



THE SPIRIT LAMP.

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The Spirit Lamp.

No. II.

MAY 13, 1892.

THE GATES OF GAZA.

I.

It is a dangerous thing to try to define a class which includes the majority. Mere modesty forbids me to define by negation and say what a Philistine is not; and with a subject so multi-form, it is not easy to grasp some quality which shall be really characteristic. I might say "Most Philistines wear collars," which would be true, and would imply at small cost a superficial sneer at a dastard respectability; but on the other hand I should offend little Jenkinsop, who is as good a fellow as ever lived, and not a bit of a Philistine, but who has made a most effective use of convention in the matter of dress. I have heard it said (by one of the majority, to be sure, speaking to his brother) that your Philistine is never cultured. Not cultured! Why, I protest, sir, culture was born in Philistia, the child of the Duke of Escalon by a Miss Blue, who caught the Duke while visiting the country with a reading party, and has since persuaded her sisters to naturalise themselves on the strength of it: 'twas born, I say, in Philistia, and a large and increasing number of natives are at the present time connected with that stock. Mr. MyriandreuS Slang and Mr. Sinbad Savage are fine examples, and I think I shall use them as a means of definition by select analysis.

Slang is an author, which is exactly what his parents hoped

he would be. At twelve years old he began as a translator of Latin Elegiacs into English in the original metre. At fifteen he deserted Ovid for Klopstock, and produced some versions of that great German which were generally admired at the time, though criticised by the *Saturday Review* with an asperity which would possibly have crushed the young life out of a weaker singer. At the present time he can not only translate, but compose original pieces in five living and two dead languages. Did you ever see the exquisite French *ballade* he wrote in one of his livelier moods? It begins:

“J’aime par les tièdes dimanches
Me balancer avec Babette,
En côtoyant ses molles hanches,
Sur une frêle escarpolette.”

Myriandreu's favourite poets are Longfellow and Lamartine. Byron he admires prodigiously, but there are certain passages of Don Juan which no modest man has ever read, and Myriandreu's Slang (after what he has heard of them) will not be the first. Longfellow he has finely compared in an exquisite ode to the memory of that great man, with

“The swallow's note of tender counterpoint,
Interpreter to Europe of the West.”

He has read the “Excursion” altogether thirteen times (this is in May, 1892); and “never,” he will tell you earnestly, “without discovering in Wordsworth some fresh anticipation of the latest results of contemporary science.”

The poet of the satirist used to grow long hair and moustachios and wear velvet and fine linen. When he walked (a thing he never did in the daytime, but which, he assured you, was his frequent practice during the small hours) his motions had all the irresponsible buoyancy of the balloon, the lubricity of a pair of skates, and the languor of a self-conscious cockatoo. Myriandreu's Slang is above all things a man of his times. He has put away these childish things. He walks at all hours, and with a certain modest manliness of gait. “Let me be alone with Nature,” he says. “We understand each other. Books you can get anywhere, but thought lives only in the open air.” In all weathers he wears knickerbockers

and a mackintosh. He loves the rain better than anything, except a really strong east wind. Often he will spend a quarter of an hour under an oak tree near Eltham, with a copy of the "Harmonies Poétiques" under his arm, watching an April shower fall or a trout pool doing nothing.

His favourite opinions are that manliness is a quality reserved for the British; and that if you correct your poetry you cannot have inspiration.

Finally, in art he believes in nothing done out of Italy, except Sir J. Reynolds and Sir F. Leighton; and as for music, though he used to enjoy military bands pretty well, he has lately resolved that "the sister arts" can never have a community of admirers.

What a different man is that other cultured Philistine, Mr. Sinbad Savage, the incarnation of modernity, the soul of the "cénacle," a person so interesting as to deserve a whole article to himself. He shall get it. Y.

THE NEWMAN STATUE.

OR

INSULAR PREJUDICES.

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS, BY OTTO TREBELLIANUS MINOR.

ACT II.

Place Inside the Refuge.

Time An Hour later.

PAUL (*half awake*). Hintz, have you slept?

HINTZ. I? Slept? No, not a wink:

How *can* I make them listen? I can't think.

It's always so—my lectures, sermons, speeches;

They will not hear a Body* when he preaches.

How, Paul Grave, how? Do answer me my question:

I shall be grateful for the least suggestion.

PAUL. TEA.

HINTZ. Excellent! Superb! Oh it was true

That inspirations really come to you:

* Presumably the Body of our Humiliation.

