

The Spirit Lamp.



CONTENTS.

To T.S.K.—Bret Harte.

A DILEMMA AND A FALLACY.—Sandys Wason.

WALT WHITMAN.

THE BATHOS OF BATHING.

CAUSERIES DU VENDREDI. — No. VII. —

The Poet Laureate.—T. Baden Powell.

ÆNONE AND OTHER POEMS.

THE BLACK BROUGHAM.

NOTES: OTHER VERSE.

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The Spirit Lamp.

VOL. 2. No. II.

Nov. 4, 1892.

TO T. S. K.

THE long, long night of storm and strife is past,
Alike the grasses spring o'er friend and foe,
And thou, brave heart, whose voice out-trod the blast—
Whose kindling thought made every beacon glow ;

O friend, who wouldst my future work forecast,
Pointing this idle pen to higher things—
In these poor songs to thee I still cling fast.

I read, and lo, thy clarion voice still rings,
And in mine own refrain, it is thy thought that sings.

1867.

BRET HARTE.

A DILEMMA AND A FALLACY.

CHAPTER II.

DE LAUNVILLE was engaged.

Not to Polly, the Master's daughter. No; De Launville had been foolish, and had fallen in love (for the second time) with a Miss Helen Vassall, a girl with an impossible aunt and a faultless complexion. After having once seen her you could never forget that her eyes were blue and her teeth extremely white, that her hair had bits of gold in it and that the only thing she wanted seemed to be a good gown. She could most certainly dance till three in the morning and play tennis till the racket dropped out of her hand; but for all that she was neither an athlete nor a doll.

When De Launville proposed she didn't swoon and she didn't sob hysterically over his coat, but looked intensely pleased and happy, put two white, rather fat, hands confidently into his, and said she thought they really loved one another, and that it was an enormous pity neither of them had one penny to rub against another. Then he kissed her, and after both had agreed that lovemaking was not nearly so awkward as it used to be, discovered that tea was after all a removeable feast and that as aunt Jemima was doing a little shopping in the Hammersmith Road there was no objection to their taking a longish turn in the opposite direction.

Aunt Jemima was not interesting; she had a starved, yellow throat, and always wore garnets in the afternoon, but she could cook like a *cordons bleu* and had a knack of dropping her final g's which Hammersmith grew to think was "so ladylike" that it gave up being jealous of her garnets and called on her in a body.

CHAPTER III.

HE interview that De Launville had described to his friends had been followed by another in which the Master had given him to understand, delicately but unmistakably, that he must either consent to an engagement with his daughter or go down.

Now De Launville had a mother, and he therefore felt himself in a very difficult position. Either he must go down and thereby resign all chances of a fellowship, to get which had been his sole object in coming up to Oxford, or resign his liberty and his *fiancée* together. If he did the first his old mother who was almost entirely dependent on him must ultimately be ruined; if he did the second . . . but De Launville was a gentleman. He fought hard with himself and his love, but to no purpose. He could *not* go back to his mother with the miserable story of his drunkenness and disgrace. He must save her at all costs. Neither could he write or tell his blue-eyed Helen that he had given her up. The answer she would have made him, had he done so, was as plain to him as if he held the letter in his hand—"don't bother about me, Harry; your first duty is to your mother." But he did mind, and he couldn't do it.

And this was the dilemma.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was a few minutes before six on the day before De Launville's wedding with Polly the Master's daughter.

A cab had just stopped before the gate of — College. Two ladies got out and began to walk quickly across the outer quadrangle. The cab rattled off.

"I can't wait, Aunt Jemima," said the younger of the two. "Remember Harry's rooms, number iv. 3 in the inner quad."

Helen Vassall ran up the stone staircase and tapped quickly at the door of De Launville's sitting-room.

"Come in," said a smothered voice from the bedroom, "I'll be with you in a minute; I'm just shaving."

"Oh, Harry," was all Helen could say, "Do be quick—something awful has happened."

De Launville put down his razor to rush into the room, but a second consideration made him stop.

Helen ! . . .

Helen *knew something*—everything. Helen was there in the next room—and *Polly was waiting dinner for him at the Master's*. His hand shook as he went on shaving, and he cut himself more than once. How ghastly and lined his own face looked in the glass!

On the point of finishing he caught the sound of low sobbing, and unable to bear the suspense any longer, wiped the soap from off his face and pushed hurriedly in, just as he was.

"Oh, Harry, Harry," said Helen as he came near her, "Your mother . . ."

De Launville crushed her to him and kissed her passionately. Then reading a new terror in her eyes he thrust her back. . . .

He had forgotten all about Polly now.

"Mother, mother!" he stammered out dazedly—"what do you mean? Is she ill?"

"Very ill," said Helen, "Oh Harry, my poor boy."... And De Launville knew all.

CHAPTER V.

THE early six o'clock dinner at the Master's was not a success.

De Launville, fresh from the news of his mother's death, had naturally enough forgotten all about it. Presently however the odious thought of his engagement occurred to him, and the words "Remember to dine with us at six, Remember to dine with us at six" kept ringing in his ears like some devilish refrain. He was too completely stunned to see the awfulness of dining out the very day of his mother's death. And then Helen was there. Every minute he remained in the same room with her was an agony. Did she or did she not know how he had betrayed her?—so uselessly too since his mother was dead after all. Dead, dead, dead! How the words burnt into his heart! . . .

Aunt Jemima's arrival a little after six (she had mistaken the staircase) finally decided him. He could

not face that awful woman with her stony eyes and terrible questions and still more terrible condolings.

