVE SHALL STAY

THE rose is dead, and the honey-bee
Forsakes the empty flower,
And summer has sailed across the sea,
Away from a leafless bower.

And the singing birds, to the siren south,
Have followed the sunbeams' track,
And never a word in his frozen mouth
Has the year to hail them back.

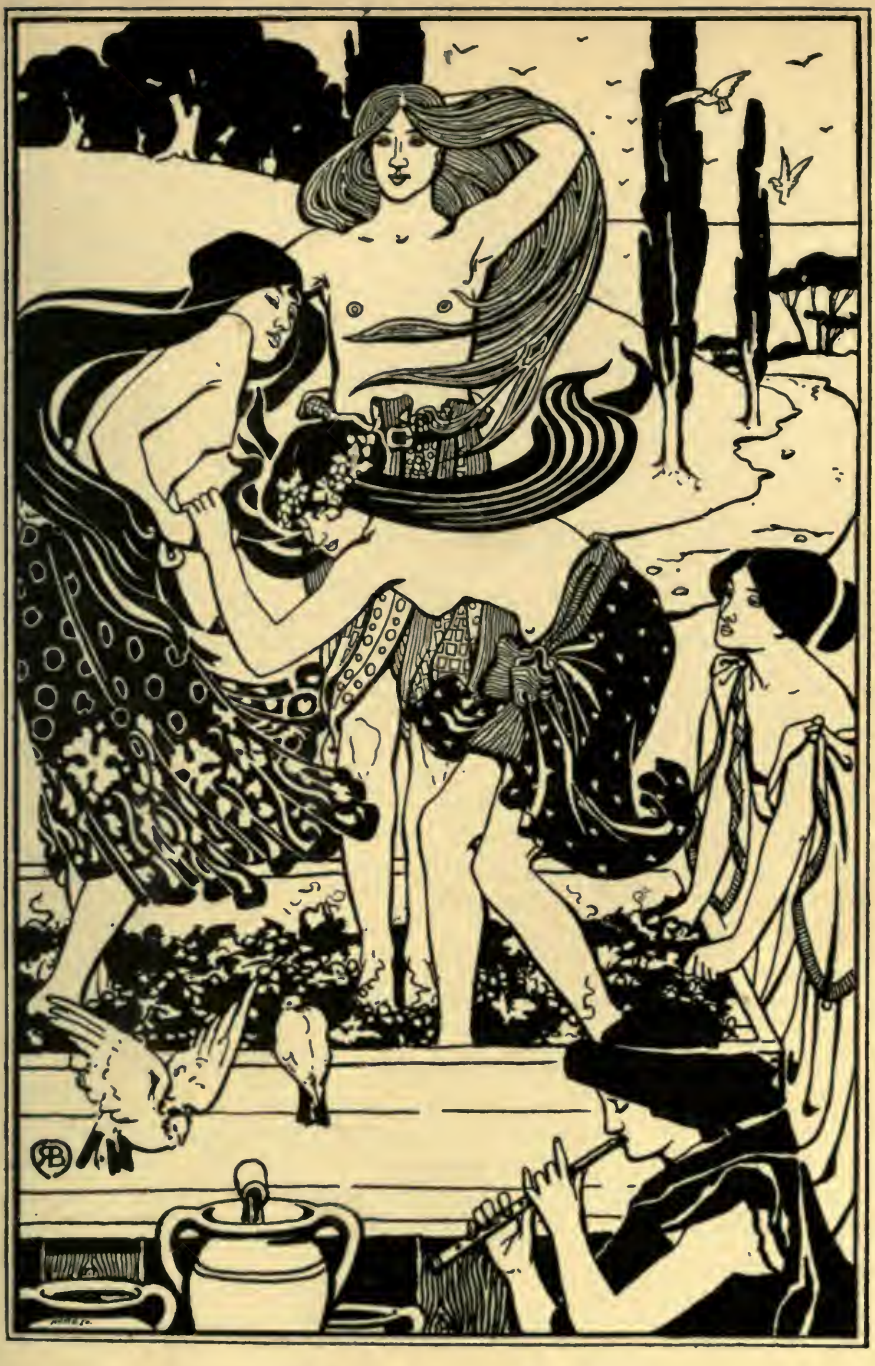
And rosy Love, with his eyes of dawn,
And his cheek of dimpling laughter—
How shall he live where the skies are wan?
Ah me! Will he up, and after?

The swallow may go, and the sun depart,
And the rose's bloom decay,
But I'll make a summer within my heart,
And Love, sweet Love, shall stay!

MARGARET ARMOUR.

VINTAGE

BY ROBERT BURNS



UNDER A PURPLE CLOUD

UNDER a purple cloud along the west
The great brown mother lies and takes her rest,
A dark cheek on her hand, and in her eyes
The shadow of primeval mysteries.

Her tawny velvets swathe her, manifold,
Her mighty head is coifed in filmy gold,
Her youngest babe, the newly-blossomed rose
Upon her swarthy bosom feeds and grows.

With her wide darkling gaze the mother sees
Her children in their homes, the reddening trees,
Roofing wet lawns, fruit-laden lattices,
Blue mountain domes, and the grey river-seas.

A myriad flowering faces flush the air
Sun-kindled eyes, and flaming outspread hair
And vermeil cheeks, the children of her love
Whose rapid heart-beats all her deep veins move.

The sun's fair children, he whose kisses burned
Upon her wedded lips, and now hath turned
Life-giving ardours upon other spheres,
Leaving their radiant offspring to her tears.

Still laugh they in their joy, with sapphire eyes,
And leafy wings of gold, and singing cries,
Still clap their rosy hands, and on the breeze
Cast fragments of their jewelled draperies.

With tranquil heart the mother watcheth them,
Each flower erect upon its fearless stem:
A wind-tost head hath lost its ruby crown,
A sapphire zone is unaware let down.

There a wing drooped, and here a love-lit face
Darkens and drops from its irradiate place;
A swaying of sweet limbs, and there a fall—
Bewildering terror seizeth upon all.

They rush with stumbling feet and blinding hair
To her who waiteth in her darkening lair,
Destruction following: their anguished cry
Rings in her ears, 'O mother, must we die?'

Then openeth she, the mighty one, her breast,
And folds them all within her arms of rest:
'Ye are immortal, children of my pain;
Sleep unafraid, for ye shall live again.'

ROSA MULHOLLAND.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF AUTUMN

ARGUMENT.—I. How everyday experience differentiates into the Arts and Sciences; yet how their progress is not only towards diversity, but towards Unity. II. How this Unity may come into our experience, and that from childhood. III. How cities may be viewed in Nature and her Seasons. IV. How their prevalent political economy is that of Autumn. V. Their literary and scientific culture likewise. VI. How decadent Art and Literature normally develop their colour, and produce their decay. VII. Decadence. VIII. How it passes into Renascence.

I

BEHIND our castle sable its field argent of white seething mist now lies later in the morning, gathers earlier towards the night, and the sea of swaying tree-tops from which its dark crags rise is crisping and yellowing towards the fall. Along the High Riggs on either hand, the distant specks hurry in denser crowd; and through the green lake-bed deep below, the engine drags under its lingering cloud a heavier train.

In some such phantasmagoria as may pass for each of us before the windows of his life, there lie latent our main possibilities both of Art and Science. Most of us, alas, are soon called back from our outlook to the workshop or the book-room, to the bed and table of our lives, and thence too seldom return. But now and then some chosen or forgotten child stays by his window all his life. Hence it is that at times we hear some strange

voice of joy or sorrow and hail a new poet; or if his gaze be silent, but he make for us some colour-note of the phase of beauty he has seen and felt, we call him painter. One tells us of sky and trees, another sketches the passing faces, a third the incident; whence landscape, portrait, genre, and the rest.

While all these mainly observe and feel, others observe and wonder; and thus your curious child wanders away from the world of Art to re-discover that of Science. This also must subdivide its field of observation, and this into narrower specialisms than those of the artist, and in a stranger way. One fixes his eyes upon the siege-scarred castle, and by and by we call him historian; another puzzles himself about the crags below, and becomes a geologist; another sees only the trees and birds—the naturalist; a fourth sits peering into the mist and listening only to the wind—the meteorologist. So it is that science develops that strange mental habit for which plain folk at once and necessarily respect and ridicule the 'strange professor-bodie'—whose power of intensely seeing one class of phenomena, yet only one, leaves him 'absent-minded,' literally, to all the rest.

In such ways, then, we need not wonder that there has arisen the marvellous heterogeneity of contemporary Art and Science; nor how each still goes on differentiating in its own way. Scientific Congresses and Art Exhibitions must needs multiply, as Science goes on isolating and analysing strange new fields of minute detail, Art refracting subtler aspects of nature through more individual moods of mind. Who now speaks of Leonardo's, Dürer's dream of reuniting Art and Science, save as a mere echo of the days of alchemy? Little wonder, then, if our dreams of this should please few critics of either camp; yet, like themselves, we also speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.

For there is a larger view of Nature and Life, a rebuilding of analyses into Synthesis, an integration of many solitary experiences into a larger Experience, an exchange of the narrow window of the individual outlook for the open tower which overlooks college and city.

In such moments all the artificially isolated mind-pictures of

mist and rock, of bird and tree, of man and his doings, reunite their special 'sciences' into Science. Nor does one lose this sense of unity when one descends again to one's own habitual outlook, but rather sees with new clearness all these diverse ''ologies' of which the half-informed think as of mazes beyond number, and within which even their special investigators are so often lost, as but orderly and parallel developments upon three planes—physical, organic, and social—which three are themselves not only parallel, but united by the world-process of Development, into a single Unity. The unnumbered descriptive specialisms of all three, like the mosaic facets of an insect's eye, are uniting into a single presentment of the world. In the science of life every one knows how of late years mind and body are again coming together, so that the psychologist is now also a physiologist; and even in the anatomist, so long an impenitent necrologist, the converse awakening has begun. So it is with the science of energy on the one hand, with that of society on the other; physics and æsthetics, economics and ethics are alike steadily recovering their long-forgotten unity. The age of mechanical dualism is ending; materialism and spiritualism have each had their day; that of an organic and idealist Monism is begun. The studies of sun and stars, of rock and flower, of beast and man, of race and destiny are becoming once more a single discipline; complex indeed, but no more a mere maze than a mere chaos, no more a mere fixed unity than a maze; but a growing Cosmos, a literal Uni-verse, of which the protean variety of Man and Nature are seen to be orderly developments; each a phase of being, of becoming; each at once a Mode and Mood of the Universal Energy.

II

But this unity, the scientific man and the artist mostly agree in saying, may be all very well on the abstract and speculative level, but what can it do for us who are not content with philosophy, who live and labour in the concrete world? How can your fine talk of synthesis help us with that? Leave philo-

sophy, the answer is, leave for a little your exhibitions and your congresses, and let us first begin with our children at school; for them all your descriptive sciences and much of your art will be absorbed into their 'Geography and History.'—Dull catalogues, you think? But forget your own woful schooling, and recall their real significance. Do they not cover Art and Science if they tell us, or rather teach us in some measure truly to imagine, the story of Nature and Man through Space and Time?

Hence it is that the narrative of individual travel and experience, like that of Herodotus or Marco Polo, Robinson Crusoe or Humboldt and Darwin, has at all times and to all minds and ages so wide an appeal; for here is the very stuff of experience from which special science, art, and literature are made; while of their development into a higher and fuller unison there are already some great masterworks in which the style is worthy of the science. Such, for instance, are Buffon's 'Histoire Naturelle' in the last century, Elisée Reclus' 'Géographie Universelle' in this. In such an education as we are coming to, instead of books innumerable and pictures few or none, as at present, the books as in the ancient church will be few, but the pictures well-nigh infinite; and for this approaching demand of the school walls of the world let the foresighted painter be getting his imagination as well as his technique ready.

Again, then, as of old the child shall know how the earth and sun determine the seasons; these the plant and animal life; and thus also, indirectly as well as directly, our own essential life and labour. Into this simple chain, henceforward unbroken, all minor specialisms, their loose facts woven firmly into chains of causation, shall be securely linked. To develop this simple lesson, this House the Sun Built, all our specialists are needed, astronomer and meteorologist, zoologist and botanist, economist, writer, and critic. And (as in the educative initiations of the ancient mysteries) the lore of the seasons furnishes the central thread. Our glorious Autumn of harvest and woodland, her pathos of fall and decay have indeed been familiar from that

very dawn of art and poetry, which her wealth and wine, her joy and sorrow, have done perhaps most of all the seasons to awaken. Yet our special sciences thrown together into the press yield new and rich elements to the old thought-vintage. They tell us where the harvest wind was warmed by the long-sunned sea, they signal from their observatories the Jötuns mustering white upon the hills, and warn us of their stormy breath; they follow the migrating bird across the sea, the fish into its depths, the seed into its appropriate soil. They follow, too, more deeply, the way in which our own lives are adapted to this Drama of Nature. They not only see as of old how the grapes or corn determine the autumn of the husbandman, or the descending cattle lead their herdman home; but ask if the herrings the fisherman has to follow are themselves borne landward upon a salter wave, see how the roots of the forest tree grow while the dryad seems in her winter sleep, or find how there lie amid the decay of autumn the witch-dreamed secrets of evil and good, sickness and wealth, disease and fertility.

Thus, too, our united physical and social geography will lead us straight into the very philosophy of History and amid the problems of Criticism. For it is the fundamental thesis of Human Evolution (there is also a supreme one) that the surroundings—the soil and climate, and hence the seasons—determine all the primary forms of labour; this labour again determines the nature of the family; this the structure of the society; and all these the individual man in life and thought. That literature may arise from the seasonal work of life, all see in the harvest dance or the shepherd's song, in Virgil or Burns, but few carry this far enough. Taine's great history of our literature has, of course, its errors (he was too much before the days of Le Play and 'La Science Sociale'), but his general idea was sound. 'Life the green leaf, say we, and Art the flower.' All the great flowers of literature and art rise straight from their great rootstocks, each deep within its soil. German commentators who teach, and critics who assume, that thought may be understood apart from its underlying life are, of course, not far to seek: yet such a view is untrue even

for the most artificial flowers, false alike for the subtle devices of the decadent poet, and the sarcasms of his reviewer.

III

Yet the seasons—they may be all very well for trees and birds, for oxen and for them whose talk (or even song) is of such; but our rock-built cities—surely these are independent of your seasons—there is no place here for such rustic fancies! So indeed men were wont to think of the rocks themselves, but since Lyell determined certain 'Principles' we know how upon these the winter rains and frosts and snows all tell most swiftly and surely, albeit silently—'they melt like mist, the solid lands.' And the city itself, does it really need anthropology and culture-history to remind us that its very existence is largely conditioned, its whole mode of life determined, by the approach of winter, for why else the crowding street, the heavier train? What are our stone houses but artificial caves, what we but the modern Troglodytes, who in our smoky labyrinths forget the outer world, and think no more of the seasons (save in society slang) because we have made ourselves a city life as near as may be to a perpetual winter?

We are indeed the New Troglodytes; hence our restless and ant-like crowding, our comfortable stupor of hibernation, our ugly and evil dreams. Here is a main clue to the sociology and psychology of those wicked fairies who are such characteristic developments of the populations of the sunnier southern cities, of those sullen gnomes so common in the gloomier northern ones. So, too, we may understand much of the physical degradation of their inhabitants. We know the secrets of the metals, and forge new weapons and invent strange mechanisms and cunning fables like the dwarfs of old. And like them we are stunting ourselves anew.

IV

But our winter cave is a store of provision, and if some lack foresight, others have it overmuch. Hence arises the common 'mania of owning things'—a growing madness as of those

American squirrel-millionaires that spend their lives in feverishly heaping up great barns of plenty which they could not consume in years, and which they must leave to moulder and rot.

But in most cases it is not excess but lack of foresight that does the mischief. Population presses on subsistence, and so arises the strangest and most characteristic biological phenomenon of autumn, that keen competition at the margin of (degenerating not progressing) existence, which our modern cities have brought to that intensity of literally putrescent horror unknown before in history or life, at which we complacently sniff and pass by as 'merely an ordinary slum.'

The decaying leaf-heap of the garden, the manure-heap of the stable, are preyed upon, each by its appropriate mould. This swiftly digests all it can from the mass, scatters its multitudinous progeny abroad upon the wind, and dies of hunger. Yet not of hunger only, for meantime has been sprouting a lower form which has the same history, and is in its turn replaced; each generation thus expressing a lower stage of competition, a more complete decay, a more thorough reburning of the ashes left by its predecessor.

In the same way it is to many minds of a quite clear and rational, though surely somewhat limited type, that the sole theory, nay, the whole practice also, of 'economic progress' lies in the steady development of a lower and lower life. Do we not tell the wretched mill-girls of our Dundees and Oldhams how they must speedily give place to the cheaper drudges of Calcutta and Shanghai, or save themselves and slay these by diving into a yet lower circle of poverty? So where can we find a better opening for our capital than by removing it to the East, or one in more obvious conformity with Nature? And what remedy is there? None that any one knows of—in autumn. For now is the golden age of Competition, as of Death.

V

In the same way it is in the intellectual world. Ideas once fresh from life wither and dry, but may still be utilised, infused

anew, albeit in dilute form, by the help of commentaries. So commentary succeeds commentary, and criticism is piled upon criticism, copy upon copy; the lower industry must have its lower journalism, its lower art to match—so at length the slum newsagent's window, full of the strangest parodies of the art and science and literature of the educated classes. Are not the 'Police News' and its French congeners at the very fountainhead of Realism? the 'Family Herald' or 'Boys' Own Library' of Romance? Punch has surely not forgotten that he came from the Naples crowd? 'Tit-Bits' is to the commercial traveller exactly what 'Chambers's Encyclopædia' and the 'Britannica' are to the better-informed classes, nay, the British Association, the German University, with Cambridge and Johns Hopkins to boot, to the learned ones—a well-scissored chaos of interesting details, of 'Speciellen Arbeiten.' The culture of any city or period is really far more of a piece than we like to believe; yet the thought of the populace, like its labour, is full of the future as well as of the past, its literature of keynotes as well as echoes. And though the learned see their lore is vulgarised to the people, and often, of course, spoiled in the process, they seldom know the converse truth. That is that the strength and the weakness of their specialism are but a reflection and outcome of those of our modern industrial world, of the division and subdivision of labour, which have long kept so far in advance of the organisation of it.

Still harder is it to learn how the new synthesis we have seen as incipient in the world of thought must grow with advancing energy in the world of action. The wholesale social reformer, indeed, loudly proclaims this. He promises us much of both, but as yet lacks patience and skill to make much definite contribution to either. On the world's stage, as on the player's, labour and thought are indissoluble; and as the first is folly without the second, so the second is futile without the first. Would we be successful playwrights, either on the great stage, or on the small? We have to be more than wrights or authors

merely; we must organise our labour to orchestrate our thought. Hence it is that each Renascence of Culture is the Story of a City.

VI

Amid the many problems of city life and degeneration some consideration of those of Sex is especially in these days forced upon us. The naturalist student must here again, as always, look below literature into the life from which it springs, and so he sees, in all the strange phenomena of passion and horror which the latter-day novelist so unsparingly reveals, the extreme cases of Variation under Domestication.

For with food and shelter for winter, man becomes the first of his own domesticated animals, and the consequences of domestication inexorably follow. First comes the extension of the breeding season more and more fully throughout the year (so distinguishing, indeed, domestication from mere captivity), witness in varying measure all truly domesticated races, notably cat and mouse, dove and rabbit. That individuality blossoms not with the self-regarding, but the sex-regarding life, the development of child into Woman or Man is, of course, the main example; and here is a prime condition of intenser and fuller development, of organic and psychical individuation. Watch for a little your common doves at play, and see how passion and desire inspire gesture, these pouting their bosoms, and those spreading their tails. But in some, gesture has become habit, and habit been established as variety; and so fantails and pouters are the result—for most purposes distinct and higher species. Domestication also involves precocity, and other consequences, and with all these degeneration seems more easy and frequent than advance. But we need not here trace the ignoble side of the evolution of sex (say rather Evolution through Sex). We are but naturalists and rustics; let the fashionable novelist go on till the mad doctor is ready.

Domestication involves disease of all sorts, or at any rate, increased liability to disease—again a matter in which breeder

and physician are at one; and we see how increasingly medical treatment and hygiene agree in prescribing more and more of that Return to Nature, which, even as it is, is our yearly source of health and sanity.

VII

It is time to come to another great doctrine of the Decadence. We have heard abundantly of Art for Art's sake, and we all know how superior Art is to any restraints of morality—how indifferent to any call to action. Well, so far true. The thesis is not only defensible, but, on a fresh side, that of Science, of which we have already noted the kindred limitations. 'Here is the germ of the disease,' says the microscopist, 'but do not ask me for the remedy.' 'Je n'impose rien, je ne propose même rien, j'expose,' calmly explains the student of social science, despite the cry for bread. Artist and man of science alike can but mirror the world without. Hence it is that for the æsthetic appreciation of the world-phantasmagoria, the questioning intellect must be calmed, the call to action ignored; the rich variety and contrast of modern life must be impartially observed, dispassionately absorbed; and hence sheltered amid the wealth and comfort of our city life our æsthete develops as never before, his impressionist mirror growing more and more perfect in its polished calm. So develop new subtleties of sense; and given this wealth of impressions, this perfection of sensibility, new combinations must weave themselves in the fantasias of reverie. Our new Merlins thus brighten our winter with their gardens of dream.

Here then is the standpoint from which to appreciate that keenly observant yet deeply subjective 'Realism' which has been so characteristic of literature and art, as indeed also its complementary movement, that strange and wayward subjective Romanticism which has run parallel with it. So far both movements amply vindicate themselves against the Philistine criticism they have been wont to meet; yet, alas, they too easily make that step further which justifies it. For this attitude of

life becomes fixed by habit, the lotos land is not easily left. For the gentler natures a deepening melancholy suffuses life, though in the stronger types passion may distil new subtleties of art or song. In time, inaction rouses the morbid strain latent in every life, and so the degeneration of the artist may set in from the physical side; and if strength remain, it must find outlet, or be lulled asleep. So arise and increase the temptations of the urban æsthete; who not only like any other man is no saint to resist them, but whose training we have seen has steadily relaxed both the intellectual and the moral fibre of resistance: and hence it is that the end of every epoch of decadence has been the same—an orgie of strange narcotics and of the strangest sins.

'I did but taste the honey of romance;
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?'

VIII

Is all æstheticism then evil, and only activity good? Has art only been an ignis fatuus, and is the jeer of the coarse utilitarian, the triumph of the joyless ascetic, to be the last word? Not so: the road of life ever lies forward, through the present phase of evolution, not back from it, be its dangers what they may. This so-called Decadence of literature and art which, as we have seen, science fully shares, is no hopeless decline, but only an autumn sickness, and one of rapid growth and adolescence. For man is increasingly master of the world and of his fate; he does not merely rest in his environment and take its mould, but rises superior to environment and remoulds it. So art and science, which we have seen unite in imagination, find unity in Action also, in that detailed reorganisation of urban and rustic life into health and beauty, which is the ideal of the Incipient Civilisation, and which distinguishes it from the confusion of the Contemporary yet Disappearing one. Here in fact lies the task of our urban autumn as harvest is that of the field; and to this men return with health and hopefulness

gained from contact with nature. Autumn is indeed in many ways the urban spring, and spring, when we are weary with city life, is the urban autumn. Thanks then, and even honour, to the art and science of the Decadence, since from it we have learned to see the thing as it is; it has even helped us likewise to imagine it as it might be: it remains only to ask if in some measure we can make it as it should be, and here lies intact such originality as is left open to us—that of Renascence. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; so in this rhythm of passive with active life, of contemplation with constructive energy, lies the health and the future of the Individual and of the Race.