I did not, I confess, believe before,
 But now there's no denying any more.
 Tea! Yes I will, whene'er I mean to preach
 Or speak, or lecture, give some tea to each
 Of the congregation or the audience :
 I really think the effect will be immense :
 Give 'em strong tea—or coffee, I suppose?—
 And I defy 'em to so much as doze!

Enter VERO CIPO carrying statuettes of Apollo, Venus, etc. He goes to the door and knocks: HINTZ opens, and seeing his wares, springs at his throat.

HINTZ. Fiend—you've the impudence to me to bring
 An effigy of that accursed thing
 I've laboured all these weeks to bring to naught :
 I'll pay you out, Sir, for what you have brought.
(Drives him away with some contumely.)

Enter a PROCTOR with BULLDOGS.

PROCTOR. Ha! what have you sniffed out, my best of spies?
 What? Doctor Hintz? Well, this is a surprise!
 And Doctor Hintz in such a strange disguise!

HINTZ. Come in, come in; I'm going to speak again—
 PROC. Speak?

HINTZ. Upon Newman, the familiar strain;
 Yes I will speak until my voice shall break,
 Now I know how to make 'em keep awake.

PROC. I'm not sure that it's discipline, but still
 Since you're so pressing, Dr. Hintz, I will.

[They enter.]

(HINTZ proceeds to make tea with a Spirit Lamp, serves it round, and then begins to speak.)

Secure, as I believe, of your attention
 (Thanks to my friends' original invention)
 I venture to address you once again :
 Gentlemen, Bulldogs, and two Jesus men,

[BULLDOGS go to sleep.]

Professor Newman is no more alone ;

We too refuse his brother's charm to own.

[FIRST UND. *drops off.*

Intolerance, so long discredited,

Dares once again to lift its sacred head :

[SECOND UND. *drops off.*

Dulness once more itself may advertize :

Pull down a reputation and you rise :

Or if you cannot pull it down, at least

By the attempt your fame will be increased.

Newman alive, we tried in vain to climb

Up to his height ;—once dead—it is our time !

[*All go to sleep.*

Among the martyrs we shall have a niche ;

To us they will put up a statue, which

Protestant crowds will gaze upon adoring,

And Papists wince to see. But what's that ? Snoring ?

PAUL (*in his sleep*). Oh for originality, alack !

Will my ideas never more come back ?

HINTZ (*with a groan*). Merciful Heavens ! even the tea has failed :

My soporific accents have prevailed !

He rushes out of the Refuge, when enter from a window of Balliol a

GHOST : *it approaches.*

HINTZ (*with horror*). Calverley ! C. S. C. ! Now Heaven have grace ;

How dare I the great foe of dulness face ?

GHOST (*disregarding him sings*)—

Thus, the old trick remembered still,

Thus, every difficulty weather'd,

I come, escaped by the familiar
method.

What is the reason now that has

Tempted me hither ? O what is it ?

Why, why the glimpses of the gas

Revisit ?

Oxford was never kind to me :

Merit she never could appreciate :

Not I, nor Shelley, even he,
 Could teach ye it.

You sent me down, as you did him :
 I found a kindlier Alma Mater ;
 You would be better did you im-
 itate her !

And now some fools have dared to sit
 And speak and hear amiss of Newman :
 And Hintz is at the head of it—
 Old woman !

I laughed at Newman : what's a laugh ?
 But I admire him none the less : a
 Divinity—eg Religious Calf—
 Professor !

(GHOST laughs long and loud.)

Turning to HINTZ—

Pledge me a pledge, old man, I say,
 Or I will lead you such a dance, sir,
 To Dorchester and back ere day—
 So answer—
 Never to fight with voice or fist,
 Or preach 'gainst Newman—pledge me that, you
 Unchristian greybeard—nor resist
 His statue.

HINTZ. Yes, anything, for I am old and weak :
 It's quite exceptional for me to speak
 Or fight : and as for preaching, why just now
 It doesn't take effect, I don't know how.

*(GHOST drives him away with some contumely, pursues him to Tom
 Gate, where HINTZ falls down.)*

GHOST. Lie there until the porters find you, then
 Go in ; they'll hold their tongues, they're honest men :
 I must be going—I've a breakfast on
 With Doctor Whewell and another don. *[Exit GHOST.*
(Enter the AUTHOR from Heaven knows where.)

AUTHOR (*sings softly*)—

Try tea, Doctor Hintz, try tea,
'Twill soon be successful, trust me :
As the sermons get longer,
The tea must get stronger ;
You'll find it expensive—but still
I'm sure that you'll find that it will
Be cheaper by far
Than advertisements are,
Like this which has ended so ill !

(Turns to go, but comes back.)