He rushed out of his rooms into the air. Outside he caught the gleam of the lights at Dr. Browne's, and with a vague idea of warmth and comfort he sprang up the steps and rang the bell. . . .

No; the dinner at the Master's was not a success. De Launville arrived twenty minutes late; but they had waited for him. Polly in a smart, and utterly unbecoming green gown looked as if she had been crying, and the Master was a little tetchy at having been kept waiting. There was a general feeling of electricity about everybody, and Dr. Browne's *Amen* at grace was not reassuring. . De Launville was positively chalky in the face, but in the faint rose-coloured light it was scarcely noticeable. Nobody said much, and Polly sent away her soup. De Launville who was sitting next to her found himself saying the Lord's Prayer over and over again to himself, under his breath; and when Polly made a remark or glanced at him, he was immensely relieved at seeing by her face that his answer had not been one of the seven petitions. After each interruption, he felt he *must* begin the Prayer all over again; and a cold nightmare sweat grew on his brow at the thought that he might forget the beginning and *have to stop altogether*. Then he knew he should go mad and swear or scream out some gibberish to the silent ghastly dinner-table.

He got away early on some lame excuse. As he kissed Polly a heavy tear fell on his hand, and he found himself repeating: "But deliver us from evil."

He did not look back again as he went off, or he would have seen Polly standing in the shadow of the door, weeping as if her heart would break.

When his scout called him the next morning he handed him a note from the Master, that ran as follows:

"My dear De Launville,

The sudden illness of an old and valued friend has called my daughter Mary away on the very eve of her

marriage with you. I need hardly say that all arrangements for the wedding have been put off, as Mary goes by the nine o'clock train to-morrow morning, to nurse her old friend.

"I remain,

"Yours very sincerely,

"CLARENCE BROWNE.

"She wishes very much to see you for a few minutes before she starts."

De Launville's ghastly face and agitated manner at dinner the night before had finally told her what she had known long before, but had refused to recognise: that he did not and never could care for her. Polly had persuaded her father to allow her to go to Madeira for a time, and had conveniently caused an old friend to fall ill. Somehow, she looked almost pretty in her travelling gown, and when she put up her face gravely to De Launville and said entreatingly: "Just kiss me once, Harry, for the last time—*once as if you really loved me*,"—he was so much relieved by her decision, and yet so much touched by her loving him well enough to give him up, that . . . Polly was almost satisfied.

And this was the fallacy.

The news of the engagement and its rupture had reached Helen and her aunt over their tea and toast at the "Sandown," long before De Launville had had time to realize it completely himself.

* * * * *

But Harry managed somehow to square matters with Helen, and he got his fellowship after all.

And this is the end of a fallacy and a dilemma.

SANDYS WASON.



WALT WHITMAN. (I.)

IT is a little more than six months since Walt Whitman passed almost unnoticed into his grave; not loaded with honours and crowned with laurel; notorious rather than famous; hated by some but for the most part ignored. America, so far from recognising in him the truest and deepest exponent of her spirit, so far from seeing in his poems the first great chapter of her literature or a new found voice to express all that she has hitherto hoarded up in silence, turned him out to starve, stoning having gone out of fashion. In England he found from the first more sympathisers but he has never been popular. He is still, so to speak, in quarantine even here.

It would be useless, until he is more widely known and appreciated, to attempt to give any final estimate of his poetry or to assign him any place even among the poets of this century. But the chief interest of his poems for us does not depend on that—in fact is not a mere literary interest at all. It lies in this that he is on his own estimate—and we must at least consider that, even if we refuse to accept it—more of a prophet than a poet; that he is the pioneer and harbinger of a new society, and the first voice of a new speech of which the future will bring fuller utterance.

“Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater
than before known,
Arouse, for you must justify me!”

Political life in any true sense of the word began in modern Europe with the advent of democracy, *i.e.* with the French Revolution. The cry of liberty, equality, fraternity, was then the standard and rallying ground of all who were working for or looking forward to the progress of mankind. It was not only a password to them but a creed which seemed at once to

sum up all the past and open a new vista for the future. To the poets especially it seemed as if the golden age of the world had already dawned. But in France—and it was to France that all men looked for the development of the new ideas—in France the work of destroying the old institutions of oppression once begun carried everything before it. Democracy came to be synonymous with anarchism, with blind and wanton uprooting of everything permanent, with the complete severance from the past traditions and growth of humanity which seemed to be the sole aim of those who then were called its champions. Democracy was established not so much as a living principle, embodying the new ideas from which it had arisen, but rather as a patched up fabric from the relics of the revolution—what was left after everything tangible had been destroyed. The French Revolution really asserted no principles whatever; it was purely negative and destructive, clearing the ground for a new structure which has never yet been built or planned. Hence, serious and profound thinkers like Wordsworth turned away from it, finding that the freedom and fraternity which it offered was but a specious delusion.

Since then we have got democracy or at least an approximation to it; but liberty and equality are yet far from us, and fraternity has lost its meaning and become a byeword. It has removed disabilities and broken down class privileges, but it has not produced the universal brotherhood of mankind; nor even the community of interests and sympathies among the citizens of a state. It has not furnished a new inspiration to art or philosophy nor has it found any distinctive expression for itself. On the contrary, art and literature and philosophy have lived almost entirely in the past and so have tended more and more to become a mere mechanic exercise of culture and education and to stand apart from the life of the multitude.