Artist and æsthete, writer and critic in this social Autumn, this ending of an age, all shrink from its active life, and indeed rightly. What profit these men of industry who can but mechanically construct, these men of science who but analyse, these emperors and revolutionists who dream but to destroy—Philistine decadents all! Little wonder that with the world-weary theologian or pessimist they proclaim their passive doctrine as final, their standpoint as permanent—and even as they speak their flowers fade, their garlands fall; then comes despair and silence.

'Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.'

The first word of the Sociology of Autumn is of the beauty of Nature, the glory of Life, both culminating (as our urban culture only more fully teaches us) in their Decadence. Hence there inevitably comes the second word, the pessimist antithesis: yet a third—the vital one—remains. Amid decay lies the best soil of Renascence: in Autumn its secret: that of survival yet initiative, of inheritance yet fresh variation—the seed; who wills may find, may sow, and in another Autumn also reap. This last word, then, leaves Omar's death-song and returns to the prose of homely life.

'Il faut cultiver son jardin.'

PATRICK GEDDES.

THE HAMMERER

To whom it may concern.

STRIKE while the iron's hot;
So mayst thou mould thy lot
As thine own power and purpose would, I wot.

Wait till it cool,—in vain
Thy sinews thou shalt strain:
As others shaped it, will the mass remain.

For, Fate's propitious hour
Neglected, purpose, power,
Are futile, as on desert sands the shower.

Yet hammer on; each blow
Will mitigate some throe
Of thy regret—worst grief the soul may know!

And from the metal cold—
Like Tubal-cain's of old—
Thy strokes undreamed-of music may unfold.

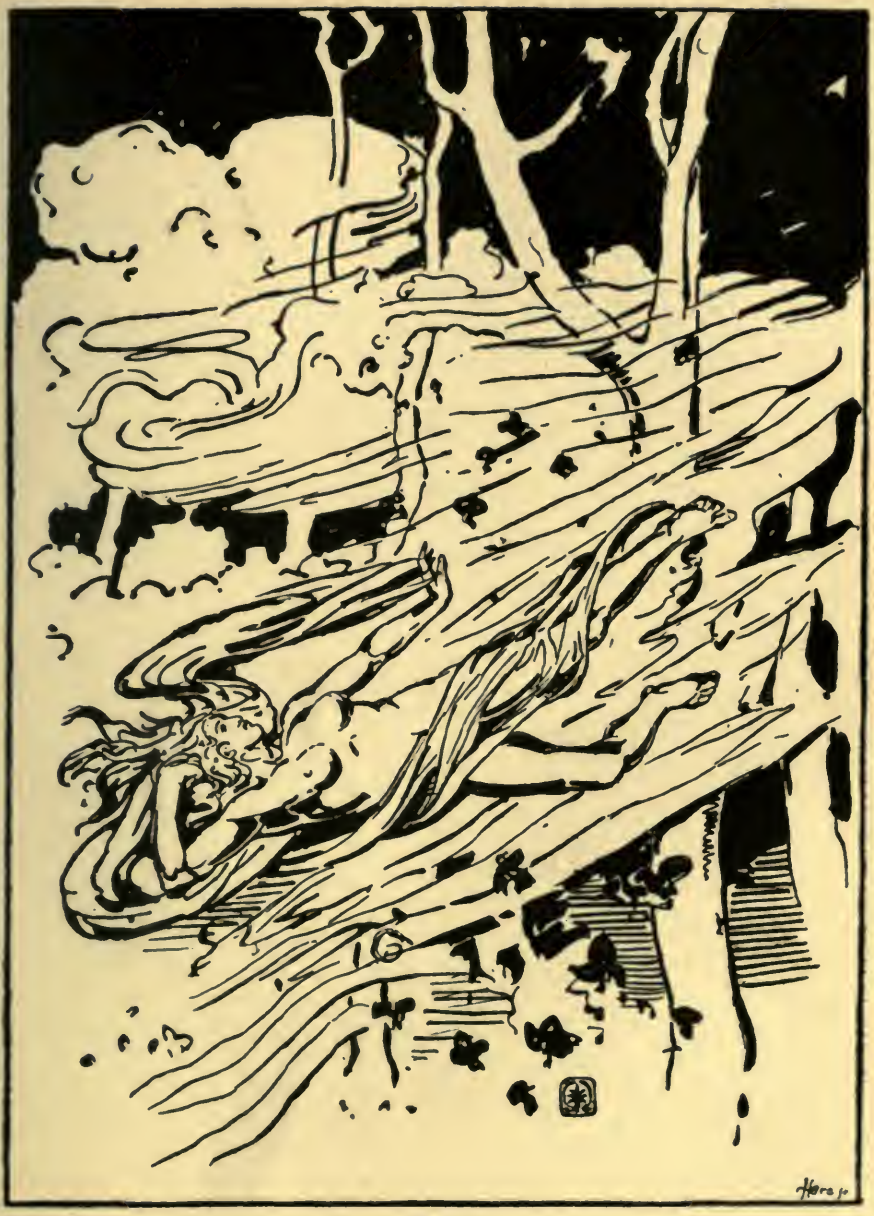
For suffering 'tis, they say,
That wakes the poet's lay—
As grapes must break ere the pent juice find way.

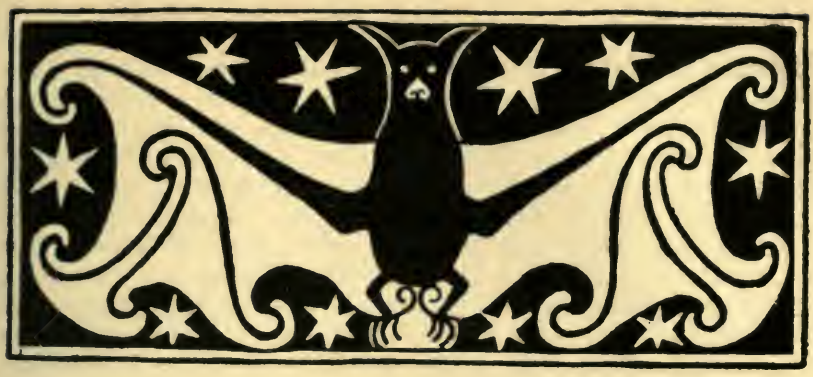
And when—thy workday past—
The hammer down is cast,
We 'll say—'At least, he hammered to the last!'

NOËL PATON.

AUTUMN WIND

BY PITTENDRIGH MACGILLIVRAY





COBWEB HALL

I KNOW an old house, situated in the Merse of Berwickshire, which from its deserted and neglected air has received the name of Cobweb Hall. This house has a story. Indeed, though efforts have repeatedly been made to let or to sell it, these have long since been abandoned as useless, for the building seems never to have recovered from the injury inflicted on its reputation by a series of events which took place a good many years ago. The house is not haunted, but it is shunned, which perhaps is worse. Until it was allowed to fall into disrepair, 'Cobweb Hall' must have been a desirable residence enough. It is commodious, and not without pretension to architectural dignity, in the form of castellated work over the front. As is shown by its name, it takes rank as a building above the manses and the better sort of farm-houses, and among the 'halls.' The red-berried barberry plant now pushes up strongly against the white 'harl,' or rough-cast, of its walls; and round about it there is a dark neglected shrubbery, originally laid out with box-edged walks and planted with laurels and with tufts of the old-fashioned butcher's broom, but now intersected by beaten tracks where tracks have no right to be, and defaced with little circular hollows, the work of hens. Here, in early spring, the yellow

aconite flourishes, in the shade under the trees. There is a bottle-green flaw in the out-house window-pane, and one notices that the back door seems to be the only one which has been used this many a day; but there is little or nothing else to catch the eye outside. However, if you raise yourself on the window-ledge, and peep through a chink between the closed shutters into the interior, you catch a glimpse of desolation indeed. The bare boards are painted over with the droppings of birds which have found their way into the house through broken windows, and which, not having always been able to find their way out again,—as a feathered corpse or two shows,—have sometimes died of starvation. And assuredly the mansion has earned its nickname of 'Cobweb Hall.' It is now supposed to be looked after by a care-taker, who seems to use it for her own purposes, and who never visits it except by daylight. Adjoining the little shrubbery there is a cornfield, and a mile or two away, on much lower ground, a sea-board village. It is said that this village was once famed for the smuggling enterprise of its inhabitants, and that its shaggy-locked outlandish headmen would sometimes meet together in the ale-house at night with deeds of violence in their pipes, and murder in their cups. But this is by the way.

Long ago things were very different in the house. Carpets then covered the floors, the hearths were warm, smoke rose from the chimneys, and thrice a day a comforting smell of cooking filled the kitchen. 'Cobweb Hall'—then known by a very different name—was the abode of Miss Clinkscales, the only daughter of the writer and usurer of that name, who had made a pile of money by his business in the neighbouring county town. For a time, after her father's death, Miss Clinkscales had kept house for her brother—who had bought landed property in the county with a part of the handsome fortune which he had inherited. And when, somewhat late in life, this brother married, she had preferred living on in the country to moving into the county town. She was a lady of a very independent character, who would have her own way in all things,

and who was considered a little eccentric. Well, Cobweb Hall —I shall adhere to the nickname—was at that time in the market. It was in one respect a suitable enough residence for a single lady of good means, consisting as it did of a first-rate house, and having only a modicum of land attached to it. Miss Clinkscales bought it, and took up her abode in it, carrying her various theories strenuously into practice in her daily life.

At this time she was in the prime of life, and did not suffer from the solitariness of her dwelling; for, though a slight tendency to parsimoniousness (as was said) prevented her receiving visitors to stay with her, she received numerous callers, and, being of an active disposition, she was able to get about as she pleased. But when, with the lapse of years, she had become old and crippled by rheumatism, it was different. Then her visitors would often advise her to move into the town. (She had some very assiduous visitors, whose attentions she attributed to the fact that she was old, rich, and heirless.) They said it would be so much more cheerful for her there, that she would be within easier reach of a doctor, and so on. But Miss Clinkscales had systematically throughout life regarded advice as an impertinence, and her native wilfulness, or strength of character, had not shared in the decline of her physical powers. She answered drily enough that she never wearied when she was alone.

'But do you think it is safe? Are you not afraid at nights in this big house all by yourself?'

The idea latent in the interlocutor's mind was the fact—well known in the neighbourhood—that the old lady kept a large sum of money in the house, a distrust of banks being one of her crotchets. But she was not to be drawn. She merely replied, without testifying to the smallest gratitude for the solicitude displayed on her account:

'Oh, don't distress yourself! Nobody would harm an old body like me: and, besides, I have Weir to protect me.'

Machell Weir was Miss Clinkscales' manservant. He had been with her for a good many years, and she had the greatest confidence in him. Some people thought this confidence mis-

placed, and ventured to hint as much to the old lady, supporting their view of the case, when required to do so, with various vague tales and rumours. But Miss Clinkscales was not used to encourage interference in her private affairs. And so, with truly Scottish candour, she would reply that, though old, she was not blind; and that she believed she could distinguish as well as another between those who were genuinely devoted to her interest, and such as were officiously active in her affairs for reasons of their own. She added some sound observations upon minding one's own business, and tagged them with a scriptural quotation touching tale-bearers. It will be seen that the old maiden lady had entire confidence in her own judgment. As became the daughter of a good business man, she had made her will long ago—a will in which no mention of any of her friends' names occurred. But she saw no occasion to make this fact public; and, indeed, she considered that the ruling and bullying of a group of expectant sycophants and legacy-hunters was a legitimate pleasure, vouchsafed to her as a small compensation amid the privations of an infirm old age.

The butler merits a word of description. In person he was thin and pale. He had a soft voice and a conciliating manner. But the striking thing about him was that, though he was barely forty, his hair and his whiskers (which he wore long) were snow-white, and had been so since he was twenty. Now, a man whose appearance is marked by an incongruity of this kind goes through life, by no fault of his own, under a disadvantage. For it is apt to seem as though Nature herself were furthering duplicity in him, or else, perhaps, marking him out as a person different from others, and against whom it behoved others to be on their guard. This, perhaps, was the reason why Machell was no favourite with the world.

However, he satisfied his mistress, and that was the great thing. She liked his obsequious manner—there is no accounting for tastes—and had conceived a high opinion of his character. And, indeed, as she lived latterly confined to two rooms, perhaps it was not very difficult for the butler to keep up

appearances in regard to all that met her eye. He was singularly attentive in his inquiries for her health; he was quiet and home-keeping. And, as she had been very kind to him, she naturally believed that he cherished an affection for her. It is needless to say that this sort of two-and-two-make-four cannot always be depended on when human nature is involved in the calculation.

One night Miss Clinkscales retired to rest as usual. The next morning a maidservant on approaching her mistress's bedroom, which she had expected to find as usual in darkness, was surprised to see light under the door, and on entering discovered that the shutter of one of the windows, and, indeed, the window itself, stood open. By the light thus admitted the maid beheld a scene which appalled her. A cupboard near the bed had been forced open and ransacked, some of its contents being scattered over the floor. The bed-clothes had also been dragged from the bed, and were saturated with blood, and upon them with the throat cut lay the body of Miss Clinkscales.

On seeing this sight, the maid turned and fled shrieking from the room. Instinctively she ran for protection to the pantry. The butler was not within, nor, when the other servants, summoned by her cries, had collected around her, did he make his appearance. This was thought strange. The alarm was raised, and in due course the authorities arrived upon the scene. There was no possible room for doubt that Miss Clinkscales had been brutally murdered, and as by this time it also seemed certain that the butler had disappeared, suspicion at once attached itself to him. A search was made, but led to no practical result. The fact was, however, elicited that a large sum of money, in gold and bank-notes, had been abstracted from the cupboard in the murdered lady's room.

The police at once set to work, and took every possible measure to trace the missing man. A description of him was circulated, and a reward offered for such information as might lead to his apprehension. Inquiries were also set on foot with a view to

trace the stolen bank-notes, or to bring to light suspicious transactions in gold. Meantime all passengers embarking from the neighbouring seaport were subjected to scrutiny. All this, however, led to nothing. There was, as usual, no dearth of apparent clues and of plausible rumours. For instance, it was stated that a man answering to the description of the suspected criminal had been encountered on the high road near Cobweb Hall, in the grey of the morning following the murder. He was heavily laden, and had appeared anxious to avoid observation. Again, a story got about to the effect that an unknown man, who carried a bundle, had called for refreshment at a lonely inn upon a neighbouring moor, and that on hearing horse's hoofs approaching along the road he had left his drink untasted, shouldered his bundle, and made off. The authorities spent a good deal of time in following up these clues—time which in the end proved to have been wasted. They also made two mistaken arrests. One man also came forward of his own accord and voluntarily gave himself up as the murderer of Miss Clinkscales. He was committed: but upon inquiry his story was proved false, and he had to be liberated, leaving the police no further advanced than they had been before. In a word, the utmost efforts of the authorities remained unrewarded, and at last it almost seemed as though the butler must have melted into thin air.

During the whole of this time it would be difficult to exaggerate the excitement which prevailed in the surrounding district. The unfortunate lady had been so long and so well known in the neighbourhood that her death by murder created an immense sensation, and her funeral was the largest ever witnessed in those parts. The excitement was, of course, increased by the mysterious disappearance of the butler. He had always been disliked; and to him, of course, the popular voice unanimously and unhesitatingly attributed the authorship of the deed. Nervous women, thereupon, became unable to remain in the house alone for fear of him, and in short, for a time, the sole subjects which filled men's minds in the surrounding country

were the murder at Cobweb Hall and the efforts of the police to apprehend the murderer. From far and wide people flocked to visit the scene of the murder, the number of visitors being especially large on Sundays; and wherever two persons met, the chances of the butler's capture formed the topic of conversation.

At last, however, the excitement began to wear itself out. When a fortnight and more had passed, it seemed that the prospects of the murderer's being taken were few. The public accordingly blamed the authorities for having allowed him to slip through their fingers, and began to return to their ordinary placid existence. About this time, however, an incident occurred which partially revived the excitement.

The women-servants employed by the late Miss Clinkscales still remained at the Hall, in charge of the house. Late one night, one of these, a young girl, entered the kitchen where her fellow-servants were seated, deadly pale, and in a fainting condition, and gasped out that she had seen the butler's ghost in the shrubbery. There were two male visitors in the kitchen at the time, keeping the women company. Without waiting to hear more, these men rose, took a lantern, and sallied forth together; nor did they return until they had thoroughly beaten every bush in the grounds. They discovered nothing. In the meantime it had been elicited from the terrified girl that, in returning through the shrubs from a stolen interview with a sweetheart close at hand, she had suddenly beheld the white face of the butler peering up at her, as it seemed from the ground. This extraordinary statement was canvassed at great length. But as it was well known that the girl's nerves—never of the strongest—had been much shaken by the recent terrible occurrence, people generally agreed in the end that she had been the victim of a delusion.

Time passed on. The murder had been committed in summer, and the autumn now arrived. The harvest had begun, and in due course it came to the turn of the field adjoining the shrubbery at Cobweb Hall to be harvested. It had been sown

with beans. Accordingly the rigs were duly opened out, and a mixed party of men and women 'shearers' assembled to execute the work. The day was fine, but there were not wanting indications that the weather was about to break; and so the farmer, when he visited the field at mid-day, impressed upon his workers the necessity of getting on with the work as quickly as possible. Consequently when labour was resumed after the dinner-hour, at the suggestion of the steward, what is locally known as a 'kemp,' or strife, was inaugurated. That is to say that the ground and the strength of reapers were alike equally divided, a portion of ground was assigned to each band of reapers, and a race was started which should get its task completed first. Beneath the rays of a vertical sun, shining in a cloudless sky, the reapers set to their work with a will. The field was a large one, the season had been fine, and the crop was heavy. They toiled all the afternoon. Among the toilers at one side of the field was a girl employed in binding. Happening to stand erect, to straighten her back, in the interval of tying two sheaves, this girl observed the beanstalks at some distance in front of her shaken, as though a dog were running among them. There was no dog that she knew of in the field; still there was nothing very surprising in what she saw, and she made no remark upon it at the time. The strife continued. In time only a comparatively narrow strip of the crop remained standing. The race promised to be a close one, and either party began to strain every nerve to win. Again the girl saw something which puzzled her. As the man to whom she was attached as binder gathered an armful of beanstalks towards him, preparatory to severing them with his sickle, it seemed to her that his action laid bare a part of something which appeared to be lurking in concealment. As swift as light this something was withdrawn into the covert of the standing beans. The binder could almost have sworn that it was a man's foot and leg. But this was surely impossible! The dazedness resulting from the heat, from stooping, and from prolonged monotonous exertion,

she concluded, must have deceived her. Besides, this was no time for idle words; so she told herself that it must have been some beast that she had seen, and again she said nothing aloud.

And now but one double ridge remained to reap. The rival parties took opposite ends of the field, and then began to draw eagerly towards each other, laying the beans low before them as if for life itself. All around them the field was cleared, and the sheaves tied with 'whippies' neatly set up, in stooks of twelve, 'toward the mid-day sun,' as the reapers say. A glorious afternoon's work had been accomplished, and the farmer who had been watching from a distance now came forward to see the last stalks levelled with the ground, and to compliment his workers.

'Hillo!' cried he, 'what have we here?'

And then, plunging his arm into the midst of a forest of beans a few yards square, he dragged out of it, by the trouser-leg, into view of the astonished labourers, the form of the miserable butler, shrieking like a wild animal, feebly resisting, and trying to hide his face in the ground. The workmen had been too much absorbed in their work to notice him before. And the reason why he had allowed himself to be captured became apparent when it was discovered that one of his legs was broken.

Whilst he was in prison awaiting execution, the murderer—who for a man in his station of life was an excellent scholar—wrote a confession. This document was printed as a pamphlet, and sold for a penny. It had an immense circulation at the time, but is now extremely rare; and from a copy of it in my possession a number of the details incorporated in this narrative have been drawn. It is certainly a curious composition—written with some pretence of style, and abundantly besprinkled with religious sentiments. A fatuous vanity, which would scarcely have been looked for in the author, peeps out at every turn. He seems to feel himself to be, after all is said, a sort of hero with a difference, and he tells

his tale with unction, and with a certain impudence of candour. Perhaps this excessive outspokenness may be explained as being the natural reaction after concealment; or perhaps the murderer was one of those weak characters who seem to crave for notoriety, no matter of what kind—or, shall we say—to bid for the sympathy which has been denied them in life, no matter how insanely, to the last.

The confession opens with an account of the writer's early years, and, if his story is to be believed, it is to hardships and persecutions endured in childhood and youth that the corruption of a character naturally mild and amiable are to be traced. Reading between the lines, however, I incline to judge differently. To me it seems that Machell Weir must have had rather the nature of the spoiled than of the ill-used child, for it is quite obvious that he made most excessive demands upon life: he was not by any means one to be 'thankful for small mercies.' Plenty of money, liberty, and independence—to name only a few of them—were among the things to which he thought himself by right entitled. In due course, after mature consideration, he came to the conclusion that there was only one way of obtaining these things, and with some reluctance he decided that he must have recourse to that one way. It is true that it involved the death of his mistress, but that was a mere accident for which he could not be held responsible. He expressly tells us that he had no innate preference for injuring others. His simple aspirations were comprised in the desire to do good to himself.

But, after arriving at a decision, he still hesitated to proceed to action. Perhaps it may occur to the reader that natural compunction, together with the recollection of benefits received at the hands of his victim, may have restrained him. This does not appear. The fact seems rather to have been that Machell was an arrant coward, who (much as he might wish to do so) was unable to brace his nerve to attack even a defenceless old woman. Thus for a long time he continued to hesitate. His plans, meantime, were matured down to the

smallest detail. Time slipped on, and the old lady's health steadily declined. The butler knew from her own lips that she had mentioned him in her will. Might he not have let things take their course, one asks? Apparently not. For some reason or other—perhaps because he did not quite wish after all that Death should rob him of his prey—considerations such as are mentioned above seem to have weighed with him as incentives rather than as deterrents. In the meantime he had discovered that courage, like inspiration, is among the things which may be found in a bottle. The next paragraph, which is curious, I quote word for word from the confession.

'At last, one night, it seemed to me—I know not why—that the time to act had come. I waited till my fellow-servants had retired to rest, and all was still. Then I took a step which to others may seem unimportant, but which to me was full of meaning. I shaved. In all my many previous mental rehearsals of the crime which I now meant to commit, this had invariably been my first step; and I regarded it as a step which—once taken—left me no room for turning back. Ever since I had arrived at man's estate, my long white whiskers had been my pride. As I looked myself in the glass, I sometimes thought—I am sorry if there was anything wrong in the thought—that they gave me an air which might have become an Elder of the Church, or even a Minister. But, though it cost me something to part with them, I could not but see that such a pair of whiskers were not desirable appurtenances in a man who, for reasons of his own, might seek to avoid observation. I shaved them off; and, having done so, I swallowed a dram and slipt the razor—upon which I had put a fine edge—into my pocket. Then I began to mount the stairs.'