Well long live Jowett, long live Gore, and long
Live both Professors who have graced our song !
Long live the 'Varsity and House of Peers,
And last of all long live the Author ! (*Cheers*). [Exit.

CURTAIN.

AD TABITHAM.

Cat,
Twelve years old and old at that,
Shall I sing of thee to-day,
Eh ?

Cat,
Tenant of my lonely mat,
If I did what should I say,
Eh ?

Cat,
As a subject thou art flat ;
Go away and—play ; nay—pray
Stay.

CATULUS.

IN A BLUE BOUDOIR.

After Emilio Montanaro.

IT was one of those hazy heliotrope days in early August—blue boiling August. The sun was just setting, and his rays as they entered the window, bathed one half of my room in

ruby-pink: the other half was by contrast darker—a dull red “darker.” I lay on my sofa wrapt in thought, of what I was thinking I scarcely now remember. I forgot my nature, myself, my very individuality: I became, so to speak, a unit in space. I felt myself the pale protoplasmic centre of a boundless whirling universe of nothing—nothing tangible, nothing visible, and yet there; I felt it, a cold empty chaos.

I woke. Again my thoughts, wandering hazily through most of the secondary and tertiary colours, at last turned to a subdued scarlet theme in the minor key, and were gently modulating to a neapolitan sixth on the sub-dominant, when a tap at my door brought me back again to the commonplace tonic triad.

The sun had now sunk, and under the atmosphere which had turned to a full purple my brain began to feel the faint fragrance of Stephanotis.

* * * *

My voice was almost olive-green as I responded to the knock. . . . “Not that chair, not that,” I trilled as my visitor began to seat himself slowly on a straight backed oak epic. “Try this one, it is an eau-de-Nil ecstasy, a pink sonnet of comfort.”

He reclined.

He was my best friend—perhaps my only friend, and I loved him with a corresponding azure.

I can find no words to express the Prussic blue thrill that shot through me as I took his hand in my hand. (This too in *Oxford* that mockery of the magenta). Yes! I did indeed feel (it was one of my topaz days) that though life was leaden-grey, moments such as these, whose warm harmony broke through the slate coloured crust of ordinary nothingness, and hid its blue-bell pallor (as the chrysalis hides the tender treble of the butterfly) *were* worth the blood-red agony of anticipation. Not all the enharmonic modulations of an Indian twilight could ever hope to express in tint and cadenza, what was passing through my thoughts just then.

* * * *

So we sat till time became the abstract of reality.

* * * *

LOBSTER.

FROM CATULLUS.

DEAR LOVE, if it were mine
To kiss for evermore
With kisses millionfold
Those honeyed eyes of thine ;
I would not have my fill ;
Although the harvest store
Of kisses were untold
As the dry cornstalks, still
I would not have my fill.

AFTER HERRICK : TO MUSIC.

Οὐρανία δέσποιν' ἐκκληλίτεια μερίμνης,
ἧ τε τίθης Αἰδου δῶμα γαληνὸν αἰεὶ,
ἡμερόεις τελέοντας ἀνορνυμένας τε θνέλλας,
σοῖσιν θελξινόοις ὑπνοδότασι νόμοις·
κάππεσέ νυν δὲ σὺ, Μοῦσα, κατ' αἰθέρος ἡχίεντος,
ὥς τ' ὧτων κρατείεις τὼς ἐπάειδε φρεσίν.

Y.

CAUSERIES DU VENDREDI.

I.—Whitman and Shelley.

THE two greatest poets that have used the English language since Milton are brought together in our minds this year. Oxford is to rear the tomb of him whom she stoned in the first ardour of his youth, and America has suffered her greatest glory to die in poverty while she hunted through Europe for memorials of the past to grace her Chicago shows. That perfect efflorescence of Senior Oxford, Mr. Arnold, has condemned the one—the Union Orator of poets, Mr. Swinburne, has jumped upon the other.

But they are the truest and greatest poets this century has known. Their poetry is no thin criticism of life. The one died when he was only beginning to understand life—the other, like Shakespeare, took all life for his subject, but to feel and love it, not to criticise or expound it in philosophic

choruses or laboured nomes. They sang of their own thoughts and passions—Shelley's rare and subtle and evanescent; Whitman's masculine and sensuous and tender. Therefore these poems are as the primal forces of nature—as the music of winds and tides and the colour of flowers and rainbows—not to be understood and explained and classified by a superior Oxford Don.