In Walt Whitman democracy has found a voice and

an interpreter. In his poetry the idea of "humanity" is stripped of all the platitudes which generations of writers and theorists have gathered about it and appears as a real thing, and a thing which to him is the central fact of the world. He puts aside all disguises of wealth, rank, reputation, as mere trappings of the true self. Each in his place and for himself is of infinite value, is to himself the explanation of all development, the centre of all space and time—"an acme of things accomplished, an encloser of things to be." And the ideal of democracy is a society where each is conscious of this in himself and is able by the gift of sympathy to find the same infinite value in his fellow-men. There no one is subject, whether in mind or body, to anything human or divine, for each is to himself the greatest and divinest thing of all.

"I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough,
None has ever yet adored or worshipped half enough,
None has begun to think how divine he himself is and how
certain the future is."

Not the heroes and great ones of the earth but the average man, at whom we that are unregenerate are apt to scoff, is the poet's theme. The young man of sound strong body and clear untroubled mind, who can wield the hammer or the axe or the trowel or any one out of the endless lists of tools on which he so lovingly dwells; the healthy domestic woman—these are his ideals. But he rejects none. His song is the Song of the Open Road along which all may go. He is the poet not of the good only but of the evil also, of the criminal, the diseased, the mean, and the commonplace, judging "not as the judge judges but as the sun falling round a helpless thing."

"The great masters and Kosmos are well as they go, the
heroes and good-doers are well,
The known leaders and inventors and the rich owners and
pious and distinguished may be well,
But there is more account than that, there is strict account
of all.

The interminable hordes of the ignorant and wicked are not nothing,
The barbarians of Africa and Asia are not nothing,
The perpetual successions of shallow people are not nothing as they go."

There never was a more human-hearted poet than Whitman. It is no mere theory of equality or toleration that we find in his poems, no vague meaningless talk about the brotherhood of man—a phrase which we have come to regard with just suspicion. For the casual passer-by or the unknown man in the crowd he has a wealth of sympathy and love compared with which most of our sentimental love poetry is mere vapour. To read his poetry is enough to convince one of this. It has a fervour and sincerity that comes from the heart. We should remember too that it is not the work of a man who lived all his life apart from his fellow-men, nursing his genius like a being from another sphere, but of a man who spent his life in the open, associating with the highest or the lowest with equal dignity and grace; who went through the Civil War nursing the wounded soldiers with a devotedness and tender affection such as the world has rarely seen; who bore an old age of poverty, sickness and contempt without a murmur. Many of our poets who have been loud in their professions of human sympathy have been in reality the most exclusive in their life and opinions. Whitman mourns alike over the dead President and the dead prostitute in the mortuary with like passionate grief.

An ill-natured reviewer, I am told, once said of Whitman that he was "a man who tried to strike out a new line in poetry but who had found himself compelled to fall back on what has been the theme of poetry since it began to be—Love and Death." It seems to me that it is just in his treatment of these themes that Whitman is original and that therein consists his chief greatness.

As he recognises no distinction of rank in men and

things, so neither will he believe that one part of himself was made to honour and another to dishonour, or that any natural change or process should be thought loathsome or repulsive. He does not look forward to death as the slave to his liberation nor as the gate to eternal happiness. He has too real a grip of the present to drop the substance of this life for the shadow of a better to come. Nor does he shrink from it in horror though he does not try to hide its gruesome livery. He feels that it is part of his nature and as such is prepared to walk out with it. He will not throw his body to be devoured while his soul slips by, for to him "the soul is not more than the body; the body is not more than the soul." The present in itself is to him an eternity. He does not look back to a beginning in the past nor forward to a "far off divine event" in the future—

"I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the
beginning and the end,

But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now

Nor any more youth or age than there is now

And will never be any more perfection than there is now

Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now."

Since the eternal mysteries were discovered by the Germans our modern poets have been too ready to grovel in the dust before them, to renounce their own individuality out of respect for some mist-begotten Infinite in which it is their aspiration to be merged. When they raise a voice of question at all it is only to proclaim their own weakness and insignificance. They put off the dignity of their manhood to throw themselves as it were on the mercy of this awful shadow, in the suppliant guise of childhood as

"An infant crying in the night

An infant crying for the light

And with no language but a cry."

But Walt Whitman is no infant; he is a man and knows it. He is a living man with all the strength he will ever have—if he is not to speak out now when will he speak?

"I will confront these shows of day and night.
I will know if I am to be less than they.
I will see if I am not as majestic as they.
I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they.
I will see if I have no meaning while the houses and ships
have meaning.
I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for them-
selves and I am not to be enough for myself,

"Why who makes much of a miracle?" he cries "the whole earth is full of miracles, and you and I are miracles just as much as any of them."

Such is the spirit which must inspire democracy if it is to do anything for men at all. If it is to stop short at equality of franchise; if it does not realise some such idea it is a mere shift of the burden and only a temporary relief.

We should wrong Whitman, however, if we supposed that *Leaves of Grass* is a political treatise. It is not an argued exposition but a living presentation of great ideas. But the subtle essence of poetry as it passes through the prosy mind of the critic becomes "subdued to what it works in," and when he sets before you the meaning which he has extracted from it it seems a very dull and lifeless thing indeed. And so it is with Whitman; there is much in him besides his political and social theories as we hope to show on a future occasion.

D.



THE BATHS OF BATHING.