The stairs creaked, and to the villain's excited fancy every creak was like a pistol-shot. He began to dread discovery, and his supple brain spun lies to account for his presence on the staircase in the event of a surprise.

I willingly spare the reader the horrible details of the scene in the bedchamber. They were too much even for the murderer, and when he turned to ransack the cupboard he was scarcely in possession of his faculties. The action of his senses was uncertain, and his trembling bloody fingers bungled and blundered, refusing to obey him. At last, however, he espied his booty. He seized it; but at that very moment he heard a sound which made his blood run suddenly chill. It was a footstep deliberately advancing along the passage toward the bedroom door. Frantic with terror, he delayed no longer, but sprang to the window, threw up the sash, and flung himself out on to the gravel below. There, half stunned by his fall, he lay and listened until it became clear to him that the alarm had been a false one, the footstep an hallucination of his disturbed brain.

He would have risen to his feet; but now he found that retribution had fallen upon his wickedness indeed. He was powerless to stand upright! The bedroom was on the first floor, and in his fall from it he had broken one of his legs. The discovery overwhelmed him with despair—'as if night were to come on suddenly in the middle of the afternoon.' Flight was now out of the question, and in concealment lay his only chance of avoiding discovery. With great pain he managed to drag himself to the neighbouring field, and there, keeping himself alive by feeding upon the beans, he had lain hidden ever since the murder.

He makes a desperate attempt to excite compassion by a moving account of his sufferings during this time. The pain in his leg was never quiet for an hour together; the fear of discovery never left him. More than once, whilst he lay hid amongst the beanstalks, parties of visitors to the scene of the murder had passed within a few yards of him, and he had distinctly heard them eagerly discussing the chances of his capture. His constant terror was lest a dog should scent out his whereabouts. Then he dwells upon the agonies of privation which he endured. He durst not approach the stream

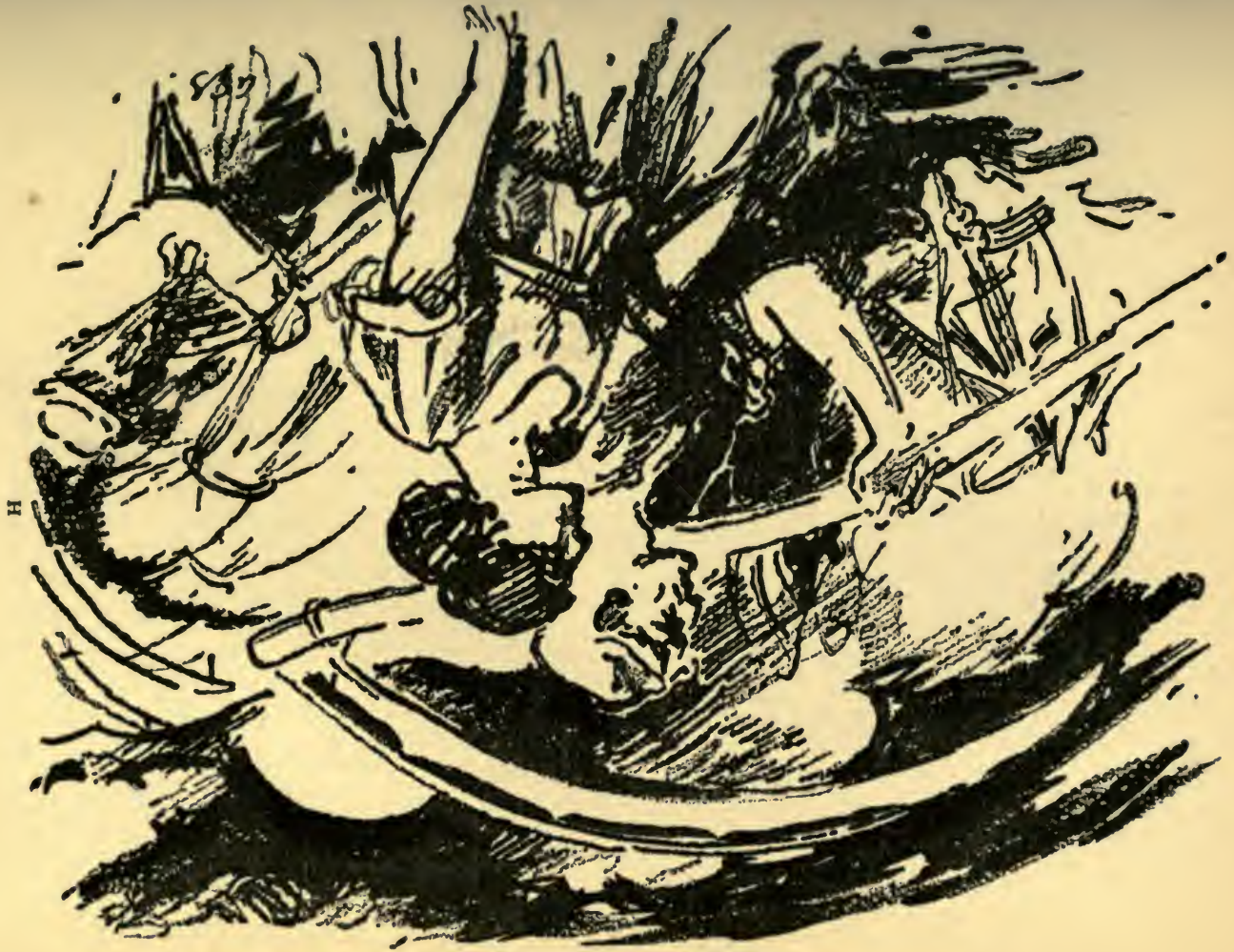
whence he drank by daylight, and thus he would often have given 'more than a hundred pounds'—for he still clung to the plunder for which he had paid so dearly—for a few drops of water. On the night when the maid had seen his ghost, he had crept out from his concealment in the hope of stealing food from the hen-troughs or the pig-sties. He winds up with an agonised appeal for mercy: 'I have already suffered the pain of more than twenty deaths: surely my crime is fully expiated, and the law has nothing to gain in depriving me of my miserable life.'

His arguments, however, were not held to be convincing, and to the general satisfaction he was duly hanged. But 'Cobweb Hall' has remained untenanted to this day.

GEORGE DOUGLAS.

THE RETURN OF THE REAPERS

BY A. G. SINCLAIR



NOVEMBER SUNSHINE

THE warm year fled ere thy sense hath caught her:
Only the wind in a misty plain,
And the beautiful brief November sunshine
Gleaming on levels of pale grey water
And roadways wet with November rain.

In the rank red groves despoiled and dreary,
A wan woman peers thro' the shadows ahead,
Seeming to seek in the sunset beyond them,
With tear-dimmed eyes grown wretched and weary,
The wraith of a golden hope, long dead.

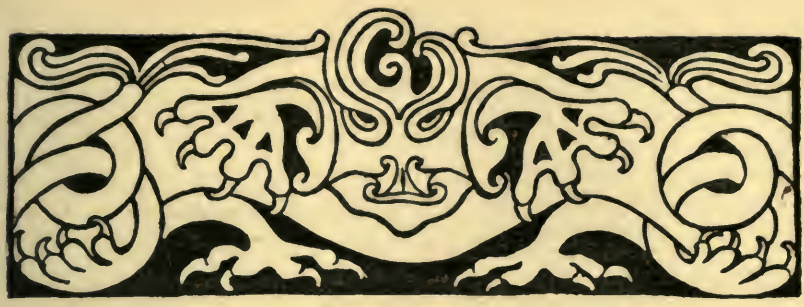
Dead hope! Dost thou its sweet remember—
Thou too, with a sigh that is spent in vain;
And thy heart like a Wanderer pale and lonely
Watching the brief bright sun of November
Sink, and the slow sweet Autumn wane?

HUGO LAUBACH.

NOTE

Charles Van Lerberghe holds a peculiar place in the contemporary Belgian Renaissance. His actual literary achievement has, in bulk, been singularly meagre. A few poems, one or two compositions in prose: and here, for the present, the chronicle ends. On the other hand, there is probably no member of 'Young Belgium,' whether under the familiar flag of 'La Jeune Belgique,' or beneath that of the new protestant standard, 'Le Coq Rouge,' who would not at once name, or at least acknowledge, the author of 'Les Flaireurs' as one of the two or three most distinctive leaders of the 'movement.' The three foremost living writers in Belgium are, indubitably: in Poetry, Emile Verhaeren; in Fiction, Georges Eekhoud; and, in the 'Drame Intime,' Maurice Maeterlinck. Verhaeren may be approached as one of the most noteworthy among all living poets who use the French tongue. Eekhoud is, probably, the most consistent and 'natural' realist in Europe. Strangely enough, his only near rival in France is a Belgian also, Camille Lemonnier: but that powerful and sombre writer is overshadowed by Zola, to whose school, save in the admirable Flemish work of his earlier years, he belongs. Eekhoud has more in common with Guy de Maupassant than with any other French novelist; but he has a style so distinctive, a Flemish sentiment so continually domineering, and an individuality so unique, that he cannot be called the Belgic Guy de Maupassant any more aptly than (as some have loosely called him) the Flemish Zola. He is, in fact, more akin to the foremost Italian realist, Giovanni Verga. 'I Malivoglia' is the Calabrian equivalent of 'Kees Doorik' or 'Kermesses.' Maurice Maeterlinck is so well known now, that it is needless to say anything here concerning his achievement in imaginative psychological drama, and in other prose and verse. What is of interest is, that his herald—and a pioneer whose influence has been one strongly marked and widespread—was Charles Van Lerberghe. In 'The Nineteenth Century' (Sept. 1893), and elsewhere, I have indicated more fully the place and influence of M. Van Lerberghe, to whom, indeed, I was the first in this country to draw attention, both before and at the time of Maurice Maeterlinck's advent as 'the new man.' Here it must suffice to point out, that to Charles Van Lerberghe is due the credit of having inaugurated what is, too loosely it may be added, called the Maeterlinckian Drama. M. Maeterlinck himself admits the author of 'Les Flaireurs' as his predecessor, and it was to him, and in recognition of 'this new and strange, this apparently crude but artistically wrought presentment of the brutality of the commonplace of death,' that his first book was dedicated.

W. S.



THE NIGHT-COMERS

(Les Flaireurs)

By CHARLES VAN LERBERGHE

Orchestra: Funeral March. Roll of muffled drums. A blast of a horn in the distance. Roll of drums. A short psalmodic motive for the organ. Repeated knocks, heavy and dull. Curtain.

The scene represents a room in a poverty-stricken cottage. To the right, against the wall, a great four-post bed with curtains of black serge. In the middle of the further wall, a door; to the left, a window with lowered blind. Near the bed a small, narrow table, bearing a crucifix between two tapers of yellow wax. A night of storm. The rain lashes against the windows. In the distance is heard the whistling of the wind through the trees, and the baying of a dog. As the curtain rises the stage appears to be empty, and is lighted only by the flickering light of the two tapers. Knocks are again heard at the door. A young girl springs hurriedly out of the bed with gestures of fear. She is clad in a night-gown only, with her blonde hair unloosened.

ACT I

THE NIGHT-COMERS

(Les Flaireurs)

To MAURICE MAETERLINCK

THE GIRL. Who is there?
A VOICE OUTSIDE. I.
THE GIRL. Who are you?

THE VOICE. I.
THE GIRL. That 's no name : who are you ?
THE VOICE. Ah ! but . . . I am the man who . . . you know quite well.
THE GIRL. I expect no one.
A VOICE IN THE BED. Child, what is that noise ?
THE GIRL. Little Mother, it is the wind.—Is it for me you come ?
THE VOICE. Certainly not, little one, most certainly not.
THE MOTHER. Ah, indeed I hear something !
THE GIRL. If you do not give your name I will not open.
THE VOICE. But . . . but . . . it should not be spoken. I am . . . I am the man with the water.
THE GIRL. The man with the water ?
THE VOICE. Yes, certainly. Listen !

[Sound of water falling drop by drop.

THE MOTHER. Child, I hear water. I hear something trickling.
THE GIRL. The man with the water ?
THE VOICE. Of course ; and with the sponge.
THE GIRL. With the sponge ? . . . I have nothing to do with all that.
THE VOICE. Excuse me, little one, excuse me . . . it is to wash with.
THE MOTHER. Who is it, my child ?
THE GIRL. Little Mother . . . it is . . . a poor . . . a poor man, who asks for alms.
THE MOTHER. Ah ! give him something. The poor man ! Let him come in and rest a little time—such a night as it is ! Ah, my God !

[A loud knocking.

THE GIRL. No ! . . . Little mother, I am afraid, we do not know who may come in.
THE MOTHER. That is wrong, what thou sayest is wrong. You must open to him, and give him some bread.

[A loud knocking.

THE GIRL. No!—I am afraid of those who come during the night. Little mother, suppose he were a robber . . . !

THE MOTHER. My child, you must open, do you hear, you must open the door. Who is it? [Smiling.] Ah, mother knows well who it is, my child. She knows that sound.

[A loud knocking.

THE GIRL [alarmed]. You know who it is?

THE MOTHER. Eh, what? Is it not the Seigneur, our good master? He hunts in the night. He is here now, hungry and thirsty, and wearied. Open to him, my daughter, open quickly. I hear the sound of his black horses!

[Trampling of horses in the distance.

THE GIRL. What is that noise? Are you not alone?

THE VOICE. Certainly I am alone! There's no noise . . . ah, yes . . . perhaps, down there . . . it is the sound of those who are coming hither . . . but now, open, open!

[Loud knocking.

THE GIRL. Go away.

THE VOICE. But why will you not open?

THE GIRL. I will never open the door.

THE VOICE. Very good. I will wait.

THE MOTHER. My child, each one says to-morrow, to-morrow; yes, but the other, the other who is there? Will he wait? What one does not know another knows; what one does not see another sees, and it is a great sin and a folly. . . . My daughter, has he gone, now that I hear him no longer?

THE GIRL [looking at the door]. Yes, mother . . . yes . . . yes . . . he has gone.

THE MOTHER. Ah! may Jesus and the Virgin take him into their good keeping. How the storm rages without. . . . Come, my child, let us pray for him, for that poor man in the dark night; let us say an 'Our Father' and the three collects. Turn the cross towards me a little, yes . . . yes.

[The murmuring of the two women at their prayers is heard, and the click of a rosary in the hands of the old woman. The rain lashes against the window. Ten o'clock strikes slowly. The baying of a dog is heard. The girl blows out the candles. Darkness.

ACT II

The blast of a horn in the distance. The roll of drums. Organ notes. Repeated knocks. The tapers are relit, and the young girl is seen, standing against the bed, motionless, in an attitude of watching, with her face turned towards the door. Some one knocks.

THE GIRL [hurrying towards the door]. Ah! be silent, be silent! do! The poor old mother sleeps now.

[A loud knocking.

A VOICE OUTSIDE. It is all one to me.
THE GIRL. You said you would wait.
THE VOICE [bursting into a laugh]. I! I have just arrived.
THE GIRL. What! you are not the man of a little ago!
THE VOICE. Certainly not.
THE MOTHER. My daughter—I hear a noise.
THE GIRL [looking towards the door]. That is not true.
THE VOICE. Ah! Indeed!
THE MOTHER. My child, I hear something moving.
THE GIRL [still facing the door]. Who are you, then?
THE VOICE. But . . .
THE MOTHER. Yes, there is something there, yes.
THE GIRL. I expect no one.
THE MOTHER [listening]. Yes, yes, there is something that frets; like that . . . there, under the door; surely, there is something that trails. What is it, my child?
THE GIRL [without looking round]. It is a night bird, little mother. . . . Who are you, then?
THE VOICE. Why . . . the man with the linen.
THE GIRL. The man with the linen?
THE VOICE. Yes.
THE MOTHER. No, no, my child, no, I hear some one speak. Who is there? that is not your voice. No, no, there is some one there! Who is it, my child?
THE GIRL. Little mother, I tell you, it is nothing.

THE MOTHER. Yes, yes, there is some one there. [Some one knocks.] Do you hear! Some one knocks. Who is it? Ask who it is.

THE GIRL. Little mother, it is a man who has strayed and asks his way.

THE MOTHER. Ah! pitiful! On such a night, ah! my God! Open the door quickly, my little one, to this poor man, so that he may rest and eat a little. Ah, my God! Listen. [Some one knocks.] Ah! you must open to him, my daughter, in common charity. Go.

THE GIRL. Little mother, I am afraid. This is the second time; and how can one know who it is that may come in.

THE MOTHER. Have no fear, my daughter; it is right, and we must do what is right.

[Some one knocks.

THE GIRL [towards the door]. No!

THE MOTHER. Do you not hear the sound of horses?

THE GIRL. What noise is that?

THE VOICE. There's no noise . . . ah, down there? I don't really know. It is the sound of those who are coming hither.

THE MOTHER. But, my child, listen. There is something that rustles below there.

THE GIRL [quickly]. It is the rain against the door, little mother. [A loud knocking.] No!

THE MOTHER. No, no! little mother is not deaf: she could hear grass grow. It is the sound of something that trails; ah! yes, I know it well! It is the beautiful Lady of the Castle, who is there, the beautiful Lady on horseback; she has come! Did she not promise; yes, yes, without a doubt, my daughter, it is she. I hear her distinctly, it is she, open the door quickly.

[Some one knocks.

THE GIRL [towards the door]. No! [She approaches her mother, whose hand she takes.] Ah! little mother, I am frightened of those who come in the night.

THE MOTHER [after a silence, and looking into her eyes]. Why, my child? Jesus is with us.

THE GIRL. Ah! little mother, what ails you that you tremble thus?

THE MOTHER. It is joy, my daughter, for she is there.

[Some one knocks.

THE GIRL. I will not open.

THE VOICE. Ah! Name of Names!

THE MOTHER. She who comes is welcome.

THE GIRL. Do not tremble so, little mother.

THE MOTHER [panting]. But this is wrong, oh! oh! oh! this is wrong . . . this is not good cheer, oh! oh! I tell you that you must . . . open! oh! you must op . . . en! Open!

[Some one knocks.

THE VOICE. So, you will not open?

THE GIRL. No! go away.—Oh! what ails you, little mother, that your hands are cold, so cold?

THE VOICE. Very good. I will wait.

THE GIRL. I will never open the door.

THE VOICE. We will see about that by and by.

THE GIRL. Oh! little mother, you . . .

THE MOTHER [panting and coughing]. My child, I have had a beautiful dream, oh! raise my pillow a little . . . yes, a beautiful dream! I was in Paradise [coughing] and the garden [cough] all the angels [making the movement of dancing with her two hands] . . . danced! [shivering] I with the Holy Virgin [always making gestures which precede her words] I danced . . . in the midst; [cough] a fête, a beautiful fête, oh! oh! oh!

[She makes great efforts to move herself.

THE GIRL [checking her and wiping the perspiration off her face]. Mother! oh, little mother!

THE MOTHER. In the midst of the flowers of Paradise [cough]—[after a silence, and wrought by a new fantasy].—Has she gone, as I no longer hear her?

THE GIRL [looking towards the door]. Yes, mother, yes . . . yes. . . . He has gone.

THE MOTHER. May God guard her in His holy keeping!

THE GIRL. Yes, little mother, I will pray for him.

THE MOTHER [sinking back slowly]. Yes . . . must pray for her . . . must pray for her [a long indrawn breath] the holy Virgin Mary in her house [cough]. Let us say the 'Pater' and the three collects. Draw the crucifix a little nearer, I no longer see it easily, yes, like that, yes.

[The murmuring of their prayers is heard again, and again the low click of the rosary and the sound of coughing. The rain lashes against the panes of glass. Eleven o'clock strikes slowly. Darkness. The baying of a dog is heard. The daughter blows out the tapers.

ACT III

Roll of drums. Blast of a horn in the distance. Organ Motive. Knocks redoubled on the door. Total darkness.

THE GIRL. Ah! my God! ah! my God! be silent there, wretch that you are, you will kill my mother!

[Some one knocks.

A VOICE [outside]. I'm here.[1]

THE GIRL. But I implore you to be silent. Oh, my God, I implore it of you!

THE VOICE. Eh, what? Look you, I've come!

[Loud knocking.

THE GIRL. But what do you want?

THE VOICE. To enter, of course.

[Loud knocking.

THE GIRL. But you said you would wait till daylight!

THE VOICE [with dull laughter]. Oh, indeed! as it happens, I have only just arrived! Is this not true, you others?

THE MOTHER. Light the candle, my child.

[A light.

THE GIRL [still looking towards the door]. It is not true.

[1] Lit.: 'Me v' la!'

THE VOICE. Ah! Sacré, do they make a mock of me here?
THE MOTHER. My child, light the other candle also, for She is there.

[Two lights.

THE VOICE. You are not going to leave me standing here?
THE GIRL. I have no need of you.
THE VOICE. Well, well, each in his turn. It's not you I'm here for; come now!
THE MOTHER [looking round her room sadly]. My house is not worthy to receive her.
THE VOICE. Look you, will you open, or shall I force the door?
THE MOTHER. Come, my child . . . pull back the curtain . . . and let the sunshine in . . . that there may be a little beauty here [waving her arm with a radiant gesture]. Everything at its best, for She is about to enter!
THE GIRL. Yes, mother.

[She draws up the blind. Through the illumined window the shadow of a hearse is thrown on the wall.

THE MOTHER. What are those shadows?
THE GIRL. Ah! . . .

[She lowers the blind rapidly.

THE MOTHER. My child, take the holy water.
THE GIRL [taking the holy water basin and the switch towards the door]. No! Who are you?
THE VOICE. Oh, in the name of all that's holy! the man with . . . the thing . . .

THE GIRL [sprinkling the holy water to right and left and before the door, while at every step a heavy dull blow resounds. The mother crosses herself. After a silence]:—What thing?
THE VOICE. I am the man with the coffin, there now!
THE GIRL [giving a cry]. Ah, the man with . . .

THE VOICE. Yes, yes, do you mean to say I was not expected?

THE MOTHER [in a suffocated voice]. Open the door to her, my girl. She can enter.

THE GIRL. Little mother, it is not a lady . . . it is . . . some one . . . who is pursued and asks for shelter.

THE MOTHER [with a rattle in her throat]. Open quickly to her, my daughter. Oh! oh! open . . . quickly to her, oh! oh! oh! she is very welcome. Water! water! O give me some water!

THE VOICE. By all that's holy, how heavy it is.

[Some one knocks.

THE MOTHER. Ah, I suffocate, my daughter. . . . Where is the crucifix? . . . I cannot see it any longer. . . . Yes, yes, you must open the door to her.

THE VOICE. It will be sodden ere long.

[Some one knocks.

THE MOTHER. Go, lay the table, put on the fine cloth. It is here, see here! [In a hoarse voice]: Ho . . . go, go, and gather some flowers; yes, she is there . . . do open to her.

[Violent blows without.