Browning and Tennyson cannot be set aside as poetasters, but surely they are often only poetizers. They have got some wretched philosophy they want to express, and we feel them straining after it. As every character in Faust comes in ticketed, and we feel that Goethe is working the strings and consciously showing us how wide is his study of life, so in every poem of Browning's we know what doctrine it is he is going to teach us, and we feel painfully aware that it does not come off. The Idylls of the King are a great Christian allegory, and they leave us at the end with the impression that a perfect Christian is a cur, and that Tennyson is a wonderful master of music and word-painting. And as the conscious poetizer must slip, so we find that there is a mass of Wordsworth, and Coleridge, and Tennyson and Browning that is just unmitigated rubbish.

But Whitman and Shelley *never* slip, because they are not poetizers, but seers and singers. You may open where you will, and you will find no effort at poetical effect, but thoughts and emotions that they have really and deeply felt, transfigured by imagination and passion, and clothed in their own music. Whitman is the greater, because his vision is wider and his feelings more akin to the human passions of us all. He has no fears, no scruples. He is not prurient like Mr. Swinburne, but he is as naked and uncovered as the wind-swept heavens. He is no student who has dreamt of life—he has lived, and done and felt. He worships a Trinity—Nature, and Human Nature, and himself. He is more open to the sensuous influences of the grass, of the sea, of "the hiding, receiving night" than Keats could have been. He has touched every human affection—the wife's, the mother's, the friend's—and in his songs of the "Love of Comrades"

has exalted human love to its purest and highest pitch. He has sung of himself, and has found himself in every aspect of everything that moves upon the face of the earth. Mr. Watts has lifted up his ass's hoof against this dead lion. But fancy the writer of costive sonnets to relieve dyspeptic moods—one of the herd of poetasters who croak so dismally in the marshes of our magazines—raising his voice against the singer of—if we must choose one single song—

Vigil strange I kept in the field one night.

There is fire enough in the belly of a five-line poem of Whitman to burn up all the lyrics and sonnets not alone of Mr. Watts' minor poets but of their masters, the Pegasus-thrashing Swinburne, the stained-glass Rossetti, the tutorial Mr. Arnold.

But it is only wronging so great a poet to indicate or to compare him. The great singers are above comparison. Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Arnold contended like gladiators as to who should stand out pre-eminent in poetry when the nineteenth century came to sum up her treasures; and they themselves have shared the fate of all the critics—each has reviled one of the two who alone must stand forth as worthy to sit down beside Homer, and Aeschylus, and Dante and Shakespeare.

HOC SECURIOR.

THE TIPPED.

POSSIBLY half-a-sovereign,
I thought if anything at all.
I did not think it could have been
So small.

It really almost made me laugh;
I bit my lip to keep it down:
Imagine he should give me half-
A-crown!

His nephew and his godchild I—
So fond of him—I hope and pray

This will not make my fondness die
Away.

The worst is, that I had arranged
To take two fellows to the "Pav.":
I only hope their minds they've changed :
I have.

How shall I ever stand their chaff?
An uncle who comes up to town,
And only gives his nephew half-
A-crown !

"My nunks I never met," I'll say ;
And as for the half-crown, we'll see
If it will tea me at an A
B C.

O.T.M.

LES AMERTUMES D'UNE DOUCEUR.

Ou quinze francs, ou rien du tout,
Me disais-je. Certes je ne
M'attendais pas à pareil coup :
Si peu !

C'était à rire et à pleurer—
J'en mordis mes lèvres des dents ;
Ce put-il qu'il m'osât donner
Cinq francs ?

A moi, son neveu son filleul !
J'avais pour lui si grand penchant :
Qu'il reste, je l'espère seul-
-ement !

D'ailleurs, j'allais à la Gaîté
Emmener deux de mes amis.
Eh ! qu'ils aient comme moi changé
D'avis !

Comment souffrir leur raillerie ?
—Le beau cadeau, figurez-vous,
D'oncle provincial, je vous prie ;
Cent sous.

Disons : Il ne s'y trouva pas.—
Quant aux francs maudits, ça vaut mainte
Tasse, chez le traiteur là-bas,
D'absinthe.

Y.

APOLOGIA PRO MUSA NOSTRA.

As some of our readers have misunderstood some of our best verse (and our best verse is very good indeed), we shall perhaps not at once be set down as impertinent if we venture to explain it at some length.

The little poem entitled 'Cabale und Liebe' in our last number was chosen as a target for general witticism and was considered in some circles as a comic poem.

Comedy we need scarcely say is not in our manner at all, and comic verse is only tolerable out of the *Oxford Magazine*.

But to begin.