THE *Cold Bath* (daily) is perhaps an unique example of a new institution becoming venerable as soon as born. Even now-a-days people have not much respect for a young peerage or a young periodical; County councils and South American republics still labour under the disadvantage of a noviciate to complete; and it is only those who are at the age of promise who do not look on Count Mattei's Remedies and "Aristotle's" Constitution of Athens with supreme suspicion. With daily baths it was never so. Not many decades since, some obscure officials of Madras and Bombay, who had taken to tubbing for their comfort in a hot climate, introduced the practice as a monstrously diverting joke into Great Britain. People at home took up the experiment seriously; the nation discovered that their ancestors had lived like hogs; and from that time forth—

"India capta ferum victorem cepit, et undas
Intulit"

Are reputations so lightly won and so little tested likely to be undying? We think not. On the contrary, there are signs of a growing spirit of rebellion against this foreign and fatuous fashion—this tropical and extremely trying tyranny. It would be absurd indeed to pretend that any one who pays income-tax has ever yet ventured to profess openly "I do without a bath": the boldest Englishman would rather die than lose caste by such an avowal. But we have known many men, and undergraduates (which is more) of the University of Oxford, who on really cold mornings in January have not hesitated to throw respectability, for the time being, to the winds.

You wake perhaps with a sore throat or a headache. You have not slept well, nor has the thought of what you must pass through in the morning contributed to your repose. It is a chapel morning with you, and there is no time to lose. Your gentleman has called you and officiously filled your bath. You have opened

your eyes for the last time: decidedly you must rouse yourself. Is there no appeal? You feel the water with your toe-tips, and say to yourself: "This is 2° below zero." If you have hot water (confirmed bathers usually have not), you slowly let a few drops trickle on the enamel, and test the temperature anew. Now, perhaps, you say "Fahrenheit, 39" or "Centigrade, &c.," which is the same thing. A little more hot water (this is to trespass on the shaving allowance; but no matter)—and your bath is at, say, 45°. Your towels are ready on the horse—near the bath, and so arranged that there may be as little interval as possible between purgatory and paradise; your sponge has reluctantly taken the fatal dive, and is sinking fast. Now comes the struggle between prudence and propriety—between the man and the idea. Are you a craven or a hero? A craven? Let us place you between the two. You hastily throw your towels down with studied negligence, and springle them with water. If you have a mat or strip of flannel to stand on, you tread it well down and crumple it: if you are particularly realistic, you pour a very little water from your basin (having previously washed) into your bath. Vain deceit! Useless compromise! Unprofitable fraud! Your scout will not be cajoled—never mind! The craven in you which you fondly call conscience is becalmed. Conventionality is outraged, but she will not tell her shame.

No! rather be a man: be bold. You *know* baths are a mere superstition. What good did they ever do to anybody? Physicians talk of the "glow" they impart to the human body. What do they mean? If we went naked like the Greeks, it might be worth one's while to glisten. If they mean the warmth of reaction, it is just as good to stand on the floor in one's nightgown for two minutes, and then get into bed again. As for cleanliness—it is the worst mistake of all to imagine baths clean you. We know some people do no other washing. They are dirty people. Be clean, and do it in a pleasant way.

Already the frosts have begun : it will soon be mid-winter. Now is the time (while our first rheum of slow recovery is with us, and every whispered sibilant tortures the tender trachea) for a resolute and wholesale *σεισάχθεια*. If we must have baths, let us at least have hot baths. Next winter it may be too late. The practice will have become all but universal : cold water bathing will then have spread to the homes of the poor and the watering-places of the continent—*Quod dī avortant !*

An association has been formed with the object of discouraging the practice complained of. The *Antipsy-chrobaptists* meet once a fortnight and hear papers read upon the subject. Membership involves no obligations beyond total abstinence from the cold bath. There is no subscription ; fines exacted for the infringement of the society's only rule being at present frequent enough to defray current expenses. The surplus, and voluntary contributions, which well-affected persons are invited to make through the treasurer, will be devoted to the execution of a scheme for building public *Thermae*. Such are the active means at present adopted in Oxford for the uprooting of a new-fangled and unreasonable creed which has already made alarming progress, and threatens, if the tide is not stemmed at once, to deluge every people in Christendom.

Bάψ.



THE NIGHT MAIL.

NIGHT falls as thick as snow. Below, the rails—
Two sundered destinies to meet no more—
Lie cold and lustrous. Overhead, the black
Brick arch o'ershadows heavily their track,
Making a little islet-space of Hell :
The buzzing idiot wires
Mutter an unintelligible song ;
The light wind gasps, and stirs again, and fails
Like one that labours half-conceived desires.
Down the line, far along,
The searching scream and menace of a train
Can scarce outrun the brute they harbinger :
Stealthy and swift,
Made mad with power and speed, she comes ; her throat
Flames red reflexion on the sinuous steam
That floats along her back :
Trampling the narrow bounds that prison her—
A loose-limbed serpent reeling thro' the night,
She roars past : making follow at her tail
Paper and leaves that slept upon the track—
Follow in wild ungovernable drift—
Slips out of sight,
Freighted with human souls. And soon her scream
Wails faint and far : and all is still again,
Only the idiot wires keep up their hum,
And the wind strives to stir,
Moaning like patient souls in martyrdom.

NOTES.

TWO important examinations have taken place since our last issue; and undoubtedly the right man was chosen in either case. There were fewer candidates than usual for the VACANCIES. vacant fellowship at All Souls; but what may be described as the All-Sold lecturership in Greek History at Christ Church drew a large number of competitors, who are said to be all equally surprised and indignant at the result.