THE VOICE. Must I break in the door?

THE MOTHER. Yes, there, I see her, I recognise her, oh, beautiful Lady!

[Renewed blows.

THE VOICE. Now then, you others?

[Voices outside.

THE MOTHER [with rattling voice]. The beautiful Lady . . . for my eyes, do you see the doors now? . . . There are none! Open . . . [Blows: the door begins to crack.] Yes, she has something there, something there on her shoulder.

[She makes the sign of the cross.

THE GIRL. Oh, little mother!

THE VOICE. Since I must, then here goes!

[Blows and crackings.

THE GIRL. Go away! go away whoever you be! Go away, I tell you, I will not open to you, I tell you! Never, never, never! Do you come to kill my mother, you there? [Crashing sounds.] Do you bring death to us? Ah, my God! What have I ever done to you? ah, my God! ah, my God!

[Blows and crashing sounds. She falls on her knees before the door, sobbing bitterly.

THE MOTHER [making violent efforts to rise]. Enter, beautiful Lady, the day is here, and I am ready.

THE GIRL [on her knees with uplifted hands]. Oh! oh! I am afraid! Cease, I implore you! We are poor women. We have nothing. My mother is ill. You do not come to take us away, do you? You are not wicked men. I will open to you, but tell me, that you are not heartless men? Is it not so? You do not wish my poor mother to die! . . . [The blows and the cracking and crashing sounds are redoubled. Violent dispute outside. A frightful rattle begins in the old woman's throat. The young girl throws herself on her knees by the bedside of her mother.] Ah, little mother, be still: what are you doing? Do not groan so, you will kill me. I am at your knees, near to you, little mother; look, look at me, it is I, your little angel,—why do you not answer me any more?

THE MOTHER. Who art thou, little angel?

THE VOICE. The hour is come! The hour is come!

[Blows and violent cracking and crashing.

THE GIRL [without rising from the foot the bed]. No, you shall not come, neither you nor the others.

THE VOICE. We shall see.

[Redoubled blows. A piece of wood breaks on the inner side of the door, and falls into the room. Voices in dispute audible outside during the following dialogue.

THE GIRL. Oh! little mother, how you tremble, how icy your hands are; be not afraid; see, it is thy dear little angel who watches over you; be not afraid, they can do you no harm. Dost thou not know me any longer? Oh! do not look at me

with those fixed eyes, little mother. I am afraid even of thee now.

[The neighing of horses is heard.

THE MOTHER [smiling, and holding her daughter to her breast, points to the door with her right hand]. It is the coach! [The noise of a heavy vehicle drawing nigh. Lights pass before the chink of the door. Disputing voices. Fragments of sentences, mixed with oaths, are heard.] What is the matter? What is it? Will not open! The door shut! Oh! la, la. Where is it? It must be forced. Everything is soaking wet. That corpse! That corpse!

[The attack on the door is recommenced with redoubled blows.

THE MOTHER [listening with gaping mouth]. Holy Virgin Mary!

THE GIRL. Little mother, it is I who kiss you; look at me and bless me! Little mother, thou art in my arms; oh, look at me, do look at me!

[Violent tumult outside. The battered door yields. The girl throws herself against the door, and pushes it back with her hands. Horrible sounds of struggling. Midnight tolls slowly.

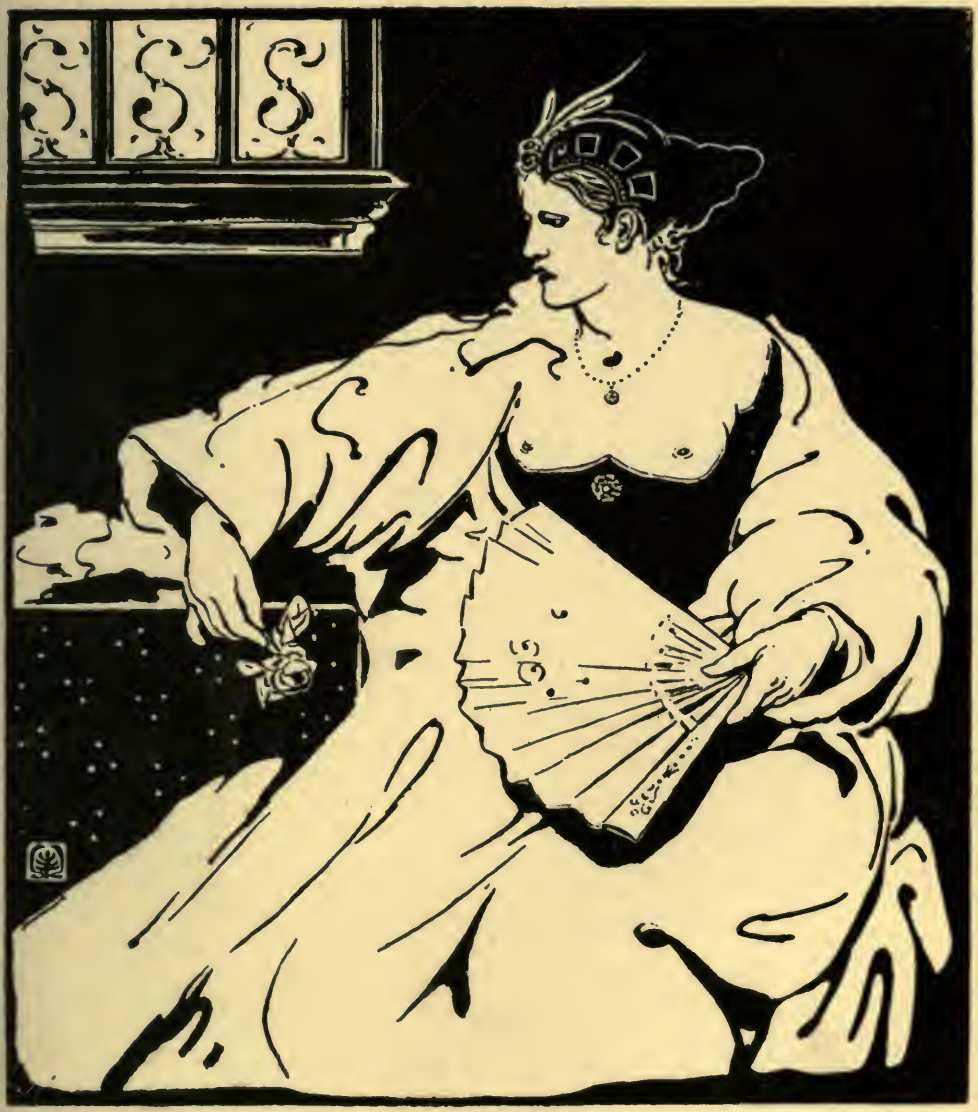
ALL THE VOICES OUTSIDE [with satisfaction]. Ah!

[On the last stroke of midnight the old woman gives a loud hoarse cry, and the young girl springs from the threshold, and throws herself on her knees, with open arms towards the bed. The door, yielding to the outer pressure, falls after her with a great noise. A rush of cold air extinguishes the two tapers. DARKNESS.

WILLIAM SHARP.

THE YELLOW ROSE

BY PITTENDRIGH MACGILLIVRAY



THE SONG OF LIFE'S FINE FLOWER

AMALFI, March 1887.

I

WHEREFORE OF JOY REMEMBERED

Wherefore of joy remembered should I sing—
Do any bells for bygone bridals ring?
  For nesting joy of years and years agone?
Do the birds chant, upon the wheat a-swing?

Nay, sharp as joy-thrill breaks the sudden song,
Cleaving the murmur of the cornland's throng,
  For this glad morn, for these young ones that flit
On balanced wing the summer flowers among.

I sing because my love desires a lay—
New as new bliss, and old as Love's old May:
  I sing a song of love fresh-garneréd
From Love's last volume, clasped in his old way.

II

IN MORNING SHINE

In morning shine I wrote Love's good and ill—
Echoes, they say, from some Sicilian hill
  Of linked arms, and seas that separate,
And eyes like wells where Love might drink his fill.

Yet who dare say what songs are new or old?
Great Omar's scroll at either end was rolled,
  And in the midst he read one single line—
A shadowy NOW traced on the gleaming gold!

Unroll which way you will, from that great NOW,
And read the script, I care not when nor how,
  There will you see, blazoned in blood of men,
Love, hate; joy, sorrow; faith, and broken vow!

III

NO NEW SONG

No new song then I sing, no note of new,
Save new joy's marvel ringing through and through—
  Only of Love and Her and Italy—
Alas! unworthy I, God keep me true.

Hither from England, lying bleak and grey,
We came. Ah, wondrous WE! To this fair bay
  Of white Amalfi, whose mysterious hue
Gleams blue and bluer fifty miles away.

Sweet, sweet above the dash of waves, to catch
The shine of eyes, to mark the light winds snatch
  A lock precise to gentler negligence,
Or the kissed cheek's responsive red to watch.

IV

THESE MAKE MORE FAIR

These make more fair the girdling Apennine,
Brighter the changing sapphire of the brine,
  Cut in ten myriad facets multiform—
As various as this joy of mine and thine.

Behold the Apennine! Ethereal
As the white throne set in God's judgment hall,
  Between the inmost sea and outmost Heaven
They wait His pleasure and the close of all.

Draw in the breaths from many an orange tree,
And drink the bursting passion of the sea—
  Strange welling perfume from the morning flowers,
This Southland's half-awakened mystery.

V

LO! CLIFF ON CLIFF

Lo! cliff on cliff in surge tumultuous,
In passionate protest overfrowning thus
  The waves' dull clamour and white Judas kiss,
Whose silver sparkles scatter tremulous.

Which love we best? Still day of upturned Heaven,
The blue-globed sea and sky a marvel given,
  Turned by its Maker's hand, perfect as God,
Wherein our souls dream, waking, sorrow-shriven?

Or this fresh, dewy, air-stirred earth,
A wide, glad place, wherein is room for mirth,
  Where earth and sea and sky talk each to each,
New merged in some diviner bath of birth.

VI

TO EACH GREEN TERRACE

To each green terrace clings the dark stone pine,
The cliff's grim ruin breaks the black sea line:
  And oranges of orbed Hesperian gold,
Like chaliced cups, hang rich with scented wine.

Grey tower, bright dome, white winding loops of road
Flashing and twining like the serpent rod,
  The prophet cast to earth by Nile's old flood—
Shall tell us 'Lo! sweet Italy you trod!'

White bending sprays of spineless strange hawthorn,
Pure favours by a bride's tire-maidens worn,
  Weep blinding sheets of tears, or distant shine
In mourning argent o'er a land forlorn.

VII

HOW MEN HAVE LOVED THEE

How men have loved thee, Italy divine,
How the Greek pledged thee in his Chian wine,
  And set his temples' magic colonnades,
At Paestum and Girgenti, o'er the brine.

From the far burning East thy lovers came
To weary thee with war's fierce amorous game.
  Till through the death song of imperial Rome
Pealed the wild clamour of Muhammed's name.

Now Mahmoud's moon is old. But fiercely then
The crescent swayed o'er hosts of swaying men.
  Ah! never more shall sabre flash attest
The surging glory of the Saracen.

VIII

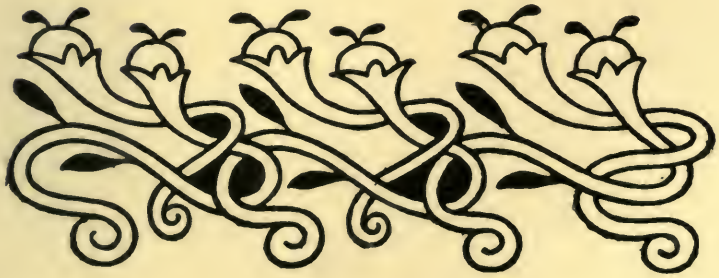
THAT WAS ITALIA'S GLORIOUS AFTERNOON

That was Italia's glorious afternoon:
It is her twilight now. Pray ye that soon
Over the Adriatic may arise
The glowing crescent of a worthier moon.

Even now it shines upon the solemn seas,
Sifts on us as we pace the terraces
Of bursting vine—and in this high-piled town
Transmutes to faery pearl her palaces.

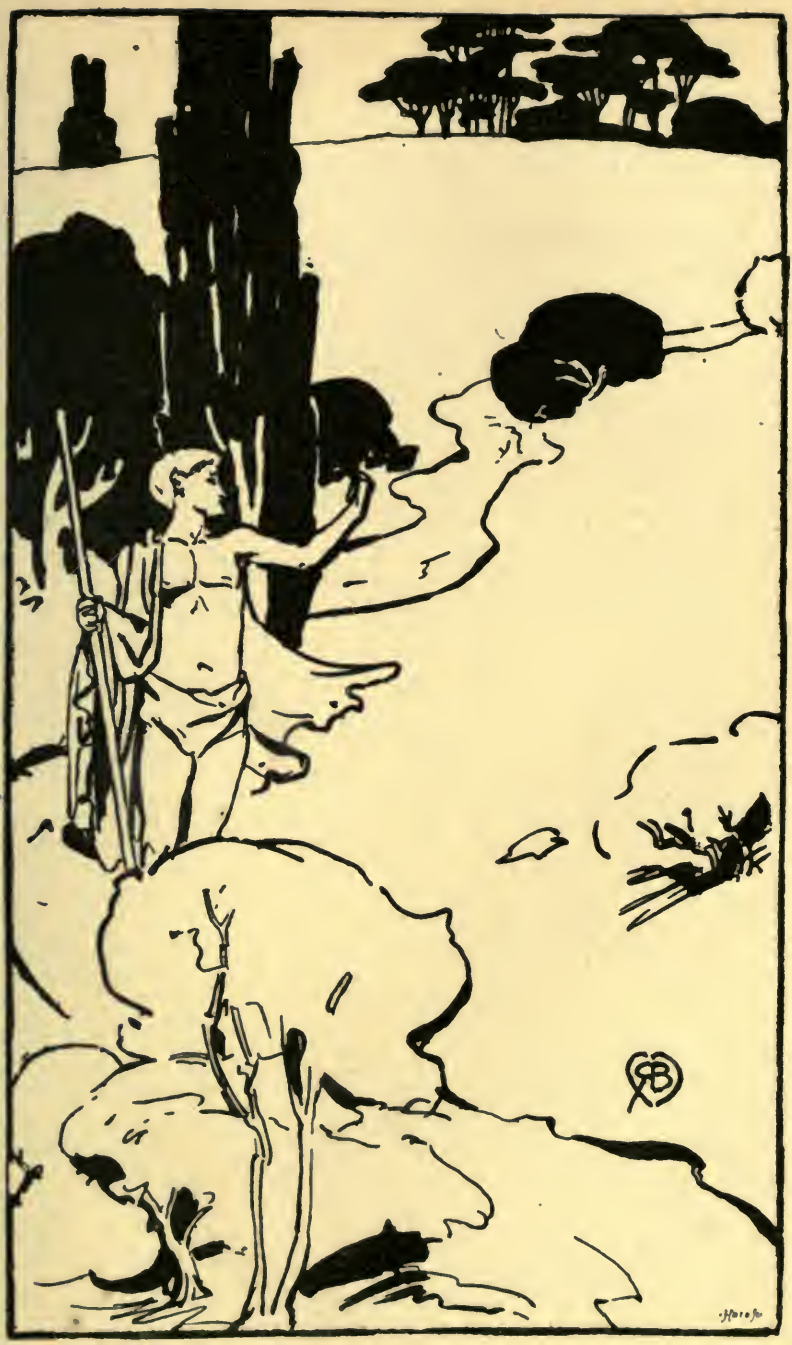
O for one flash of the old dead renown,
To make this Italy the whole world's crown.
For Rome is gone. Her name is all of her—
And all her gods' high temples broken down.

S. R. CROCKETT.



THE PASSER-BY

BY ROBERT BURNS



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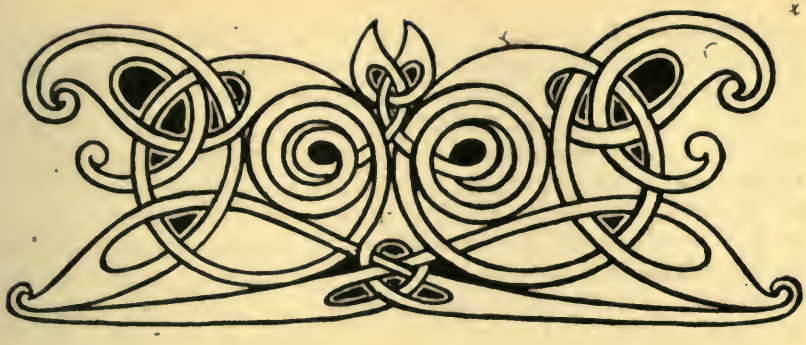

LE DILETTANTISME

ARGUMENT.—Like a star-gazer who would tell us that astronomy is vanity, yet offers in exchange his own descriptions and fancies of the hour, so this contemporary literature of dilettantism thinks of life as a mere phantasmagoria, pleasant to observe but vain to understand. Moreover, amid true and false, good and ill, why limit our interest by any preference? Renan was founder of the school, Jules Lemaître and Anatole France are its leaders, Maurice Barrès its exaggerator. Their qualities and defects are manifest; charm of style and fancy, wide and varied interests, subtle perceptions, refined enjoyment: but corresponding lack of interpretation and of judgment, paralysis of will, incapacity even of conceiving action. Such literature is that of overgrown children; the great masters have always reached manhood, have expressed its qualities, and hence inspire them.

FIGUREZ-VOUS un astronome qui viendrait vous dire: 'C'est un splendide spectacle que celui du ciel étoilé, mais bien fous sont les hommes qui prétendent en donner d'exactes descriptions et en faire connaître les vraies lois! Les Copernic et les Newton se montraient de grands prétentieux lorsqu'ils cherchaient à se rendre compte du mouvement des astres: là-dessus tous les systèmes se valent, et il y a long-temps que, dans ma sagesse, je me suis fait une gloire de n'y rien comprendre. Mais, si cela peut vous être agréable, je

vous exposerai volontiers, à propos de ces difficiles matières, les jolies choses, les combinaisons surprenantes et les théories de toute espèce que je m'amuse à inventer.'

Si vous n'avez jamais rencontré de tels astronomes, je puis vous présenter un certain nombre de moralistes qui procèdent exactement de la même façon dans les problèmes essentiels de la destinée humaine. On les appelle les 'dilettantes' parce qu'en toutes choses, et même dans les plus importantes idées, ils cherchent uniquement le plaisir, la jouissance, le divertissement. Ce ne sont point, malgré les apparences, des sceptiques comme les autres: on peut être sceptique et regretter de ne pas connaître le vrai; les dilettantes se complaisent dans leur ignorance. Ils seraient bien fâchés d'arriver à comprendre quelque chose dans l'ordre du monde et dans les lois morales de la vie humaine: à leurs yeux comprendre est le fait des esprits étroits; aux esprits larges il suffit de connaître.

Savoir ce qu'on a pensé avant nous sur la morale, la religion, l'art, la société; ajouter, si on le peut, quelques nouvelles idées à celles qui ont déjà cours sur ces matières inextricables; regarder avec indifférence les solutions contradictoires qu'on a essayé de donner aux divers problèmes; dominer de son haut tous les préjugés, tous les devoirs, toutes les lois et toutes les doctrines; n'adopter de chaque système que ce qu'on y trouve de plus conforme à ses goûts présents, mais sans rompre pour si peu avec les systèmes opposés qu'un jour peut-être on sera bien heureux de faire siens: voilà, évidemment, la marque d'une intelligence supérieure et le seul procédé qui convienne à de vrais dilettantes. Entre le vrai et le faux, entre le bien et le mal, pourquoi des préférences? pourquoi un choix exclusif qui nous priverait de la moitié au moins des façons de penser et de sentir? 'Tout est vrai, même les songes,' dit Jules Lemaître; et Renan, fondateur du dilettantisme, recommande à ses disciples de bien faire voir dans chacun de leurs livres 'les deux faces opposés dont se compose toute vérité.' Dans le 'Jardin d'Epicure,' ce livre très

digne de son titre et qui constitue le plus parfait manuel du dilettantisme, Anatole France a donné plus clairement encore la vraie formule du nouveau système, lorsqu'il a dit que 'c'est faire un abus vraiment inique de l'intelligence que de l'employer à chercher la vérité.' Réfléchissez bien à l'admirable règle de conduite que vous donne une pareille sentence ; et, si cela ne vous suffit pas encore, considérez de plus, avec le même auteur, que, si la morale avait écouté la raison, 'elle eût été conduite par divers chemins aux conclusions les plus monstrueuses.'

Il n'est rien d'exagéré dans ce tableau : chaque trait en est emprunté aux dilettantes eux-mêmes ; et, pour les faire condamner par toutes les âmes droites, il suffit de reproduire ce qu'ils ont dit maintes fois dans l'intention de se faire admirer. Peut-être on aura quelque peine à le croire, mais réellement nous avons en France un certain nombre d'écrivains qui pensent de la sorte, si tant est qu'on puisse voir là de la pensée.

Et ce ne sont point les premiers venus, car leur chef a eu nom Renan, et ils s'appellent aujourd'hui Anatole France, Jules Lemaître, Maurice Barrès. Sans doute, c'est peu de chose encore que M. Barrès, et, si ses exagérations de toute espèce ont réussi à le faire connaître des gens les mieux informés, il demeure bien en deça de la gloire ; mais Lemaître et Anatole France possèdent comme stylistes un talent de premier ordre, et leur science est très suffisante pour qu'ils parlent de tout, de morale, de religion, d'histoire, de littérature, sinon avec profondeur, du moins avec une parfaite aisance. Le succès, non plus, n'est pas ce qui leur manque. Je ne dis pas qu'on les estime, mais on s'intéresse à leurs fantaisies. Les rois aussi s'intéressaient naguère aux drôleries de leurs bouffons. Sans les prendre au sérieux, on voit plus d'un esprit d'élite s'amuser de leurs jolis tours et oublier trop aisément le mal qui en résulte pour l'esprit public. Quant à l'homme sans valeur, il reste devant eux béat d'admiration ; lorsqu'il leur entend dire qu'ils ne comprennent rien de rien à l'ensemble

du monde ni à la destinée humaine, il ne se tient pas de joie : ‘C’est justement comme moi,’ s’écrie-t-il transporté ; ‘voilà de l’intelligence !’

La supériorité que les dilettantes s’attribuent, et que semble aussi proclamer une partie du public, est-elle bien réelle ? Sont-ils, comme ils le croient, des esprits vraiment complets, ouverts, délicats, bienfaisants, admirables autant qu’admirés ?