The thought-fraught line, 'many a mad magenta minute,' tremulous with meaning as it was to not a few, has been criticized as what it was not by the many.

A grammarian on the look out for an opening for fault-finding has quarrelled with our first line. He insists, with some justice on his side, be it allowed, that it should run

'Many mad magenta minutes.'

Now when we come across a fairminded critic like this we have no objection to answer him.

It *was* we confess with a sense of misgiving that in a serious poem such as 'Cabale und Liebe' we ventured to open with a phrase usually confined to the conversation of the frivolous.

But even rhyme has its exigencies; and the gentleman who contributed the third line pointed out to us in a vigorous letter that the use of the plural 'spinets' (mark you, not spinet) would have been fatal to the sense.

It would certainly be difficult to justify the use of such a phrase as

'Keran-Happuch at her spinets.'

In a word, though the expression was peculiar, we determined to lend it our countenance.

But when our fair-minded critic went on to further protest against the facetious character of this exquisite little verse-gem we were forced to point out to him the true nature of his error.

Comic! Yes, the expression passed between us; and we felt very much as if we had noticed Ellen Terry dancing at the Empire, or Professor Huxley's name on the list of contributors to the *Idler*.

But a private expostulation hardly stands with propriety in a public journal? It is high time we offered an emphatic proof of the serious sediment of thought that lurks under such of our 'comic' crystals as 'the olive stanza,' 'the lavender of life,' 'the nicotine extravaganza,' and 'the omelette of the past.'

'A gill of examples,' as should have been wittily said, 'is worth a peck of precept.'

Let us therefore at once select one, the first that comes to hand from the crowded canvas of our recollection. It happens to belong to that much abused class of symbolic subtleties—Life-lavenders.

Here it is.

Once of a Tenor
Whose mouchoir and sentiment
Sent me to heaven
(His scent, I meant,
Sent me to heaven),
When I asked 'How
Old is he now?'
They answered, 'We vow
He's but ten or
Eleven.'

My second example is more difficult to class. In outward form I am inclined to regard it as an 'omelette'—its pathos certainly makes it look far more like a 'curried castaway'—but I believe there are critics who have definitely pronounced

it (and I hesitate to differ from them) one of the finest examples extant of the once scorned nicotine extravaganza.

One noon, moved by a friend's admonishment,
I struck a literary attitude ;
When to my own extreme astonishment,
 Sub rosa
 (Beneath the rose)
 Uprose,
 Uprose a
 PLATITUDE !

Time and type wait for no man, or I should like to have given a few exquisite instances of the harsh-pea-green-remember and the elegiac bureau.

They must be reserved for another occasion.

DOETHE.

**AVE GIVEENE IMPROVISATOR, AUDITURI TE
SALUTANT.**

RUN back, you have some minutes yet
 Ere they begin,
And from your common place book get
 The jokes, Giveen.

Let me go over all your wit ;
 Your joke-machine
Has done good service—hasn't it ?—
 This week, Giveen.

Two puns, a score, a repartee
 (Not over clean,
Nor over new it seemed to me)—
 What else, Giveen ?

Your jokes ring hollow as they fall,
 Flat, cracked, and thin ;
Like a don's laughter heard in Hall
 At grace, Giveen.

O.T.M.

PNEUMATOLAMPADOMASTIX.

(à la Whistler).

AVERAGE DON. A good deal of taste about it—and all of it very bad.

CURT DON. Simply vulgar.

DON (*rather below the average*). Between you and I, I believe that skit was written by a Proctor; or else.....

SLY DON (*a reader of Modern Society*). I shall certainly take it in; but I shall tear off the cover.

YOUNG LORD GUINEABOX. Much, *much*, MUCH worse than the *Isis*, and twice as dear; in fact it is—is—is—is.....
(*Left foaming*).

MR. OSCAR WILDE. The writers are quite unintelligible, and will consequently never be found out.*

MORAL.

MR. GEORGE MEREDITH. Foolish Young Fellows!

* Absit omen!—[ED.].

NOTICES.

THE columns of the *Spirit Lamp* are open to all the talents. We shall be glad to receive contributions in Prose or in Verse. They should be written on *one* side of the paper only, and sent in not later than the *Wednesday before publication*, to

THE EDITOR,

c/o MR. JAMES THORNTON,

HIGH STREET.

The day of issue is FRIDAY every week. MSS. will in no case be returned.

LODGINGS FOR EIGHTS' WEEK AND COMMÉM.

LONGWALL STREET.

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No. 20.—Mrs. Davis. One Sitting Room and one Bedroom, for Eights' Week and Commemoration.

HOLYWELL STREET.

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