MR. FROUDE's inaugural address was remarkable for nothing but the bad taste of PROFESSOR FROUDE. an ostentatious repudiation of all that was dearest to his predecessor, and a perfectly inadequate apology for holding the Chair of Modern History. "I was tempted," said Mr. Froude, "and I fell." Touching enough. *Pone me, Sa-lisbury!* Which is by interpretation, either: "Give me a place, my lord, though I be old," (one can always sneer at Gladstone), "though it is a rank political job; though being an historian I find myself tempted to tell what is not true; though every reasoning soul in Oxford cries out against the appointment. Give me the place, the place." Or else it may be taken more simply as "Get thee behind me *Sa*—"—by direct implication from the words of the Professor. Only *that* he did not say.—It is not everyone who can be ungrateful by innuendo so deftly as Mr. Froude.

MR. GLADSTONE. NOTHING could have looked cooler than Mr. Gladstone's scarlet-clad figure in the Sheldonian, as he bowed to right and left with exquisite courtesy among the perspiring Dons and Dominae. For us in the gallery his utterance had the vagueness of sweet music: the voice was paramount at all times, but the heavy falls of fainting men and the tramp of carriers-out continually drowned the words. Official providence had prepared for

a large bag, and was not disappointed. The mortality during the first half-hour was very severe. Jesus alone (if there be any trust in rumour) lost thirteen killed and wounded, and other Colleges fared proportionately ill. It had been arranged that the iron gates upon the Broad should be *porta libitina*; but the gates were narrow, and the number of carriers quite insufficient to meet the demands upon their services. Straw was laid down out of kind thought for the many lying sick within the Sheldonian.

Quantities of superfluous women and strangers choked the lower gallery; a thick *κνίσση* of stuffy humanity choked the occupants of the upper. All had been done upon the model of Jehu's proceedings as narrated in the Tenth Chapter of the Second Book of Kings—a doubtful precedent.

EPIGRAMS on the *Isis* continue to come in. This week's crop is rather below than above the average. This is perhaps the best:

	THE <i>Isis</i> delicately goes
THE	Through rich effluvial plains;
ISIS	Young Oxford here projects its prose—
	Old Oxford pours its drains.

OURSELVES. In our last number we inserted a letter from "Catspaw" running us down. Of course it looked like a piece of cheap magnanimity; but a little opposition is just what we wanted. The charge of priggishness is no doubt unanswerable. But personal attacks we never encouraged. Someone who *has* read the *Spirit Lamp* has perhaps been hoaxing "Catspaw."



CAUSERIES DU VENDREDI.

No. VII.—The Poet Laureate.

IF the Government find that in filling the vacant place at Court lately occupied by Tennyson, they have a difficult problem to solve, it will not be for want of volunteer assistance. The columns of the press have teemed with proposals and suggestions, some of them provided by popular candidates for the post. And there is scarce an Editor who has not “done a round” with the glass slipper, doubtfully adjusting it to sundry hoofs.

But all these volunteers seem to have cramped the flight of their misgivings by clinging too faithfully to one or both of two common assumptions, to wit:—

(1) The office of Poet Laureate ought to be abolished.

(2) If the office be retained, a real poet ought to perform it.

On these assumptions let us turn the rays of the *Spirit Lamp*.

The most distinguished name to be found associated with the former assumption is that of William Morris. He is, as a republican, especially sensible of the anachronistic character of the institution, and its incongruity with enlightened democratic ideals to which he points as the fatal feature. But this objection is not peculiar to republicans. It is but an effect and a symptom of the growing disgust for the decorated herd of which the Poet Laureate is but one: for the institution of which his office is but a part: for courts and courtiers in all their works and ways.

But it does not follow that for those who feel this disgust, the dictates of their impatience will prove to be the best guide, or that the quickest or most thorough way to exterminate the plant is to pounce on such of its flowers as most readily catch the public eye. Yet it is highly characteristic of ourselves and of our times that we should fall upon these giddy courses. We have a cherished habit in this country of nibbling at the leaves, pecking at the flowers and grumbling at the fruit of a

suspected or doomed institution, while suffering or ignoring the roots, or even piously protecting them against the profane touch of less muddle-headed reformers.

These things we daily do. On Sunday we pray in the Litany against heresy and schism. Or we are shocked to read (perhaps in connection with Grindewald confabulations) that there are still a few people who do not consider heresy and schism harmless or salutary. On Tuesday we write indignant letters (of course to the *Daily News*) to denounce the bigotry and intolerance of those few. It is not surprising if by Wednesday we have engendered a mental atmosphere as favourable to all manner of confusion and even to hypocrisy in ourselves as it is unfavourable to the appreciation of sincerity and consistency in others. So we deal also with the British Sabbath, Drunkenness and the Monarchy tinkering at conclusions and consequences while we shirk premisses and shut our eyes to antecedents. Of these practices we are, naturally, proud: boasting ourselves of our Practical Instinct, our Whole-some Distrust of Abstract Methods and our Wise Dislike of General Principle. To which virtuous wisdom among other gifts and graces we confidently attribute our prosperity in this world and our excellent prospects in the next. Wherein we seem to resemble the medical wise-acres of old time who killed or cured the fever-struck with red rags and were ever for tickling and tinkering at symptoms rather than for eradicating disease. But a certain diffidence has hindered us from hastily assuming for ourselves the honourable title of quack which was long ago, as well by acclamation as by authority, conferred upon them.