Même en lui concédant tous les avantages que célèbrent ses partisans, même en voyant en lui, comme on nous y invite, la suprême perfection de l’intelligence et l’épanouissement de nos plus délicates facultés de jouir, le dilettantisme, de l’aveu des siens, aurait encore un vice fondamental et qui suffirait à prévenir contre ses séductions toutes les âmes vaillantes : il ne fait point de part à la volonté, il détourne de l’action, il sourit du devoir, il énerve toute puissance morale. Or c’est par là qu’on vaut, par le libre exercice de son activité, par la mise en œuvre de ses énergies. Connaître et jouir ne dépendent pas toujours de nous ; ce qui dépend de nous, ce qui, au jugement de Dieu comme devant notre conscience et devant nos semblables, constitue notre mérite ou notre indignité, c’est l’usage de notre liberté, c’est notre manière de vouloir et d’agir. Une habitude d’esprit comme le dilettantisme, qui ne développe l’intelligence qu’en déprimant la volonté, enlève donc beaucoup plus qu’elle n’ajoute de valeur réelle à ceux en qui elle domine. Exagérer en soi certaines facultés en atrophiant les autres, c’est toujours déchoir et s’éloigner de cette perfection qui est essentiellement harmonie et ordre ; mais, si cette exagération se produit en faveur des facultés irresponsables, et aux dépens des facultés libres, quels troubles n’amène-t-elle pas, et quel abaissement de la personne humaine !

Disons mieux : Céder au dilettantisme sous prétexte de développer plus amplement son intelligence, c’est tout perdre d’un côté sans rien gagner de l’autre.

De ce dangereux exercice, l’intelligence ne peut, en effet, tirer aucun avantage sérieux. Elle produit, n’est-ce pas ? deux sortes d’opérations : les unes, plutôt passives et souvent

inconscientes, consistent surtout à emmagasiner dans la mémoire les faits et les paroles, à refléter dans l'imagination la vie extérieure du monde ; les autres, actives et vraiment propres à l'homme, consistent à se prononcer sur les rapports et sur la valeur des images ou des idées qui se présentent à notre esprit. Par le premier mode, nous connaissons ; par le second mode, nous comprenons et nous jugeons. Or, de connaître, c'est toute l'ambition et tout l'effort du dilettantisme ; comprendre et juger ne sont pour lui que des opérations chimériques et pédantes, bonnes tout au plus pour les esprits vulgaires.

On voit maintenant ce que signifie pour les dilettantes cette intelligence dont volontiers ils s'attribueraient le monopole. Qu'elle soit compatible avec de brillantes connaissances, de la souplesse, de la bonne grâce, tant que l'on voudra ; cela dépend du talent des auteurs, et, du reste, ces qualités n'appartiennent pas en propre au dilettantisme. Mais que dans une telle intelligence il y ait place pour le jugement et pour la raison, c'est-à-dire en somme pour les facultés les plus hautes, nul n'osera le prétendre, et les dilettantes eux-mêmes ne voudraient pas qu'il en fût ainsi. Ils sont bien trop fiers de ne rien comprendre ; ils s'amusent bien trop à jongler avec les systèmes, et à se balancer légèrement d'une contradiction à l'autre !

Après tout, c'est leur droit, de se livrer à ces jeux de vieux enfants. Mais c'est notre droit aussi, de croire qu'il y a mieux à faire dans ce monde, et de préférer à ceux qui se moquent de nous les écrivains qui, s'adressant à notre raison, lui expliquent les vérités essentielles qu'elle peut et qu'elle doit comprendre. N'ayant besoin de docteurs ni pour ignorer ni pour trouver de beaux prétextes à notre lâcheté, nous continuerons, comme cet homme de bon sens qui s'appelait La Bruyère, à ne traiter de 'maîtres ouvriers' que les auteurs dont les livres 'nous élèvent l'esprit et nous inspirent des sentiments nobles et généreux.' Quant à ceux qui font profession de douter de tout ce qu'ils disent, ne sachant que

railler la vérité et la vertu, ils auraient au moins la ressource de se taire, et je ne vois pas ce que nous y perdrions. Cela vaudrait mieux que de s'appliquer, comme ils le font, à ruiner le peu de conscience qu'ont gardée les riches et le peu d'espérance qui console les pauvres.

ABBÉ FÉLIX KLEIN.

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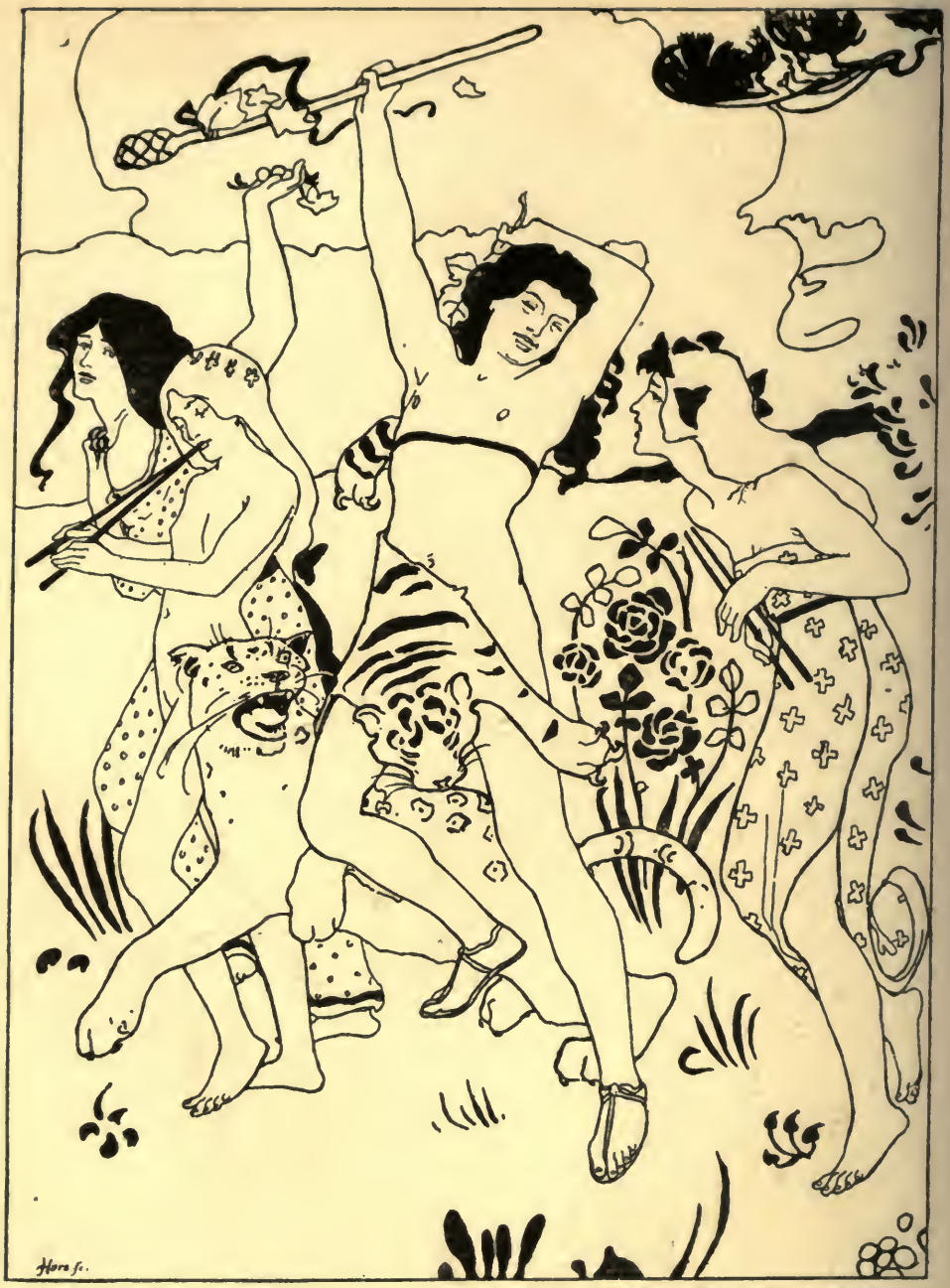
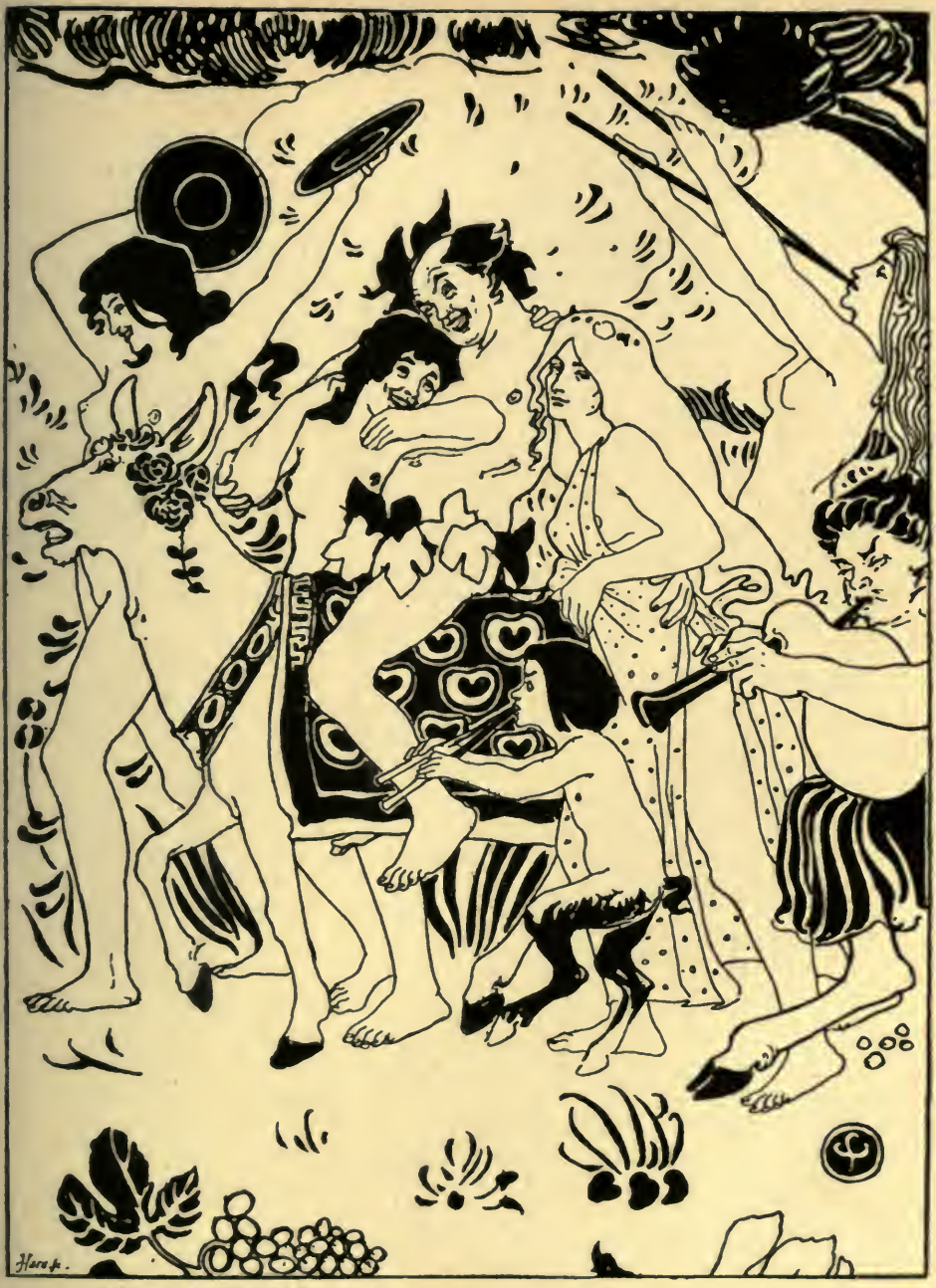


BACCHUS AND SILENUS



BY JOHN DUNCAN

AMEL AND PENHOR[1]

IT is the common rumour, along this Breton coast, that when a north-east wind blows strongly across the bay of Saint-Malo, a sailor's eye may at times discern strange things between Mont Saint-Michel and the Isles of Chausey. Whole villages there have been covered by the waves, villages with their cottages and church-spire. These villages are Bougneuf, Tommen, Saint-Etienne-en-Paluel, Saint-Louis, Mauny, Epiniac, la Feillette, and many others. The gaunt ruins of these submerged hamlets lie in the sand, with fragments of wrecks, and great trunks of the forest of Scissy.

A pitiless strife has raged for centuries between the ocean and the poor land of Brittany. The conquering ocean sleeps peacefully now on the field of battle.

It is not tradition only which has preserved the memory of those deadly combats. Family and monastic records, town archives, dusty papers of notaries, all contain a number of authentic titles to those lost estates, those submerged corn-fields. The homeless man, who to-day wanders over the Breton roads with stick and wallet, may be heir to princely domains beneath these silent waters. These lost castles may be his, these meadows and forests, these mills which hummed on the

[1] After the Breton legend as narrated by Paul Féval.

river banks; his, too, the peaceful huts whose rising smoke was wont to cheer from afar the weary traveller. Ships, with sails unfurled, now pass a hundred feet above the once hospitable dwellings. The sea, as that other dread leveller, Death, has spread itself over manor and cottage, over oak and reed.

This ever-present, this sad and prophetic Menace of the Past is apt to daunt even the strongest and most indefatigable man with the futility of his labour. Great jest of the jests of centuries, that discloses the shroud as the first and last expression of a dreamed-of equality!

All along the coast from Granville to Cape Frehel, near Saint-Malo, this conquering sea has covered the once fertile fields with barren sand. Here and there, a rock raises its black head above the waves. This may preserve its ancient name of fief, of castle, or of village; for the earth has bones, and even a mountain leaves behind it a skeleton of stone. The fishers of Dinard cast their nets over the fair meadows of Césambre: and the Grand-Bé, that sombre spot where Chateaubriand wished to have his tomb, was once the centre of a glorious garden.

How long the sea took to conquer this land none can tell. The strife began before the Christian era. It is known that druidical woods stretched for eight or ten miles beyond the present coast line. Later, the forest of Scissy planted its vanguard oaks on the rocks of Chausey.

At that time Couesnon was a big river which Ptolemy and Ammianus Marcellinus confounded with the Seine. A proud river it was, sovereign of the Selune, and lord of the See, which brought to it the tribute of their waters. It flowed oceanward beyond the hills of Chausey, which now form an archipelago; and, at that remote date, its course was by the right of Mont Saint-Michel, along the coast of La Manche. It was long after this that the Couesnon doubled upon itself. Thereafter it flowed to the left of the Mount, thus taking it from Brittany to give it to Normandy.

Li Couesnon à fait folie;
Si est le Mont en Normandie. . . .

The Breton legend of the Great Flood which brought about that severance, the Deluge as it is called in Armoricq, runs thus:—

Penhor, the daughter of Bud, was the wife of Amel, who tended the flocks of Annan. This great seigneur was lord and count of Chezé, beyond Mont Trombelène. His castle stood in the midst of seven villages, which paid tribute when he sent out his men to war. One of these villages was called Saint-Vinol: and it was here Amel and Penhor dwelt.

Penhor was eighteen years old, Amel was almost twenty-five. Their parents were dead, and they loved one another with the great love of orphans. Amel's wife was beautiful as a sunbeam in spring. Her hair fell as a mantle around her. Her eyes pierced to the depths of the heart. He himself was tall and strong, and his limbs were supple.

In these days there were striped wolves which were bigger than foals six months old. They killed horses, and drank the blood of sleeping cattle; and they disdained to flee at the approach of man. It was said of them that an arrow could not pierce their skin: that, if struck by a spear, it snapped in the hand. Nevertheless, Amel set himself to cope with this terror. Thus it was that, one winter night, when the striped wolf of Chezé left the forest in search of food, Penhor's husband crouched on the plain to intercept him.

And the end was this: Amel seized the striped wolf in his strong arms, and strangled it. And that is a true thing of Amel that was so strong and supple, and was, indeed, a youth both of might and valour.

But before he had set out to await the wolf, Amel had hung in the village church of Saint-Vinol, under the niche from which the good Virgin smiled, a distaff of fine linen, prepared by the fair hands of Penhor.

The Virgin of Saint-Vinol was rich. Year after year offerings were placed at her feet; for the country people thought to expiate their sins with gifts of linen, or of sheaves of corn, or of fair ripe fruits. God knows if these simple people had sins for which to atone!

Amel and Penhor lived in joy, for they were young and they loved. One shadow, however, dusked their sunshine at times. That they had no children: this was their one regret. Thus it was that Penhor was sad when she remained alone in her hut, while Amel guarded his flocks.

She said to herself, one day when the weariness was upon her, as the shadow of autumn upon the sunlit woods of July: 'Ah, Madone, if only I had a beautiful child on my knee, the living image of his father, then, true, it is with a singing at my heart I would await each day the home-coming of Amel.'

As for Amel, this is what he said to himself: 'Ah, Madone, if Penhor gave me a beautiful child, the living image of herself, what joy, what happiness!'

Ah, they were good Christians, these: and as for their innocent sins, for sure they did not add greatly to those of the people of Saint-Vinol!

'Penhor, my wife,' said Amel one day, 'weave a veil for the holy Mary, Mother of God, and perhaps a child will be given to us.'

So, in due time, Penhor wove a veil for the holy Mary, Mother of God; a beautiful veil, white as snow, and more delicate than the tender mist of an August evening.

The Mother of God was well pleased. Amel and Penhor had a child. They loved one another all the more tenderly as they bent over its little cradle.

The child was nine days old, when Amel took the cradle in his arms, and so carried the infant to baptism. After the baptism, Penhor lifted the cradle and carried it round the church to the altar of the Virgin.

'Mary, oh, holy Mary!' said she, kneeling before the Mother of God, 'to you I consecrate the child which you have given to

us. He shall be yours, and grow up dedicated to your divine colour. Look at him, holy Mary; he is called Raoul as was his father's father. See him, that you may know him in the day of peril.'

Thereat Amel, assenting, cried, 'So be it.'

Mary's colour is the blue of the sky. Therefore it was that the child, Raoul, was thenceforth robed in the holy blue. He was beautiful, with the fair hair of his mother and the dark eyes of Amel, the brave herdsman.

Then the sorrow of the sorrows came.

No man can tell if it was because of some great sin among the people of Saint-Vinol, or but the wise wisdom of God, that one night—O Mary! a night of terror!—the waters of the Couesnon rose rapidly.

The wind blew from the north-east, the rain fell in torrents, the earth shook. In a brief while the plain was covered with water. When morning broke, the people saw that it was not the Couesnon only which had overflowed; it was the sea, which had destroyed all the barriers, even those raised by the hand of God Himself.

The flood came on, dark, raging, a creature of the night, full of awe and terror, bearing on its surface uprooted trees and the bodies of dead animals.

To the church of Saint-Vinol, which stood on a height, the bewildered villagers fled affrighted. All save two: for when Amel and Penhor hastened thither with their child the church was full, and they were forced to remain at the door, with the roaring rush of the deluge in their ears, like the baying of a bloodhound.

The waters rose and rose. When the lips of the flood licked their feet, Amel took his wife in his arms. Soon the waters reached his waist. Then he said: 'Farewell, my beloved wife. I will uphold you. Perhaps the deluge will be stayed. If I die, and you are saved, it is well.'

Penhor obeyed. Still the dark flood of the waters rose. When it reached her breast, she lifted the little Raoul, and said:

'Farewell, my darling child. I will uphold you. Perhaps the waters will be stayed. If I die, and you are saved, it is well.' With the child it was in turn as with his mother when Amel had whispered to her.
Still the waters rose.
Soon nothing was visible above the angry waves, save the fair head of little Raoul, and a fold of his blue frock which fluttered in the wind.

It was at this moment that the Virgin left her niche in the church of Saint-Vinol to fly heavenward. In her hands she carried all her offerings.
As she passed above the churchyard she saw the fair head of little Raoul and the fluttering fold of pale blue.
Hereat the Virgin paused in her flight, and said: 'This child is mine. I will carry him to God.' With that she put the softness of her hand about his fair hair. But the child was heavy, very heavy for such a little fellow. One by one the holy Virgin had to relinquish her cherished offerings.
When she had thrown them all aside—the linen, the flowers, and the ripe fruits—she was able to raise him. Then it was she saw why little Raoul was so heavy.
His mother held him in her stiffened arms.
In his stiffened arms, in turn, the father upheld the mother.
How blessed is love washed in the blood of kindred! The Virgin smiled. She said: 'They loved one another well.' But when she smiled, the darkness of death went from them, and they awoke.
Thus it was that Mary carried three happy souls up to heaven; the father with the mother, the mother with the child.

This story is told in the evening watches between Saint-Georges and Cherrueix.

EDITH WINGATE RINDER.

FAITH'S AVATAR

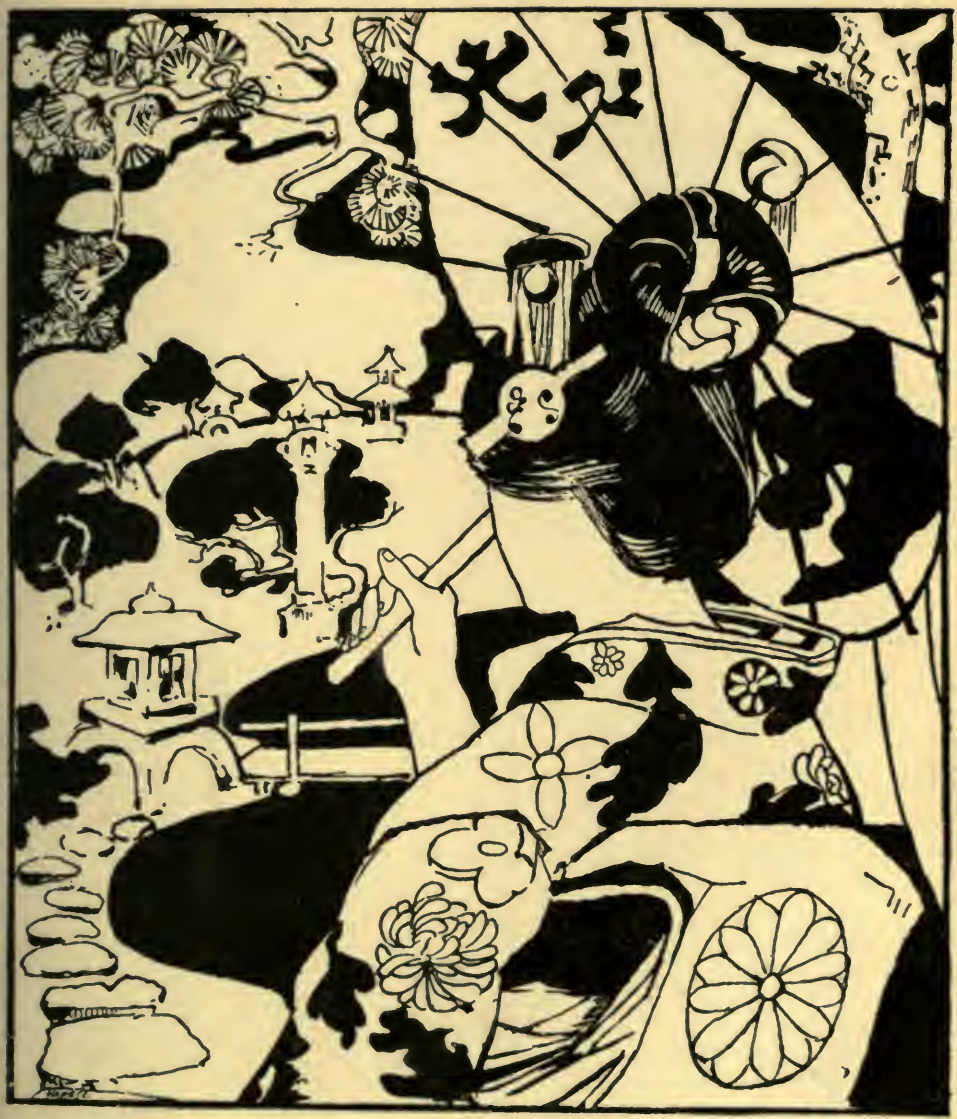
TO . . . . . .