It is the recurrent action of these habits that is discernible in the desire to abolish the hack Bard of the Court. The slightly odious flavour of the idea of Poet Laureate which prompts public distaste is but the same flavour of venality, humbug and flunkeyism which characterises the Court at large; a flavour too

apt to pass unnoticed upon the popular palate, or even to be relished, apart from its conspicuous and incongruous association with the semi-sacred Muses. But this is not so much a good reason for incontinently lopping off the repugnant blossom as for preserving it whole, that the true character of the plant may peradventure achieve due notice and come to be better understood.

This is why we should also support, instead of assailing, all manner of Royal Grants while the monarchy survives. And if Radicals and Republicans will consider these things they will not cry so loud for the extermination of the Laureate.

To the semi-Liberal and demi-semi-Liberal soul a further word in season: There is ever in you a contemptible desire to have it both ways; to maintain some rotten system or abuse, and at the same time to wriggle out of the more obvious or irksome (but not out of the more insidious and mischievous) of its natural and proper consequences. You are but indulging this propensity now.

Therefore let semi-Liberals also reflect that as long as the roots are left in the ground the more we see of the flowers and fruit the better.

Thus shall we all be left free to afford compliance to those who mourn the prospective loss of a picturesque archaism. Of such are Edmund Gosse and others. "True it is," (say these) "that the thing is an anachronism. But how few there be remaining of such anachronisms, and how pretty a one is this! To us, æsthetic Conservatives, Archæologists, Antiquaries, such things are among our chief delights."

The Radical may freely answer them—"Keep your picturesque archaism. It will serve more purposes than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

So let concord be achieved all round, and be it agreed that the Poet Laureate continue to flourish with all pomp and circumstance as an integral part of the Court.

On this peaceful footing we may approach thesecond assumption: that if the office of Poet Laureate be maintained, a real poet ought to perform it.

Let us consider how heavy a price this were to pay, and how ill we can afford it.

(1) To impose this office on a poet is almost certainly, more or less, to sacrifice him. The freedom of his speech must be abridged; and therewith, in due process, the freedom of his thought. This means the atrophy, in some measure, of his mind; and the cramping and corruption of his muse. These consequences must tend to grow more and more certain and effective in times like ours, when new lights keep breaking in on the higher minds, and when the divergence keeps growing wider between the conventionally-respectable and the true. Such an office tends to make or keep its functionary orthodox in mind; not necessarily orthodox in respect of his particular conclusions, but rather of the courses and processes of his thought, obeying an illicit bias. Such seems generally to be the meaning intended in speaking of Orthodoxy: a word justly taken to indicate the habit of sticking in the mud; and no longer as specifying the particular kind of mud stuck in. Now an Orthodox Poet is a thing imagination boggles at; you turn for relief to the contemplation of the Orthodox Shopkeeper which outrages no congruities and suggests no contradictions.

If the example of Tennyson himself be pointed to, as soothing such fears and deprecating the suggestion of such risks, we may allow that in all probability he remained undefiled by the pitch he touched, and that nothing was lost to mankind in him by reason of the livery he wore. But even in him we can never be sure of this. And in the future, for reasons already hinted at, the case must generally be rather Swinburne's than Tennyson's. Swinburne's is indeed a strong example to answer those who appeal to Tennyson's. Had Swinburne stood in the Laureate's shoes these twenty years his tones had shewn another ring and the

waste had been great. Where would *Poems and Ballads* have been? *Songs before Sunrise* had, for the most part, gone unsung; nor would the Roman Catholic Church have been delighted at being addressed as "Grey Spouse of Satan."

To clash at all with the Smug Idea in any of its religious, social, or political expressions is not for the Laureate. He may not bite the hand that feeds him, nor make war upon his eventual paymaster, the British Public, as represented in its typical and now long time dominant section the *Bourgeois* Middle Classes. And as we advance by every decade it becomes less and less likely that the limits of archaic or provincial decorum will coincide with the natural boundaries of the poet's genius, even if so exceptional a coincidence were achieved in Tennyson's case. The Court and the Parlour, like the Church, have their creeds and articles; the Courtier and the Official like the ecclesiastic must put expediency and conformity first and truth second. Let no Poet then be prisoned in the gilded cage; nor have we poets to spare for any such purpose. A wingless bird will serve as well and no sin be done.

(2) The wingless bird will not only serve as well but much better. The idea of the Poet Laureate is a vicious idea. It embodies, encourages and supports a vulgar and base estimate of the things of the mind; an estimate reflected in Sir Edwin Arnold's Philistine suggestion that the Muses or the Arts or the public that should draw spiritual sustenance therefrom have something to gain or to hope from Court patronage, or State endowments: as if there were anything but corruption to be bred of their association with any vulgarities or respectabilities whatsoever. And whether the Laureate be a worshipper or (as, at the least, he must be) only a respecter of Mrs. Grundy, yet must he tend, by his circumspect regards, to foster and to maintain in the sight of the public the Smug Idea. The force and weight of his example is much abated if he be no Poet; but must wax mischievously cogent if he be one.

Moreover, the idea of the Laureate is apt to impose itself in a false light upon our dull perceptions if the Laureate be a poet. The obvious concrete ever diverts and bewilders the eye of the multitude; and the Poet's genius sheds its own rays upon his office and disguises with 'a reflected plausibility the intrinsic paltriness of the idea, inverting it with a virtue not its own, and giving currency to grossly Philistine conceptions. You could not put a poet's genius to a worse use. It would be no bad thing if official verse were to sink to the level of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* for a while: that such spurious glory may have time to fade as Tennyson's noble Muse has long shed on the institution. It would be lamentable that this incidental disservice should be done by making Laureates of three poets successively: and thus a further evil be added to the sacrifice of the poet himself.

So far, then, it seems (1) that the office should be preserved and (2) that he should not be a poet who performs it. But lest these considerations should seem to mark out Lewis Morris, or some such other, as the man for the occasion, it is needful to add that neither ought the Laureate even to seem, in the eyes of the multitude, to be a poet. Else we confirm them in strong delusion: another ill use for the Laureate, who plainly might be clear of all suspicion of poetry, a very Cæsar's wife among verse-mongers.

If these warnings be duly laid to heart we shall escape blunders and make a safe choice, to effect which should content the ambitious critic; nor need he presume to press his counsel to the point of making final choice. Yet it may be permissible to suggest that all snares would be escaped, all ills avoided and a further useful purpose served, if the office of Poet Laureate were joined to a seat in the Cabinet and offered so, since a new Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to be desired, to Sir William Harcourt.

THOMAS BADEN POWELL.

New College.

TRIOLETS.

I REALLY can't go into Hall,
 You don't do badly at the Queen's !
 That fresher's was the dullest call—
 I really can't go into Hall.
 This cutlet isn't bad at all,
 But *do* look sharp about the beans.
 I really can't go into Hall.
 You don't do badly at the Queen's !

What ever made you trump my king ?
 You *must* have known I had the ace.
 Your mind is simply wandering !
 What ever made you trump my king ?
 It seems a very simple thing—
 Here's " Cavendish " : now, find the place !
 What ever made you trump my king ?
 You *must* have known I had the ace !

CYGNET.

LOVE AND BEAUTY.

(FROM GREEK ANTHOLOGY.—STRATON.)

AIR is the path wherein we twain are met ;
 But since 'tis wingèd Love our footstep guides,
 Say now, shall we endure and not forget ?
 Beauty in thee, and Love in me abides ;
 Both are in season ; both a moment stay
 If they unite ; but both will fly away
 If one guards not the other from decay.

ON THE INSTABILITY OF HUMAN AFFECTION.

SOME people love never :
 I'd rather be clever
 Than rich or unpleasant or dirty ;
 however,
 Some people love never.


Some people love once :
 Manito's a dunce ;
 He sits in his office and curses and grunts—
 Some people love once.

Some people love twice ;
 The " Florence " is nice ;
 They give you the choice between pudding
 and ice—
 Some people love twice.

The young poet climbs
 The rungs of his crimes—
 I love an indefinite number of times.
 I write little rhymes.

CALIBAN.

"THE DEATH OF CENONE; AND OTHER POEMS."

E cannot criticise these poems. They are the last "twigs from an old tree"—a tree that has given us rich blossoms and mellow fruit. We note here and there familiar touches as "The dream wailed in her when she woke beneath the stars," and "The Silent Voices" carries us back to "Crossing the Bar," "Tears, Idle Tears" and a long chain of lyrics with a note peculiarly and exquisitely their own. If some of the twigs are dry and leafless, or—to drop metaphor—if some of the poems are in a tone of melancholy darker than Keats would allow, of a sort of irritable despair with which we have grown familiar in recent years we can forgive because we can understand. And indeed, to be just, this last volume has less of such an accent than some previous one—courage and hope have come back to the brave man's heart as the roar of Death's bar fell more distinctly on his ear.

We can understand such an accent because it is the troubled tone of one who feels he has lived into an age which he cannot understand—has lived to see things develop not as he vaguely hoped but altogether otherwise, and that beliefs, and customs, and institutions dear to him as life—indeed one to him with life—are being swept away. "The last of the Romans" is no more—the last great man to whom England as it is known in history was the ideal country of freedom and order. The feudal life of England has found many lovers and poets. Of these the greatest are Shakespeare and Scott—but they are the greatest because in their picture of this life there is so much more, so many of the fundamentals of human life to which all particular institutions are indifferent. It is only in the external pageantry and panorama that they are feudal and aristocratic. But in Chaucer and still more in Tennyson this pageantry is the great essential. Tennyson is the greatest master of word painting—rich in colour and exquisite in detail—in our language, and this power has worked in the service of a clear and definite ideal,

to portray an institution and a life in which that ideal has been slowly and in full concreteness realised in the course of centuries.

It is not a life into which love of the mere free play of intelligence enters largely—as it enters into the life of Athens or of Paris—and in consequence his philosophy has all the inadequacy we know and need not dwell on. But it is a picturesque life and one of deep-rooted instincts and convictions, and all these Tennyson has woven into the richly coloured web of his work—which is as it were a Bayeux tapestry of the last phase of English life. For the groundwork we have a minute and truthful limning of English scenery, for the lower scenes the still, traditional life of the English village, of Squire and Parson and Labourer, and for its outer border a vaguer picture of an ideal nobility and king.

How close is Tennyson's painting of nature need not be dwelt on, for it has become a common-place: but we should never fail to note that it is not drawn for its own sake or simply—as with Keats—to delight the poet's own heart, but as a setting for the life he is depicting. It is the English village,

The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The pea-cock, yew-tree and lonely Hall.

To the heart of Enoch Arden a tropical isle is “beauteous hateful.” He has given us the Squire's Hall with its “broad lawns” and the English meadows “dewy fresh, broused by deep-uddered kine.”