IF Faith were given human form, alive and warm,
I think thy steady-burning eyes
Where Love and Hope and Courage dwell,
I think thy mouth so sweet and wise
Would suit her well.
For if not very Faith thou art,
Yet Faith, who dwelleth in thy heart,
Has wrought thy features to her will,
And made them pure and calm and still.

RONALD CAMPBELL MACFIE.

MADAME CHRYSANTHÈME

BY E. A. HORNEL



LA CITÉ DU BON ACCORD[1]

LA Joie par excellence est de trouver un ami et de lui montrer qu'on l'aime. Oui, la Joie par excellence, car l'Amour même, avec tous ses emportements, n'a sa vraie grandeur, n'est durable que par la fervente amitié.

Mais en dehors de ce haut sentiment qui dépasse de beaucoup la simple fraternité, puisqu'elle suppose une association complète des volontés et des actes, combien d'impulsions naturelles auxquelles on donne ordinairement le nom d'"amitiés,' et qui, sans mériter cette appellation glorieuse, n'en sont pas moins des sentiments très nobles et qu'il faudrait pleinement satisfaire! La sympathie voudrait souvent s'élancer de l'homme à l'homme, mais pour mille causes étrangères elle ne se manifeste point. Que de fois chacun de nous a-t-il ainsi rencontré des personnes que d'un coup d'œil il a reconnues comme des amis en puissance, comme des êtres avec lesquels il voudrait échanger des pensées sincères, mais qui pour lui ne seront jamais que des ombres, destinées bientôt à fuir de sa mémoire: ce ne sont guère que des apparences vaines malgré

[1] This article is placed in the section 'Autumn in the North' since it has been suggested by a recent visit from its writer. The foremost geographer in Europe, M. Reclus, is also the joint-apostle with Tolstoï of the higher Anarchism. Both characteristics of his thought are thus represented in his title; his generous hopefulness most of all.

les qualités puissantes, malgré tous les élans de bonté qu'il sent devoir exister en elles. On s'est croisé, on a même pu échanger un regard, peut-être le hasard vous a-t-il favorisé au point de permettre un salut ou un serrement de main : c'est tout et l'on s'engloutit de nouveau l'un pour l'autre dans le gouffre infini de l'espace et du temps. Les amis virtuels restent des amis inconnus. Seulement à la lecture de tel livre, à la récitation de telle phrase, à l'ouie d'une même musique, sous la pression des mêmes faits sociaux, les âmes sœurs vibrent simultanément comme des plaques de cristal émues par un coup d'archet. Si l'un des amis inconnus a la joie de travailler comme artiste ou savant, ce qu'il chante, peint, sculpte, écrit peut du moins créer une sorte d'amitié unilatérale : les sympathies se précisent chez le lecteur ou l'auditeur. Parfois aussi, par exemple dans une réunion publique, des sentiments d'enthousiasme s'échangent de l'âme à l'âme dans l'air brûlant. Une tendresse mutuelle qui ne s'était jamais exprimée directement trouve ainsi une issue momentanée, mais à la sortie les amis se séparent et, plus tard, quand ils se rencontrent, ils ignorent que leurs cœurs ont ensemble battu.

Comment donc unir ceux qui ne demandent qu'à s'aimer ? Comment joindre les sympathies en un bonheur d'affection réciproque ? Au premier abord le problème semble impossible, en ce monde conventionnel où règnent les formules, où tout est mesuré par une éducation hypocrite, où tout ment, le regard, le geste et le sourire. Mais non, l'œuvre peut s'accomplir, grâce à ces hommes dévoués qui rapprochent dans une même entreprise les amis connus et inconnus. Si l'amitié engendre la communauté des efforts extérieurs, de même, par une réaction naturelle, un travail commun, abordé passionnément, révèle ou suscite l'amitié entre les compagnons de labeur. Les tentatives des êtres généreux qui font appel à toutes les initiatives, à toutes les énergies, pour travailler au bien public, sont donc doublement bonnes, à la fois par le but direct réalisé et par le groupement d'amis qui, sans cela, ne se seraient jamais rencontrés : une conscience collective les anime ; ils vivent de la même

vie et l'associent librement dans l'emploi de leurs individualités diverses.

Un grand nombre de ces œuvres collectives, triomphe des hommes de cœur sur l'égoïsme primitif, naissent sous mille formes; la solidarité humaine fait surgir de tous côtés des associations où les initiatives ont leur franc jeu, et où les amis inconnus ont la joie de se découvrir mutuellement. Laquelle de ces entreprises aura le plus d'importance historique dans l'évolution de l'humanité? Toutes sont bonnes, puisque l'impulsion morale en est parfaite; mais la meilleure est certainement celle qui embrasse le plus d'intérêts humains et leur donne le plus de satisfaction: c'est la 'Cité du Bon Accord.'

Je la vois d'ici, ayant sur la 'Cité de Dieu,' la 'Cité du Soleil,' et tant d'autres cités déjà rêvées, l'avantage capital de n'être pas une pure conception de l'esprit, mais de se développer d'une manière organique, de vivre enfin d'une vie toute concrète, en utilisant, pour les renouveler, les cellules vieillies d'organismes antérieurs tombés en dissolution. Je la vois dressant ses tours et ses clochetons, étalant ses terrasses sur la colline superbe où vécurent les héros mythiques. En bas se groupent les demeures des générations qui passent, préparant par leur travail, achetant par leurs souffrances la promesse d'un avenir meilleur. Au delà se prolongent les hauteurs herbeuses ou fleuries de bruyères; des roches lointaines qui se montrent à l'horizon surgissent de la mer, et l'on croirait entendre le murmure des vagues qui, dans l'infini des temps écoulés, apportèrent nos aïeux.

La 'Cité du Bon Accord' domine tout cet immense espace, tout ce monde de poésie et d'histoire, et par les yeux de l'esprit, je la vois résumant le sens intime de tout ce passé, s'épanouissant comme une fleur merveilleuse, dont la sève distillait dans le sol des milliers de générations humaines. Le poète nous parle de la 'Cité Dolente' au seuil de laquelle le malheureux perd toute espérance: ici nous entrons avec joie, pleins d'une noble gaieté, avec la fière résolution d'accomplir de grandes choses.

Ici tous auront le pain, le pain qu'il est si difficile, parfois si humiliant de conquérir ailleurs; tous auront la santé que donnera l'air pur, l'eau amenée en abondance des sources cristallines; ils jouiront de la nourriture simple réglée par le travail. Là tout un microcosme, résumé et en même temps espoir du genre humain, fonctionnera sans effort, s'occupant aux mille besognes de la vie, besognes toujours attrayantes puisqu'elles seront choisies librement. Les artistes décoreront les palais familiaux de leurs sculptures et de leurs fresques; on s'instruira mutuellement dans les laboratoires, les musées et les jardins; les jeunes filles nous chanteront des chœurs; les enfants noueront et dénoueront leurs rondes autour des vieillards heureux: nulle loi, nulle contrainte ne troublera le grand accord.

Salut et joie à tous les amis inconnus que j'ai rencontrés dans la cité nouvelle! Salut et joie à tous ceux qui s'y succèderont de siècle en siècle.

ÉLISÉE RECLUS.

THE HILL-WATER

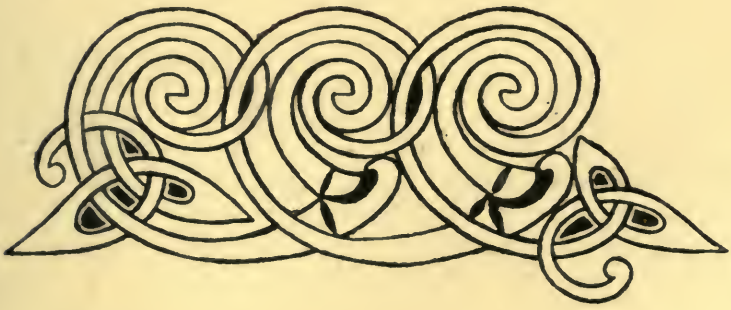
THERE is a little brook,
I love it well:
It hath so sweet a sound
That even in dreams my ears could tell
Its music anywhere:
Often I wander there,
And leave my book
Unread upon the ground,
Eager to quell
In the hushed air
That haunts its flowing forehead fair
All that about my heart hath wound
A trouble of care:
Or, it may be, idly to spell
Its runic rhythms rare,
And with its singing soul to share
Its ancient lore profound:
For sweet it is to be the echoing shell
That lists and inly keeps that murmurous miracle.

About it all day long
In this June tide
There is a myriad song.
From every side
There comes a breath, a hum, a voice:
The hill-wind fans it with a pleasant noise
As of sweet rustling things
That move on unseen wings;
And from the pinewood near
A floating whisper oftentimes I hear,
As when, o'er pastoral meadows wide,
Stealeth the drowsy rumour of a weir.
The green reeds bend above it,
The soft green grasses stoop and trail therein;
The minnows dart and spin;
The purple-gleaming swallows love it;
And, hush, its innermost depths within,
The vague prophetic murmur of the linn.

But not in summertide alone
I love to look
Upon this rippling water in my glen:
Most sweet, most dear my brook,
When the grey mists shroud every ben,
And in its quiet place
The stream doth bare her face,
And lets me pore deep down into her eyes,
Her eyes of shadowy grey,
Wherein from day to day
My soul is startled with a new surmise,
Or doth some subtler meaning trace
Reflected from unseen, invisible skies.

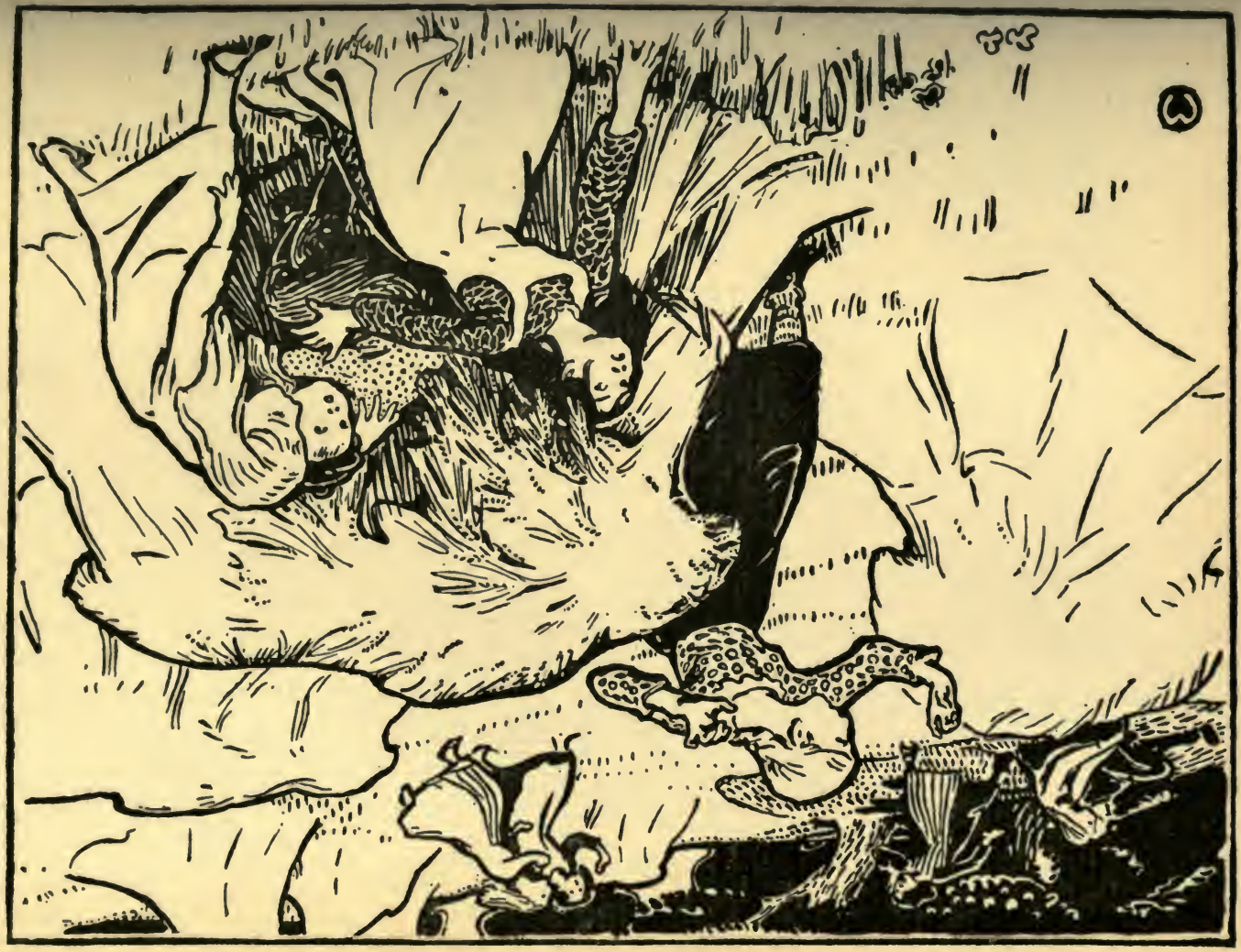
Dear mountain-solitary, dear lonely brook,
Of hillside rains and dews the vagrant daughter,
Sweet, sweet thy music when I bend above thee,
When in thy fugitive face I look:
Yet not the less I love thee,
When, far away, and absent from thee long,
I yearn, my dark hill-water,
I yearn, I strain to hear thy song,
Brown, wandering water,
Dear murmuring water.

WILLIAM SHARP.



HIDE AND SEEK

BY CHARLES H. MACKIE



THE BREATH OF THE SNOW

OFTEN on entering a house I find myself saying, 'It's a bad night for the crops,' and then search my mind for the latest bit of gossip. A word of pity and there it ends. In Linneside the weather is our all, and we prosper as the crops do; but if our own bits of land are right, our feelings, I confess, are not far-reaching. In early autumn, the burns come down, leaving the mountain sides with ragged gaps and eating under the trees. The low lands are flooded, and ricks are like islands round the end of the firth. We hear of the crofter's only cow being carried away, and the bed-ridden wife watching its descent from the window. Strangely fast such things slip from our minds, and weather is the beginning and end, but never the middle, of our conversations. Perhaps the reason is that it is not ours to make or mend the weather.

Surely it was the hissing of the coals that sent my pen on this wandering; for I started to say that to-night there is a smell of snow in the air. To many a one, I daresay, these words bear no meaning; for only where the wind blows in its purity can you scent the coming of the snow; but we, up here, have been counting the signs since the robin started singing so merrily amongst us. That was the last week in August, and since then we have summed up the bad, subtracted the good, and found winter. At any rate, the smell is clear enough

to-night. Just now if I step out to the porch, a keen-edged east wind draws the smoke from my mouth and like a hand casts it over the house; and the stars are twinkling sharply like the diamonds some grand women wear. But a quarter of an hour ago I was being driven home, all nature scolding. The wind was dashing a sleety rain along; the trees swung with a sound like creaking doors and threw their leaves in the air as a schoolboy would his bonnet on a holiday. Perhaps while I am spelling this out, another great bank of cloud, black in the centre and shading outwards into white like an eye, is rising up to cast itself upon us.

Such nights always turn our thoughts on snow. September past, it is always near us. One morning we rise to find the Ben is tipped, and steadily the white creeps down to us. The days are never sure of themselves. Rain follows frost without leaving us time to open an umbrella, and the sky gets dark as quickly as one would blow out a candle. The trees look starved, and in the fields you see women lifting potatoes with many shawls about their heads. On frosty days the hills stand out clear against the sky, and old men feel the sweet air bracing them. Sleety rain comes, and the hills are sad and blurred, and old bones are racked with rheumatism.

But apart from all this and the fact that the Thanksgiving Day for the harvest is past, I see other signs of the closing in of winter. Peggy who keeps house to me gets mightily quickened in the tongue as the days grow shorter. She lays my supper, and then, pretending to dust the mantelpiece, she begins:

'Now, indeed, I am hearing that the Fergusons along the way will be having a lot of new dresses, and I am sure it would be more like them to get their old debts paid first of all; for they say—any way Jeemie, that's my good-brother that works with Macfarquhar, was telling me that they will have a big account against them in Macfarquhar's books. Indeed, too,' Peggy would add, sniffing sarcastically, 'and it's themselves that keep their heads high with all the debt that will be on them!'

Or may be she says:
'Ay, ay, and it's fine goings-on they'll be at the Gillespies' next week. Of course you would be hearing it all.'
'No, Peggy,' I put in, just to please the body.
'Yes, indeed, it's a terrible big tea-party they will be giving. They're saying that the laddie Williamina is engaged to will be coming all the way from Inverness to it. But he'll be having to put up with a shake-down if he comes, for they haven't a spare bed in the house. May be, though, that old Granny Gillespie can give him a room for the one night at any rate.'
I listen to it—or most of it—Peggy would leave the house if I didn't; and, God knows, what is evil—and Peggy is a woman—never goes past me. As soon as I came in to-night she commenced:
'Ach, ach! I am telling you that you will be sure to be getting your death of cold without your thick flannels on in this raw weather. I was just busying myself looking them out for you. And, indeed, the weather has taken a terrible change. I was out by the day at Mrs. Fairbairn's, west the road there, and she was saying her Jockie's cough is just getting fearful to hear. She is very downhearted about it, poor woman. I will be afraid myself it's in the decline he'll be. And you couldn't be wondering. He was aye a through-other laddie with his poaching and carrying-on. And for all that there was always a kind word upon his lips, and he was a good son. And if it's the will of the good Lord that his last sickness is on him, the smile of him and the way he had with the bairns and the old folk will be missed more—just—just more than I could be telling you.
'And as I was coming east,' Peggy went on, warming to her work, 'who do you think I met but Rory Simpson's lassie, Maggan. There'll not be so much at the back of them Simpsons' pride as some people might be thinking; any way, it was suspicious-like to be seeing Maggan with her last winter's hat trimmed over again for this winter. You'll be

minding the big black one she had with the ostrich feathers in it, that hung down on to her back? Well, well, it doesn't matter: it's it she had on the day, and her sister's old dress. And Mrs. Fairbairn was saying to me that Mrs. Mathieson down at the Mill is getting a lot of her old clothes dyed, and made down for the lassies. And I wouldn't wonder at all. But I am thinking, too, that Mrs. Fairbairn has an ill tongue, when she'll be caring to use it. I saw herself making down her man's trousers for her laddie Tommy. Of course she wouldn't be telling me that, but I was seeing it all the same. But it's always the way: them folk will never be done speaking of one another. They're as jealous of one another as cats, and indeed I am thinking myself well out of it all.'

But I am just a little afraid, though, of course, I dare not breathe it, that Peggy, good woman, is looked upon as rather a leader in the gossiping society, whose queer ways she sometimes describes to me with unpitying scorn.

That, you see, is the way a woman's eye beholds the changes coming. In the great cities, I do not doubt, there are many signs, but we have only a little view of our fellows and a great one of the solemn hills. To me this gathering chill, this slow closing of bony fingers, means the loss of many quiet joys—the song of birds, the sight of green hills, the warm consolation of sunlight. It is a hard time, and yet, in this good air, the snows and frosts are sweet. To rise and see the ragged hillsides smoothed and carpeted in white as if the chariots of God had passed in the high silence of the night, and to see the sun glow on the snow crust as if from the chariots the occupants had strewn their path with diamonds, is a strangely glorious thing. But as you look you see the clouds gathering on the northern hills, and you remember our tragedy of last winter. You watch again the searchers out upon the moonlit snow and the sad burden brought in—young Sandy Donaldson, the Rhilochan post, with the mail bag frozen to him, his ears bitten dead and his strong heart dying. You pile the fires, and you bring a quiver to the eyes and a snap to the jaws

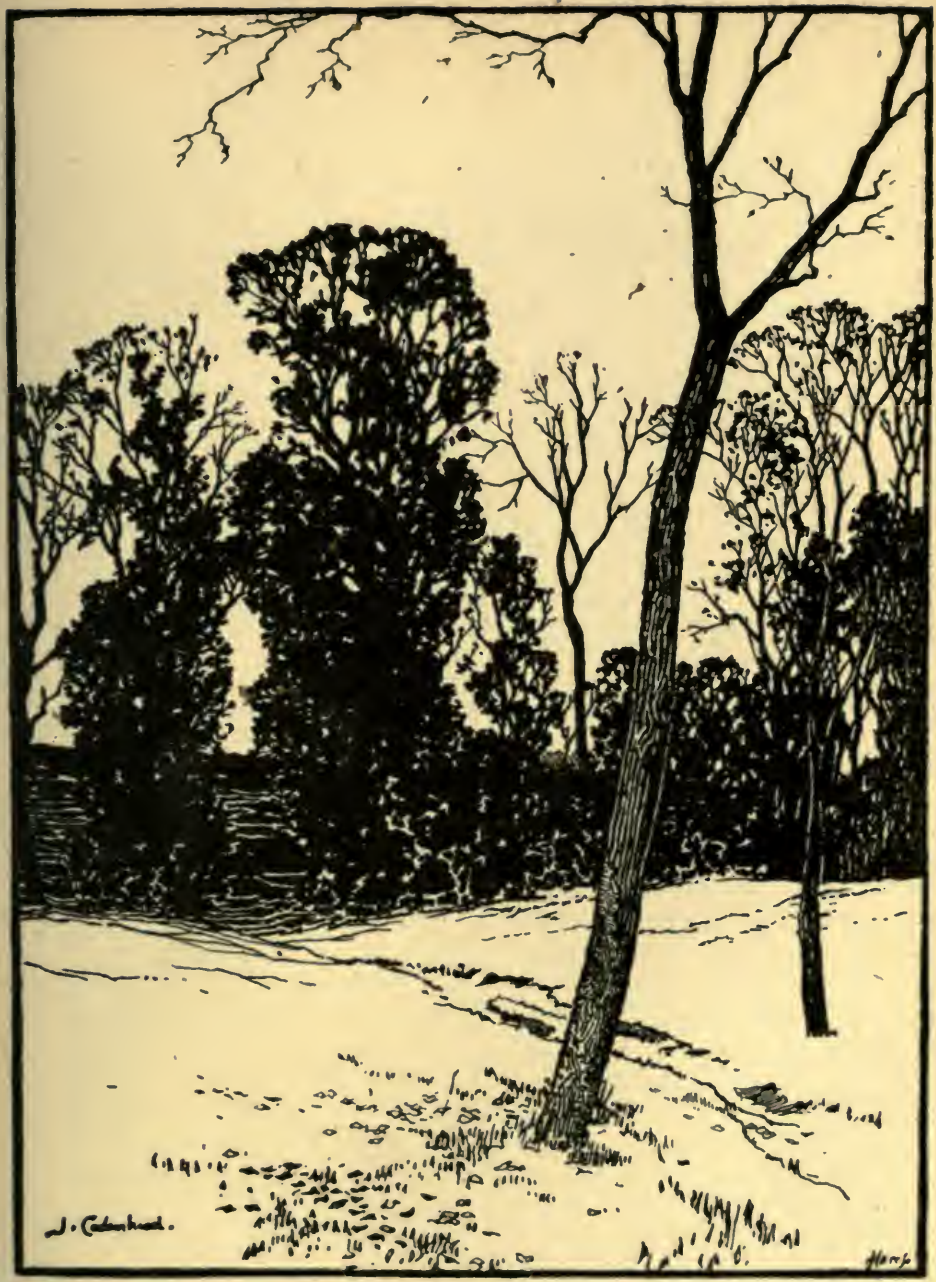
and the kind words that go to the lassie of the west who is waiting for him—'God be good to Annie.'

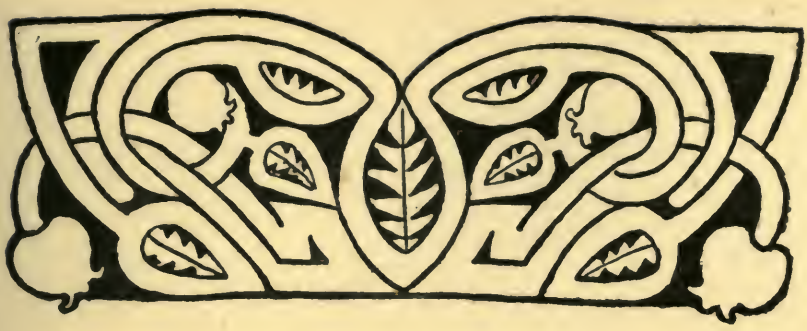
The north is growing darker now, and you leave the window for the fire. Its sparkle has a sweeter memory: and yet the prayer comes silently that when our winter time arrives it may be given us to slip into the eternal summer quietly as the snow falls.

JOHN MACLEAY.

'BARE RUINED CHOIRS'

BY JAMES CADENHEAD





IN SHADOWLAND

BETWEEN the moaning of the mountain stream
And the hoarse thunder of the Atlantic deep,
An outcast from the peaceful realms of sleep
I lie, and hear as in a fever-dream
The homeless night-wind in the darkness scream
And wail around the inaccessible steep
Down whose gaunt sides the spectral torrents leap
From crag to crag,—till almost I could deem
The plaided ghosts of buried centuries
Were mustering in the glens with bow and spear
And shadowy hounds to hunt the shadowy deer,
Mix in phantasmal sword-play, or, with eyes
Of wrath and pain immortal, wander o'er
Loved scenes where human footstep comes no more.

NOËL PATON.

NOTE

This 'legendary romance' is based upon the ancient and still current (though often hopelessly contradictory) legends concerning Brighid, or Bride, commonly known as 'Muime Chriosd,' i.e. the Foster-Mother of Christ. From the universal honour and reverence in which she was and is held—second only in this respect to the Virgin herself—she is also called 'Mary of the Gael.' Another name, frequent in the West, is 'Brighde-nam-Bratj,' i.e. St. Bride of the Mantle, a name explained in the course of my legendary story. Brighid the Christian saint should not, however, as is commonly done, be confused with a much earlier and remoter Brighid, the ancient Celtic muse of Song.

MARY OF THE GAEL

SLOINNEADH BRIGHDE, MUIME CHRIOSD

Brighde nighean Dughaill Duinn,
'Ic Aoidth, 'ic Arta, 'ic Cuinn.
Gach la is gach oidhche
Ni mi cuimhneachadh air sloinneadh Brighde.
Cha mharbhar mi,
Cha ghuinear mi,
Cha ghonar mi,
Cha mho dh' fhagas Criosd an dearmad mi;
Cha loisg teine gniomh Shatain mi;
'S cha bhath uisge no saile mi;
'S mi fo chomraig Naoimh Moire
'S mo chaomh mhuime, Brighde.

THE GENEALOGY OF ST. BRIDGET OR ST. BRIDE, FOSTER-MOTHER OF CHRIST.

St. Bridget, the daughter of Dùghall Donn,
Son of Hugh, son of Art, son of Conn.
Each day and each night
I will meditate on the genealogy of St. Bridget.
[Whereby] I will not be killed,
I will not be wounded,

I will not be bewitched;
Neither will Christ forsake me;
Satan's fire will not burn me;
Neither water nor sea shall drown me;
For I am under the protection of the Virgin Mary,
And my meek and gentle foster-mother, St. Bridget.

I

BEFORE ever St. Colum came across the Moyle to the island of Iona, that was then by strangers called Innis-nan-Dhruidhneach, the Isle of the Druids, and by the natives Ioua, there lived upon the south-east slope of Dun-I a poor herdsman, named Dùvach. Poor he was, for sure, though it was not for this reason that he could not win back to Ireland, green Banba, as he called it: but because he was an exile thence, and might never again smell the heather blowing over Sliabh-Gorm in what of old was the realm of Aoimag.

He was a prince in his own land, though none on Iona save the Arch-Druid knew what his name was. The high priest, however, knew that Dùvach was the royal Dùghall, called Dùghall Donn, the son of Hugh the King, the son of Art, the son of Conn. In his youth he had been accused of having done a wrong against a noble maiden of the blood. When her child was born he was made to swear across her dead body that he would be true to the daughter for whom she had given up her life, that he would rear her in a holy place but away from Eiré, and that he would never set foot within that land again. This was a bitter thing for Dùghall Donn to do: the more so as, before the King, and the priests, and the people, he swore by the Wind, and by the Moon, and by the Sun, that he was guiltless of the thing of which he was accused. There were many there who believed him because of that sacred oath: others, too, forasmuch as that Morna the Princess had herself sworn to the same effect. Moreover, there was Aodh of the Golden Hair, a poet and seer,

who avowed that Morna had given birth to an immortal, whose name would one day be as a moon among the stars for glory. But the King would not be appeased, though he spared the life of his youngest son. So it was that, by the advice of Aodh of the Druids, Dùghall Donn went northwards through the realm of Clanadon and so to the sea-loch that was then called Loc Feobal. There he took boat with some wayfarers bound for Alba. But in the Moyle a tempest arose, and the frail galley was driven northward, and at sunrise was cast like a great fish, spent and dead, upon the south end of Ioua, that is now Iona. Only two of the mariners survived: Dùghall Donn and the little child. This was at the place where, on a day of the days in a year that was not yet come, St. Colum landed in his coracle, and gave thanks on his bended knees.

When, warmed by the sun, they rose, they found themselves in a waste place. Ill was Dùghall in his mind because of the portents, and now to his astonishment and alarm the child Bridget knelt on the stones, and, with claspt hands, small and pink as the sea-shells round about her, sang a song of words which were unknown to him. This was the more marvellous, as she was yet but an infant, and could say no word even of Erse, the only tongue she had heard.

At this portent, he knew that Aodh had spoken seeingly. Truly this child was not of human parentage. So he, too, kneeled, and, bowing before her, asked if she were of the race of the Tuatha de Danann, or of the older gods, and what her will was, that he might be her servant. Then it was that the kneeling babe looked at him, and sang in a low sweet voice in Erse:

I am but a little child,
Dùghall, son of Hugh, son of Art,
But my garment shall be laid
On the lord of the world,
Yea, surely it shall be that He
The King of the Elements Himself
Shall lean against my bosom,

And I will give him peace,
And peace will I give to all who ask
Because of this mighty Prince,
And because of his Mother that is the Daughter of Peace.

And while Dùghall Donn was still marvelling at this thing, the Arch-Druid of Iona approached, with his white-robed priests. A grave welcome was given to the stranger, but while the youngest of the servants of God was entrusted with the child, the Arch-Druid took Dùghall aside, and questioned him. It was not till the third day that the old man gave his decision. Dùghall Donn was to abide on Iona if he so willed: the child certainly was to stay. His life would be spared, nor would he be a bondager of any kind, and a little land to till would be given him, and all that he might need. But of his past he was to say no word. His name was to become as naught, and he was to be known simply as Dùvach. The child, too, was to be named Bride, for that was the way the name Bridget was called in the Erse of the Isles.

To the question of Dùghall, that was thenceforth Dùvach, as to why he laid so great stress on the child, that was a girl, and the reputed offspring of shame at that, Cathal the Arch-Druid replied thus: 'My kinsman Aodh of the Golden Hair, who sent you here, was wiser than Hugh the King and all the Druids of Aoimag. Truly, this child is an Immortal. There is an ancient prophecy concerning her: surely of her who is now here, and no other. There shall be, it says, a spotless maid born of a virgin of the ancient immemorial race in Innisfail. And when for the seventh time the sacred year has come, she will hold Eternity in her lap as a white flower. Her maiden breasts shall swell with milk for the Prince of the World. She shall give suck to the King of the Elements. So I say unto you, Dùvach, go in peace. Take unto thyself a wife, and live upon the place I will give thee on the east side of Ioua. Treat Bride as though she were thy spirit, but leave her much alone, and let her learn of the sun and the wind. In the fulness of time the prophecy shall be fulfilled.'

So was it, from that day of the days. Dùvach took a wife unto himself, who weaned the little Bride, who grew in beauty and grace, so that all men marvelled. Year by year for seven years the wife of Dùvach bore him a son, and these grew apace in strength, so that by the beginning of the third year of the seventh cycle of Bride's life there were three stalwart youths to brother her, and three comely and strong lads, and one young boy fair to see. Nor did any one, not even Bride herself, saving Cathal the Arch-Druid, know that Dùvach the herdsman was Dùghall Donn, of a princely race in Innisfail.

In the end, too, Dùvach came to think that he had dreamed, or at the least that Cathal had not interpreted the prophecy aright. For though Bride was of exceeding beauty, and of a strange piety that made the young Druids bow before her as though she were a bàndia, yet the world went on as before, and the days brought no change. Often, while she was still a child, he had questioned her about the words she had said as a babe, but she had no memory of them. Once, in her ninth year, he came upon her on the hillside of Dun-I singing these self-same words. Her eyes dreamed afar away. He bowed his head, and, praying to the Giver of Light, hurried to Cathal. The old man bade him speak no more to the child concerning the mysteries.

Bride lived the hours of her days upon the slopes of Dun-I, herding the sheep, or in following the kye upon the green hillocks and grassy dunes of what then as now was called the Machar. The beauty of the world was her daily food. The spirit within her was like sunlight behind a white flower. The birdeens in the green bushes sang for joy when they saw her blue eyes. The tender prayers that were in her heart for all the beasts and birds, for helpless children, and tired women, and for all who were old, were often seen flying above her head in the form of white doves of sunshine.

But when the middle of the year came that was, though Dùvach had forgotten it, the year of the prophecy, his eldest son, Conn, who was now a man, murmured against the virginity

of Bride, because of her beauty and because a chieftain of the mainland was eager to wed her. 'I shall wed Bride or raid Ioua' was the message he had sent.

So one day, before the great fire of the summer festival, Conn and his brothers reproached Bride.

'Idle are these pure eyes, O Bride, not to be as lamps at thy marriage-bed.'

'Truly, it is not by the eyes that we live,' replied the maiden gently, while to their fear and amazement she passed her hand before her face and let them see that the sockets were empty.

Trembling with awe at this portent, Dùvach intervened.

'By the Sun I swear it, O Bride, that thou shalt marry whomsoever thou wilt and none other, and when thou willest, or not at all if such be thy will.'

And when he had spoken, Bride smiled, and passed her hand before her face again, and all there were abashed because of the blue light as of morning that was in her shining eyes.

II

The still weather had come, and all the isles lay in beauty. Far south, beyond vision, ranged the coasts of Eiré: westward, leagues of quiet ocean dreamed into unsailed wastes whose waves at last laved the shores of Tir-na-Hoy, the Land of Eternal Youth: northward, the spell-bound waters sparkled in the sunlight, broken here and there by purple splatches, that were the isles of Staffa and Ulva, Lunga and the isles of the columns, misty Coll, and Tiree that is the land beneath the wave, with, pale blue in the heat-haze, the mountains of Rûm called Haleval, Haskeval, and Oreval, with the sheer Scuir-na-Gillian and the peaks of the Cuchullins in remote Skye.

All the sweet loveliness of a late spring remained, to give a freshness to the glory of summer. The birds had song to them still.

It was while the dew was yet wet on the grass that Bride came out of her father's house, and went up the steep slope of

Dun-I. The crying of the ewes and lambs at the pastures came plaintively against the dawn. The lowing of the kye arose from the sandy hollows by the shore, or from the meadows on the lower slopes. Through the whole island went a rapid trickling sound, most sweet to hear: the myriad voices of twittering birds, from the dotterel in the seaweed to the larks climbing the blue spirals of heaven.

This was the morning of her birth, and she was clad in white. About her waist was a girdle of the sacred rowan, the feathery green leaves of it flickering dusky shadows upon her robe as she moved. The light upon her yellow hair was as when morning wakes, laughing low with joy, amid the tall corn. As she went she sang, soft as the crooning of a dove. If any had been there to hear he would have been abashed, for the words were not in Erse, and the eyes of the beautiful girl were as those of one in a vision.

When, at last, a brief while before sunrise, she reached the summit of the Scuir, that is so small a hill and yet seems so big in Iona where it is the sole peak, she found three young Druids there, ready to tend the sacred fire the moment the sun-rays should kindle it. Each was clad in a white robe, with fillets of oak-leaves: and each had a golden armlet. They made a quiet obeisance as she approached. One stepped forward, with a flush in his face because of her beauty, that was as a sea-wave for grace, and a flower for purity, and sunlight for joy, and moonlight for peace, and the wind for fragrance.

'Thou mayst draw near if thou wilt, Bride, daughter of Dùvach,' he said, with something of reverence as well as of grave courtesy in his voice: 'for the holy Cathal hath said that the Breath of the Source of All is upon thee. It is not lawful for women to be here at this moment, but thou hast the law shining upon thy face and in thine eyes. Hast thou come to pray?'

But at that moment a low cry came from one of his companions. He turned, and rejoined his fellows. Then all three sank upon their knees, and with outstretched arms hailed the rising of God.

As the sun rose, a solemn chant swelled from their lips, ascending as incense through the silent air. The glory of the new day came soundlessly. Peace was in the blue heaven, on the blue-green sea, on the green land. There was no wind, even where the currents of the deep moved in shadowy purple. The sea itself was silent, making no more than a sighing slumber-breath round the white sands of the isle, or a hushed whisper where the tide lifted the long weed that clung to the rocks.

In what strange, mysterious way, Bride did not see: but as the three Druids held their hands before the sacred fire there was a faint crackling, then three thin spirals of blue smoke rose, and soon dusky red and wan yellow tongues of flame moved to and fro. The sacrifice of God was made. Out of the immeasurable heaven He had come, in His golden chariot. Now, in the wonder and mystery of His love, He was reborn upon the world, reborn a little fugitive flame upon a low hill in a remote isle. Great must be His love that He could die thus daily in a thousand places: so great His love that He could give up His own body to daily death, and suffer the holy flame that was in the embers he illumined to be lighted and revered and then scattered to the four quarters of the world.

Bride could bear no longer the mystery of this great love. It moved her to an ecstasy. What tenderness of divine love that could thus redeem the world daily: what long-suffering for all the evil and cruelty done hourly upon the weeping earth, what patience with the bitterness of the blind fates! The beauty of the worship of Be'al was upon her as a golden glory. Her heart leaped to a song that could not be sung. The inexhaustible love and pity in her soul chanted a hymn that was heard of no Druid or mortal anywhere, but was known of the white spirits of Life.

Bowing her head, so that the glad tears fell warm as thunder-rain upon her hands, she rose and moved away.

Not far from the summit of Dun-I is a hidden pool, to this day called the Fountain of Youth. Hitherward she went, as was her wont when upon the hill at the break of day, at noon, or

at sundown. Close by the huge boulder, which hides it from above, she heard a pitiful bleating, and soon the healing of her eyes was upon a lamb which had become fixed in a crevice in the rock. On a crag above it stood a falcon, with savage cries, lusting for warm blood. With swift step Bride drew near. There was no hurt to the lambkin as she lifted it in her arms. Soft and warm was it there, as a young babe against the bosom that mothers it. Then with quiet eyes she looked at the falcon, who hooded his cruel gaze.

'There is no wrong in thee, Seobhag,' she said gently: 'but the law of blood shall not prevail for ever. Let there be peace this morn.'

And when she had spoken this word, the wild hawk of the hills flew down upon her shoulder, nor did the heart of the lambkin beat the quicker, while with drowsy eyes it nestled as against its dam. When she stood by the pool she laid the little woolly creature among the fern. Already the bleating of it was sweet against the forlorn heart of a ewe. The falcon rose, circled above her head, and with swift flight sped through the blue air. For a time Bride watched its travelling shadow: when it was itself no more than a speck in the golden haze, she turned, and stooped above the Fountain of Youth.

Beyond it stood then, though for ages past there has been no sign of either, two quicken-trees. Now they were gold-green in the morning light, and the brown-green berries that had not yet reddened were still small. Fair to see was the flickering of the long finger-shadows upon the granite rocks and boulders.

Often had Bride dreamed through their foliage: but now she stared in amaze. She had put her lips to the water, and had started back because she had seen, beyond her own image, that of a woman so beautiful that her soul was troubled within her, and had cried its inaudible cry, worshipping. When, trembling, she had glanced again, there was none there beside herself. Yet what had happened? For, as she stared at the quicken-trees, she saw that their boughs had interlaced, and that they now made a green arch. What was even stranger was that

the rowan-clusters hung in blood-red masses, although the late heats were yet a long way off.

Bride rose, her body quivering because of the cool sweet draught of the Fountain of Youth, so that almost she imagined the water was for her that day what it could be once in each year to every person who came to it, a breath of new life and the strength and joy of youth. With slow steps she advanced towards the arch of the quickens. Her heart beat as she saw that the branches at the summit had formed themselves into the shape of a wreath or crown, and that the scarlet berries dropped therefrom a steady rain of red drops as of blood. A sigh of joy breathed from her lips when, deep among the red and green, she saw the white merle of which the ancient poets sang, and heard the exceeding wonder of its rapture, which was now in the pain of joy and now the joy of pain.

The song of the mystic bird grew wilder and more sweet as she drew near. For a brief while she hesitated. Then, as a white dove drifted slow before her under and through the quicken-boughs, a dove white as snow but radiant with sunfire, she moved forward to follow, with a dream-smile upon her face and her eyes full of the sheen of wonder and mystery, as shadowy waters flooded with moonshine.

And this was the passing of Bride, who was not seen again of Dùvach or her foster-brothers for the space of a year and a day. Only Cathal, the aged Arch-Druid, who died seven days thence, had a vision of her, and wept for joy.

III

When the strain of the white merle ceased, though it had seemed to her scarce longer than the vanishing song of the swallow on the wing, Bride saw that the evening was come. Through the violet glooms of dusk she moved soundlessly, save for the crispling of her feet among the hot sands. Far as she could see to right or left there were hollows and ridges of sand: where, here and there, trees or shrubs grew out of

the parched soil, they were strange to her. She had heard the Druids speak of the sunlands in a remote, nigh unreachable East, where there were trees called palms, trees that rose with the sunflood and perished not, also tall dark cypresses that were black-green as the holy yew. These were the trees she now saw. Did she dream, she wondered? Far down in her mind was some memory, some floating vision only, it may be, of a small green isle far among the northern seas. Voices, words, faces, familiar yet unfamiliar when she strove to bring them nearer, haunted her.

The heat brooded upon the land. The sigh of the parched earth was 'Water, water.'

As she moved onward through the gloaming she descried white walls beyond her: white walls and square white buildings, looming ghostly through the dark, yet home-sweet as the bells of the cows on the sea-pastures, because of the yellow lights every here and there agleam.

A tall figure moved towards her, clad in white, even as those figures which haunted her unremembering memory. When he drew near she gave a low cry of joy. The face of her father was sweet to her.

'Where will be the pitcher, Brighid?' he said, though the words were not the words that were near her when she was alone. Nevertheless she knew them, and the same manner of words was upon her lips.

'My pitcher, father?'

'Ah, dreamer, when will you be taking heed! It is leaving your pitcher you will be, and by the Well of the Camels, no doubt: though little matter will that be, since there is now no water, and the drought is heavy upon the land. But . . . Brighid . . .'

'Yes, my father?'

'It is not being safe for you to be on the desert at night. Wild beasts come out of the darkness, and there are robbers and wild men who lurk in the shadow. Brighid . . . Brighid . . . is it dreaming you are still?'

'I was dreaming of a cool green isle in northern seas, where . . .

'Where you have never been, foolish lass, and are never like to be. Sure, if any wayfarer were to come upon us you would scarce be able to tell him that yonder village is Bethlehem, and that I am Dùghall Donn the inn-keeper, Dùghall, the son of Hugh, son of Art, son of Conn. Well, well, I am growing old, and they say that the old see wonders. But I do not wish to see this wonder, that my daughter Brighid forgets her own town, and the good inn that is there, and the strong sweet ale that is cool against the thirst of the weary. Sure, if the day of my days is near it is near. "Green be the place of my rest," I cry, even as Oisin the son of Fionn of the hero-line of Trenmor cried in his old age; though if Oisin and the Fiànn were here not a green place would they now find, for the land is burned dry as the heather after a hill-fire. But now, Brighid, let us go back into Bethlehem, for I have that for the saying which must be said at once.'

In silence the twain walked through the gloaming that was already the mirk, till they came to the white gate, where the asses and camels breathed wearily in the sultry darkness, with dry tongues moving round parched mouths. Thence they fared through narrow streets, where a few white-robed Hebrews and sons of the desert moved silently, or sat in niches. Finally they came to a great yard, where more than a score of camels lay huddled and growling in their sleep. Beyond this was the inn, which was known to all the patrons and friends of Dùghall Donn as the 'Rest and Be Thankful,' though formerly as the Rest of Clan-Ailpean, for was he not himself through his mother MacAlpine of the Isles, as well as blood-kin to the great O'Connor, to whom his father, Hugh the King, was feudatory prince?

As Dùghall and Bride walked along the stone flags of a passage leading to the inner rooms, he stopped and drew her attention to the water-tanks.

'Look you, my lass,' he said sorrowfully, 'of these tanks and barrels nearly all are empty. Soon there will be no water whatever, which is an evil thing though I whisper it in peace, to the

Stones be it said. Now, already the folk who come here murmur. No man can drink ale all day long, and those wayfarers who want to wash the dust of their journey from their feet and hands complain bitterly. And . . . what is that you will be saying? The kye? Ay, sure, there is the kye, but the poor beasts are o'ercome with the heat, and there's not a Cailliach on the hills who could win a drop more of milk from them than we squeeze out of their udders now, and that only with rune after rune till all the throats of the milking lassies are as dry as the salt grass by the sea.