All this, with a detail, we would delight to dwell on, is only the setting for the life of English villages. Unfortunately, to give a picture of that life, except in its externals and occasional, simple, often-recurring phases of feeling, he had not the dramatic genius. Where has he portrayed the life of English villagers with the veracity and humour and insight that Scott has shown in his pictures of Scottish peasant life? Can Tennyson's ideal king be compared for vital and dramatic force with Thackeray's ideal gentleman, Harry Esmond? But we need not quarrel with what we have not got,

but delight in what we have. The external picture of this life he has given us is perfect. We can group together individual examples of the different types, and always we can at least see the outer man. Among the squires we have "Sir Aylmer Aylmer, that almighty man," Sir Walter Vivian, "a great broad-shouldered genial Englishman,"—and similarly vivid types of parsons and farmers. English maidens are scattered through his works. The same want of dramatic ability and the want also of epic movement and force deprived us of a clear full presentation of all that was ideally great in his well-bred English character. Arthur and his knights are shadows, and their wars and jousts and lovmakings are a series of "Tableaux Vivants." Compared with Scott's

Though charging knights like whirlwinds go
And bill-men ply the ghastly blow ;

or the rush of Byron's "Siege of Corinth,"—what a waxwork charge is this—

They couched their spears and pricked their steeds and thus
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea
Green-glimmering toward the summit bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark and overbears the bark.

And yet how picturesque it is. This is Tennyson's undying claim to immortality, his power as a word-painter and his appeal through it to the associations and profoundest feelings of the English heart. The last peaceful phase of feudalism has passed before our eyes in a haze of colour—as some dying fish pass in their last moments through every splendour of hue.

Therefore it is well that he should be in Westminster Abbey, beneath its arches and stained windows where the organ peals. There we could not have laid Keats—he would not have felt the daisies growing over him. No cold stone abbey would have been a fit resting

place for Shelley's passion-fretted "tenement of clay." The sea and the fire reclaimed his spirit akin as it was to the inorganic, elemental forces of nature. Byron should have rested at Missolonghi, where

He shook the yoke of inauspicious stars
From his world-wearied flesh.

For Wordsworth, the dales and grassy hills of Cumberland; for Scott, the Tweed and the Eildon Hills; but for Tennyson, the Abbey.

And with him let the laureateship die. He is the last singer of settled institutions and fixed national ideals. Why should we keep the trappings of feudalism for poets who can only preserve its lackeyism. When the present storm and darkness is over-past and a life of institutions and faiths is possible again, we shall find a fitting laureate, or all poets will be laureates.

HOC SECURIOR.



THE BLACK BROUGHAM.

A PLAY WITHOUT WORDS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FELIX DARFORD.

CYRIL BURGE (*in love with CORINNA DARFORD*).

REGINALD BECKET (*in love with CORINNA DARFORD ;
disguised as a Coachman*).

CORINNA DARFORD.

ACT I.—THE CRIME.

A STREET in Mayfair. A dense yellow fog completely fills the stage and it is at first impossible to distinguish more than the vague outlines of a horse and brougham, drawn up in front of a grey house. Little by little however the mist lifts and REGINALD BECKET is discovered on the box of the carriage. Next, a faint light is thrown on the faces of FELIX and CORINNA DARFORD, who are seated inside, conversing earnestly in inaudible tones. Behind, on the bar, crouches CYRIL BURGE muffled in a black opera-cloak. He holds a gag and a cord in his right hand.

Suddenly, CORINNA DARFORD opens the brougham-door farthest from the footlights, runs up the steps of the house and lets herself in with a latch-key.

CYRIL BURGE gets up from the bar, inserts both hands through the back-window of the carriage—a wider one than usual and having no glass—and appears to be throttling someone within. A stifled groan is heard. The light is now concentrated on REGINALD BECKET who rises from his seat, startled by the sound, and kneeling down peers intently into the carriage through the window. He is on the point of getting down from the box, but after listening a moment seems reassured and keeps his seat. In the meantime CYRIL BURGE moves stealthily round, unperceived by REGINALD BECKET, to the door of the brougham nearest to the stage, steps in, draws the blinds and is heard arranging something within.

A policeman passes and throws the light of his lantern on the carriage. He resumes his beat. CORINNA

DARFORD now opens the door of the grey house which she closes quietly behind her and totters slowly down the steps white and shivering—a small parcel in her hand. She gets into the brougham, gives one stifled scream, leans out of the window and waves her hand in the direction of the wings.

The brougham is driven slowly off by REGINALD BECKET as the curtain falls.

ACT II.—A CONDEMNED CELL.

REGINALD BECKET sits alone at a table looking at a small miniature of CORINNA DARFORD. He appears deeply moved, and kisses the picture passionately several times. A thought full of agony strikes him, and he rises to look at the clock on the other side of the stage. As he walks slowly towards it his face grows stern: shame and self-sacrifice seem to be fighting for the mastery. He gropes wildly for his handkerchief to wipe the sweat from his brow, but fails to find it.

As he goes back to his seat, after glancing at the clock, his eye falls on a letter lying on the carpet. It is open—addressed to CORINNA DARFORD. He kisses it sadly, and is about to put it by without reading it when he appears to *recognize the handwriting*. He turns the envelope over and over several times in his fingers and at last draws out the folded sheet and reads it. As he does so an awful change passes over his face. Despair and hate are written there. At the last line a strong light is thrown upon the letter from the wings—"I will be *there*, Corinna,—Cyril Burge," are the words.

REGINALD BECKET tears the miniature from his breast, spits on it and crushes it to a shapeless mass under his heel.

At this moment a hesitating knock is heard, and CORINNA enters

The clock slowly strikes and continues striking as the curtain falls. (*Curtain.*)

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