'Well, what I am saying is this: 'tis months now since any rain will be falling, and every crock of water has been for the treasuring as though it were the honey of Moy-Mell itself. The moon has been full twice since we had the good water brought from the mountain-springs: and now they are for drying up too. The seers say that the drought will last. If that is a true word, and there be no rain till the winter comes, there will be no inn in Bethlehem called "The Rest and Be Thankful": for already there is not enough good water to give peace even to your little thirst, my birdeen. As for the ale, it is poor drink now for man or maid, and as for the camels and asses, poor beasts, they don't understand the drinking of it.'

'That is true, father, but what is to be done?'

'That's what I will be telling you, my lintie. Now, I have been told by an oganach out of Jerusalem, that lives in another place close by the great town, that there is a quenchless well of pure water, cold as the sea with a north wind in it, on a hill there called The Mount of Olives. Now it is to that hill I will be going. I am for taking all the camels, and all the horses, and all the asses, and will lade each with a burthen of waterskins, and come back home again with water enough to last us till the drought breaks.'

That was all that was said that night. But at the dawn the inn was busy, and all the folk in Bethlehem were up to see the going abroad of Dùghall Donn and Ronald M'Ian, his shepherd, and some Macleans and Macallums that were then in that

place. It was a fair sight to see as they went forth through the white gate that is called the Gate of Nazareth. A piper walked first, playing the Gathering of the Swords: then came Dùghall Donn on a camel, and M'Ian on a horse, and the herdsmen on asses, and then there were the collies, barking for joy.

Before he had gone, Dùghall took Bride out of the hearing of the others. There was only a little stagnant water, he said: and as for the ale there was no more than a flagon left of what was good. This flagon, and the one jar of pure water, he left with her. On no account was she to give a drop to any wayfarer, no matter how urgent he might be: for he, Dùghall, could not say when he would get back, and he did not want to find a dead daughter to greet him on his return, let alone there being no maid of the inn to attend to customers. Over and above that, he made her take an oath that she would give no one, no, not even a stranger, accommodation at the inn, during his absence.

Afternoon and night came, and dawn and night again, and yet again. It was on the afternoon of the third day, when even the crickets were dying of thirst, that Bride heard a clanging at the door of the inn.

When she went to the door she saw a weary grey-haired man, dusty and tired. By his side was an ass with drooping head, and on the ass was a woman, young, and of a beauty that was as the cool shadow of green leaves and the cold ripple of running waters. But beautiful as she was, it was not this that made Bride start: no, nor the heavy womb that showed the woman was with child. For she remembered her of a dream—it was a dream, sure—when she had looked into a pool on a mountain-side, and seen, beyond her own image, just this fair and beautiful face, the most beautiful that ever man saw since Nais, of the Sons of Usna, beheld Deirdrê in the forest, ay, and lovelier far even than she, the peerless among women.

'Gu'm beannaicheadh Dia an tigh,' said the grey-haired man in a weary voice, 'the blessing of God on this house.'

'Soraidh leat,' replied Bride gently, 'and upon you likewise.'

'Can you give us food and drink, and, after that, good rest at this inn? Sure it is grateful we will be. This is my wife Mary, upon whom is a mystery: and I am Joseph, that is a carpenter in Arimathea.'

'Welcome, and to you, too, Mary: and peace. But there is neither food nor drink here, and my father has bidden me give shelter to none who come here against his return.'

The carpenter sighed, but the fair woman on the ass turned her shadowy eyes upon Bride, so that the maiden trembled with joy and fear.

'And is it forgetting me you will be, Brighid-Alona,' she murmured, in the good sweet Gaelic of the Isles, and the voice of her was like the rustle of leaves when a soft rain is falling in a wood

'Sure, I remember,' Bride whispered, filled with deep awe. Then without a word she turned, and beckoned them to follow: which, having left the ass by the doorway, they did.

'Here is all the ale that I have,' she said, as she gave the flagon to Joseph: 'and here, Mary, is all the water that there is. Little there is, but it is you that are welcome to it.'

Then, when they had quenched their thirst she brought out oat-cakes and scones and brown bread, and would fain have added milk, but there was none.

'Go to the byre, Brighid,' said Mary, 'and the first of the kye shall give milk.'

So Bride went, but returned saying that the creature would not give milk without a rune or song, and that her throat was too dry to sing.

'Sing this rune,' said Mary:—

> Give up thy milk to her who calls
> Across the low green hills of Heaven
> And stream-cool meads of Paradise!

And sure enough, when Bride did this, the milk came: and she soothed her thirst, and went back to her guests rejoicing. It was sorrow to her not to let them stay where they were, but she could not, because of her oath.

The man Joseph was weary, and said he was too tired to seek far that night, and asked if there were no empty byre or stable where he and Mary could sleep till morning. At that, Bride was glad: for she knew there was a clean cool stable close to the byre where her kye were: and thereto she led them, and returned with peace at her heart.

When she was in the inn again, she was afraid once more: for lo, though Mary and Joseph had drunken deep of the jar and the flagon, each was now as full as it had been. Of the food, too, none seemed to have been taken, though she had herself seen them break the scones and the oatcakes.

It was dusk when her reverie was broken by the sound of the pipes. Soon thereafter Dùghall Donn and his following rode up to the inn, and all were glad because of the cool water, and the grapes, and the green fruits of the earth, that they brought with them.

While her father was eating and drinking, merry because of the ale that was still in the flagon, Bride told him of the wayfarers. Even as she spoke, he made a sign of silence, because of a strange, unwonted sound that he heard.

'What will that be meaning?' he asked, in a low, hushed voice.

'Sure it is the rain at last, father. That is a glad thing. The earth will be green again. The beasts will not perish. Hark, I hear the noise of it coming down from the hills as well.' But Dùghall sat brooding.

'Ay,' he said at last, 'is it not foretold that the Prince of the World is to be born in this land, during a heavy falling of rain, after a long drought? And who is for knowing that Bethlehem is not the place, and that this is not the night of the day of the days? Brighid, Brighid, the woman Mary must be the mother of the Prince, who is to save all mankind out of evil and pain and death!'

And with that he rose and beckoned to her to follow. They took a lantern, and made their way through the drowsing camels and asses and horses, and past the byres where the kye lowed gently, and so to the stable.

Sure that is a bright light they are having,' Dùghall muttered uneasily: for, truly, it was as though the shed were a shell filled with the fires of sunrise.

Lightly they pushed back the door. When they saw what they saw they fell upon their knees. Mary sat, with her heavenly beauty upon her like sunshine on a dusk land: in her lap, a Babe, laughing sweet and low.

Never had they seen a Child so fair. He was as though wrought of light.

'Who is it?' murmured Dùghall Donn, of Joseph, who stood near, with rapt eyes.

'It is the Prince of Peace.'

And with that Mary smiled, and the Child slept.

'Brighid, my sister dear'—and, as she whispered this, Mary held the little one to Bride.

The fair girl took the Babe in her arms, and covered it with her mantle. Therefore it is that she is known to this day as Brighde-nam-Bratj, St. Bride of the Mantle.

And all through that night, while the mother slept, Bride nursed the Child, with tender hands and croodling crooning songs. And this was one of the songs that she sang:

Ah, Baby Christ, so dear to me,
  Sang Bridget Bride:
How sweet thou art,
My baby dear,
Heart of my heart!

Heavy her body was with thee,
Mary, beloved of One in Three,
  Sang Bridget Bride—
Mary, who bore thee, little lad:
But light her heart was, light and glad
With God's love clad.

Sit on my knee,
  Sang Bridget Bride:
Sit here
O Baby dear,
Close to my heart, my heart
For I thy foster-mother am,
My helpless lamb!
O have no fear,
  Sang good St. Bride.

'None, none,
No fear have I:
So let me cling
Close to thy side
While thou dost sing,
O Bridget Bride!'

My Lord, my Prince I sing:
My baby dear, my King!
  Sang Bridget Bride.

It was on this night that far away in Iona the Arch-Druid Cathal died. But before the breath went from him he had his vision of joy, and his last words were:

Brighde 'dol air a glùn,
Righ nan dùl a shuidh 'na h-uchd!
(Bridget Bride upon her knee,
The King of the Elements asleep on her breast!)

On the coming of dawn Mary awoke, and took the Child. She kissed Bride upon the brows, and said this thing to her: 'Brighid, my sister dear, thou shalt be known unto all time as Muime Chriosd.'

IV

No sooner had Mary spoken than Bride fell into a deep sleep. So profound was this slumber that when Dùghall Donn came to see to the wayfarers, and to tell them that the milk and the porridge were ready for the breaking of their fast, he could get no word of her at all. She lay in the clean yellow straw beneath the manger, where Mary had laid the Child. Dùghall stared in amaze. There was no sign of the mother, nor of the Babe that was the Prince of Peace, nor of the douce quiet man that was Joseph the carpenter. As for Bride, she not only slept so sound that no word of his fell against her ears, but she gave him awe. For as he looked at her he saw that she was surrounded by a glowing light. Something in his heart shaped itself into a prayer, and he knelt beside her, sobbing low. When he rose, it was in peace. Mayhap an angel had comforted his soul in its dark shadowy haunt of his body.

It was late when Bride awoke, though she did not open her eyes, but lay dreaming. For long she thought she was in Tir-Tairngire, the Land of Promise, or wandering on the honey-sweet plain of Magh-Mell: for the wind of dreamland brought exquisite odours to her, and in her ears was a most marvellous sweet singing.

All round her there was a music of rejoicing. Voices, lovelier than any she had ever heard, resounded; glad voices full of praise and joy. There was a pleasant tumult of harps and trumpets, and as from across blue hills and over calm water came the sound of the bagpipes. She listened with tears. Loud and glad were the pipes at times full of triumph, as when the heroes of old marched with Cuculain or went down to battle with Fionn: again, they were low and sweet, like the humming of bees when the heather is heavy with the honey-ooze. The

songs and wild music of the angels lulled her into peace: for a time no thought of the woman Mary came to her, nor of the Child that was her foster-child.

Suddenly it was in her mind as though the pipes played the chant that is called the 'Aoibhneas a Shlighe,' 'the joy of his way,' a march played before a bridegroom going to his bride. Out of this glad music came a solitary voice, like a child singing on the hillside.

'The way of wonder shall be thine, O Brighid-Naomha!'

This was what the child-voice sang. Then it was as though all the harpers of the west were playing 'air clàrsach': and the song of a multitude of voices was this:

'Blessed art thou, O Brighid, who didst nurse the King of the Elements in thy bosom: blessed thou, the Virgin Sister of the Virgin Mother, for unto all time thou shalt be called Muime Chriosd, the Foster-Mother of Jesus that is the Christ.'

With that, Bride remembered all, and opened her eyes. Naught strange was there to see, save that she lay in the stable. Then as she noted that the gloaming had come, she wondered at the soft light that prevailed in the shed, though no lamp or candle burned there. In her ears, too, still lingered a wild and beautiful music.

It was strange. Was it all a dream, she pondered. But even as she thought thus, she saw half of her mantle lying upon the straw in the manger. Much she marvelled at this, but when she took the garment in her hand she wondered more. For though it was no more than a half of the poor mantle wherewith she had wrapped the Babe, it was all wrought with mystic gold lines and with precious stones more glorious than ever Arch-Druid or Island Prince had seen. The marvel gave her awe at last, when, as she placed the garment upon her shoulder, it covered her completely.

She knew now that she had not dreamed, and that a miracle was done. So with gladness she went out of the stable, and into the inn. Dùghall Donn was amazed when he saw her, and then rejoiced exceedingly.

'Why are you so merry, my father?' she asked.

'Sure it is glad that I am. For now the folk will be laughing the wrong way. This very morning I was so pleased with the pleasure, that while the pot was boiling on the peats I went out and told every one I met that the Prince of Peace was come, and had just been born in the stable behind the "Rest and Be Thankful." Well, that saying was just like a weasel among the rabbits, only it was an old toothless weasel: for all Bethlehem mocked me, some with jeers, some with hard words, and some with threats. Sure, I cursed them right and left. No, not for all my cursing—and by the blood of my fathers, I spared no man among them, wishing them sword and fire, the black plague and the grey death—would they believe. So back it was that I came, and going through the inn I am come to the stable. 'Sorrow is on me like a grey mist,' said Oissin, mourning for Oscur, and sure it was a grey mist that was on me when not a sign of man, woman, or child was to be seen, and you so sound asleep that a March gale in the Moyle wouldn't have roused you. Well, I went back, and told this thing, and all the people in Bethlehem mocked at me. And the Elders of the People came at last, and put a fine upon me: and condemned me to pay three barrels of good ale, and a sack of meal, and three thin chains of gold, each three yards long: and this for causing a false rumour, and still more for making a laughing-stock of the good folk of Bethlehem. There was a man called Murdoch-Dhu, who is the chief smith in Nazareth, and it 's him I 'm thinking will have laughed the Elders into doing this hard thing.'

It was then that Bride was aware of a marvel upon her, for she blew an incantation off the palm of her hand, and by that frith she knew where the dues were to be found.

'By what I see in the air that is blown off the palm of my hand, father, I bid you go into the cellar of the inn. There you will find three barrels full of good ale, and beside them a sack of meal, and the sack is tied with three chains of gold, each three yards long.'

But, while Dùghall Donn went away rejoicing, and found that which Bride had foretold, she passed out into the street. None saw her in the gloaming, or as she went towards the Gate of the East. When she passed by the Lazar-house she took her mantle off her back and laid it in the place of offerings. All the jewels and fine gold passed into invisible birds with healing wings: and these birds flew about the heads of the sick all night, so that at dawn every one arose, with no ill upon him, and went on his way rejoicing. As each went out of Bethlehem that morning of the mornings he found a clean white robe and new sandals at the first mile; and, at the second, food and cool water; and, at the third, a gold piece and a staff.

The guard that was at the Eastern Gate did not hail Bride. All the gaze of him was upon a company of strange men, shepherd-kings, who said they had come out of the East led by a star. They carried rare gifts with them when they first came to Bethlehem: but no man knew whence they came, what they wanted, or whither they went.

For a time Bride walked along the road that leads to Nazareth. There was fear in her gentle heart when she heard the howling of hyenas down in the dark hollows, and she was glad when the moon came out and shone quietly upon her.

In the moonlight she saw that there were steps in the dew before her. She could see the black print of feet in the silver sheen on the wet grass, for it was on a grassy hill that she now walked, though a day ago every leaf and sheath there had lain brown and withered. The foot-prints she followed were those of a woman and of a child.

All night through she tracked those wandering feet in the dew. They were always fresh before her, and led her away from the villages, and also where no wild beasts prowled through the gloom. There was no weariness upon her, though often she wondered when she should see the fair wondrous face she sought. Behind her also were footsteps in the dew, though she knew nothing of them. They were those of the Following

Love. And this was the Lorgadh-Bhrighde of which men speak to this day: the Quest of the holy St. Bride.

All night she walked; now upon the high slopes of a hill. Never once did she have a glimpse of any figure in the moonlight, though the steps in the dew before her were newly made, and none lay in the glisten a short way ahead.

Suddenly she stopped. There were no more footprints. Eagerly she looked before her. On a hill beyond the valley beneath her she saw the gleaming of yellow stars. These were the lights of a city. 'Behold, it is Jerusalem,' she murmured, awe-struck, for she had never seen the great town.

Sweet was the breath of the wind that stirred among the olives on the mount where she stood. It had the smell of heather, and she could hear the rustle of it among the bracken on a hill close by.

'Truly, this must be the Mount of Olives,' she whispered, 'The Mount of which I have heard my father speak, and that must be the hill called Calvary.'

But even as she gazed marvelling, she sighed with new wonder: for now she saw that the yellow stars were as the twinkling of the fires of the sun along the crest of a hill that is set against the east. There was a living joy in the dawntide. In her ears was a sweet sound of the bleating of ewes and lambs. From the hollows in the shadow came the swift singing rush of the flowing tide. Faint cries of the herring gulls filled the air: from the weedy boulders by the sea the skuas called wailingly.

Bewildered, she stood intent. If only she could see the footprints again, she thought. Whither should she turn, whither go? At her feet was a yellow flower. She stooped and plucked it.

'Tell me, O little sun-flower, which way shall I be going?' and as she spoke a small golden bee flew up from the heart of it, and up the hill to the left of her. So it is that from that day the dandelion is called am-Bèarnàn-Bhrighde.

Still she hesitated. Then a sea-bird flew by her with a loud whistling cry.

'Tell me, O eisireùn,' she called, 'which way shall I be going?'
And at this the eisireùn swerved in its flight, and followed the golden bee, crying, 'This way, O Bride, Bride, Bride, Bride, Bri-i-i-ide!'
So it is that from that day the oyster-catcher has been called the Gille-Bhrigde, the Servant of St. Bridget.
Then it was that Bride said this rune:

Dia romham;
Moire am dheaghuidh;
'S am Mac a thug Righ nan Dul!
Mis' air do shlios, a Dhia,
Is Dia ma'm luirg.
Mac' 'oire, a's Righ nan Dul,
A shoillseachadh gach ni dheth so,
Le a ghras, mu'm choinneamh.

God before me;
The Virgin Mary after me;
And the Son sent by the King of the Elements.
I am to windward of thee, O God!
And God on my footsteps.
May the Son of Mary, King of the Elements,
Reveal the meaning of each of these things
Before me, through His grace.

And as she ended she saw before her two quicken-trees, of which the boughs were interwrought so that they made an arch. Deep in the green foliage was a white merle that sang a wondrous sweet song. Above it the small branches were twisted into the shape of a wreath or crown, lovely with the sunlit rowan-clusters, from whose scarlet berries red drops as of blood fell.
Before her flew a white dove, all aglow as with golden light. She followed, and passed beneath the quicken arch.
Sweet was the song of the merle, that was then no more: sweet the green shadow of the rowans, that now grew straight as

young pines. Sweet the far song in the sky, where the white dove flew against the sun.

Bride looked, and her eyes were glad. Bonnie the blooming of the heather on the slopes of Dun-I. Iona lay green and gold, isled in her blue waters. From the sheiling of Dùvach, her father, rose a thin column of pale blue smoke. The collies, seeing her, barked loudly with welcoming joy.

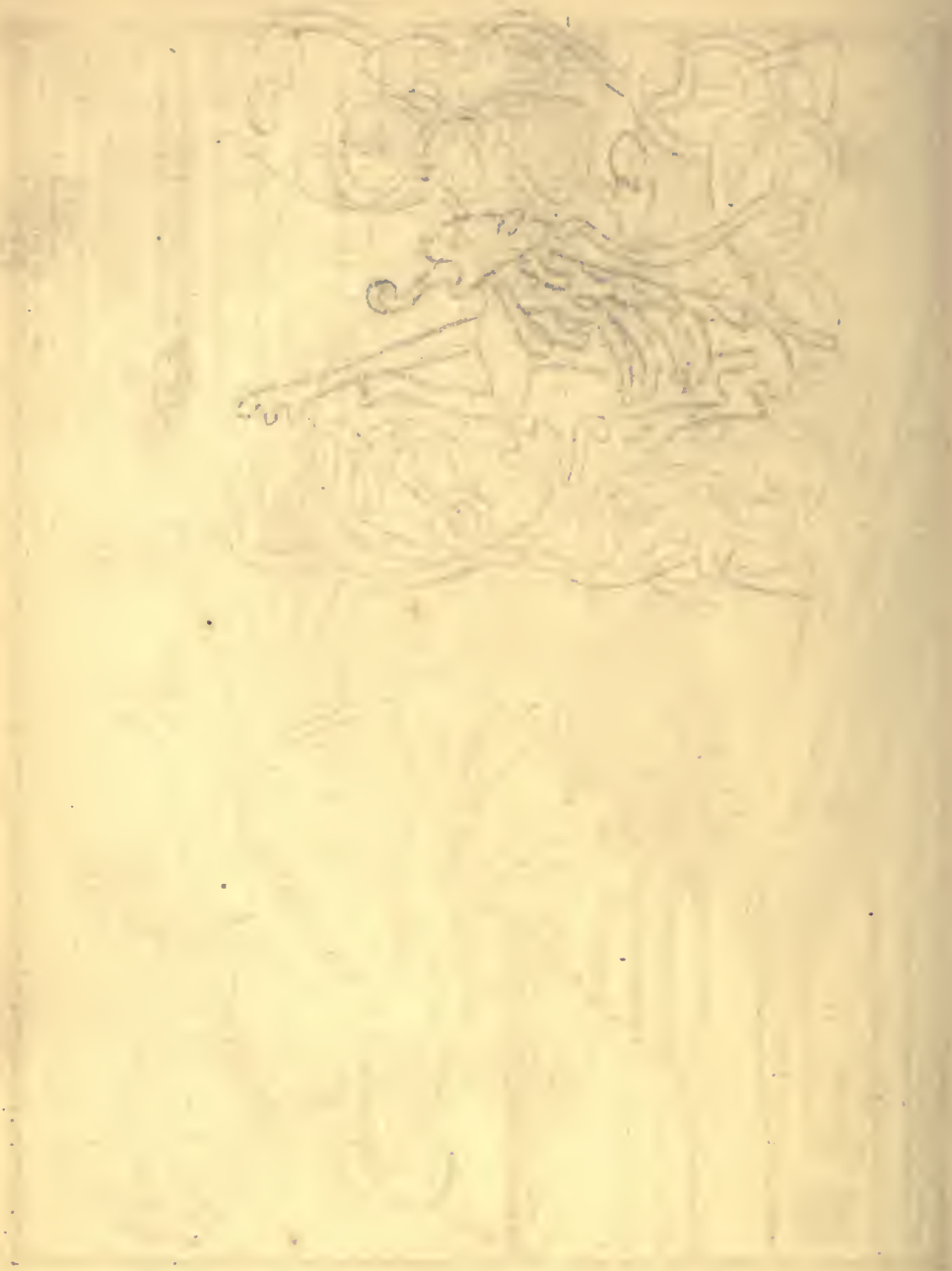
The bleating of the sheep, the lowing of the kye, the breath of the salt wind from the open sea beyond, the song of the flowing tide in the Sound beneath: dear the homing.

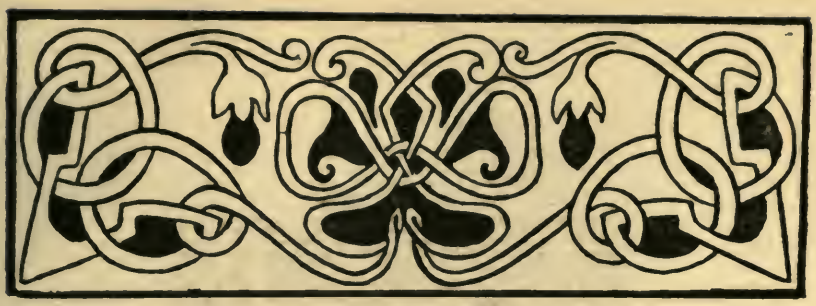
With a strange light in her eyes she moved down through the heather and among the green bracken: white, wonderful, fair to see.

FIONA MACLEOD.

DER ZEITGEIST

BY PITTENDRIGH MACGILLIVRAY





MAYA

THE Earth is a perishing patch of dust
In the ruinous drift of Things;
Yet the sensate motes on its crumbling crust
Are vain of their Summers and Springs.

And man in his moment of vanishing years—
That is gone while a flash goes by—
Finds an epic of long-drawn hopes and fears,
And is weary or ever he die!

WILLIAM MACDONALD.

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