

The Spirit Lamp.



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The Spirit Lamp.

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THE NEW REMORSE.

THE sin was mine ; I did not understand.
So now is music prisoned in her cave,
Save where some ebbing desultory wave
Frets with its restless whirls this meagre strand.
And in the withered hollow of this land
Hath Summer dug herself so deep a grave,
That hardly can the leaden willow crave
One silver blossom from keen Winter's hand.
But who is this who cometh by the shore ?
(Nay, love, look up and wonder !) Who is this
Who cometh in dyed garments from the South ?
It is thy new-found Lord, and he shall kiss
The yet unravished roses of thy mouth,
And I shall weep and worship, as before.

OSCAR WILDE.

PEET GYNT.

MR. RUDYARD KIPLING, in one of the less vigorous of his ballads, describes the unhappy condition after death, of a man essentially modern and mediocre. Heaven is too good for him; and the Devil can discover no deed of his, sufficiently scarlet in complexion, to merit hell. He is neither hot nor cold: a stale and unprofitable servant.

Peet Gynt is cousin-german to Tomlinson. In his great poem, "Brand," Herrick Ibsen rebuked the half-heartedness and lack of spirit which he discerned among his countrymen, by creating a figure filled with great and impossible aims; and taller in stature, mental and moral, than the pygmies who surround him. Brand, indeed, pursues to the end the remorseless logic of his motto "All or nothing;" and dashed himself to death against the unyielding rocks of reality: but it is otherwise with Peet Gynt. For the latter is himself the prince of the pygmies; the actual representative of the spirit of compromise; the incarnation of the Scandinavian peoples. And yet he is no mere embodied vice or virtue,—a figment of and apology for a character—as is so often found in the old morality-plays; but a very real being; living, breathing, and, above all, idealising. It is this inveterate habit of idealising, of refusing to look the facts of life in the face, which Ibsen is so fond of satirising, and which is so characteristic of the genuine Teutonic spirit, pure and undefiled. Nor is this the poet's only intention with regard to the inner meaning of the character: Peet is also, in a secondary sense, the dream-ridden Norwegian of a particular epoch. That great movement, the romantic renaissance—which the new spirit of the present century gave birth to amid the ruins of the effete classicism of its predecessors, of whose prophets, to mention two out of many, were Victor Hugo and Sir Walter Scott—has in the view of Ibsen played its part, and has in its turn gone the way of all men and things, becoming a stumblingblock to the present time, a darkened mirror, a perverter of the

truth. So, as Cervantes tenderly smiled away the attenuated shadow of the age of chivalry, Ibsen also laughs at his people and his age; because, though by no means blind, yet they will not see.

Peet is as much an egoist as Sir Willoughby Patterne, without the pathetic grandeur of the Englishman: and yet both have their Laetitia Dales. Solvig waits for Peet patiently through years of loneliness; she would seem, in the poet's view, to rescue his halting soul from the remorseless button-moulder, who wishes to mould him anew into something more profitable; for it is the woman who has the last word in the drama: and it is a word almost maternal in the sense of protection it promises. Ibsen, indeed, seems generally to look to woman for the regeneration of the world. Eve and the serpent are still at war for the possession of man.

Peet cannot get out of his habit of idealising: he reads himself into every faëry tale. He is persuaded that he himself was the hunter of the fable, Gudbrand Glesnë, who was borne over the precipitous Gjende-edge between the horns of a wounded buck; he romances in the death-chamber of his mother (this scene is in direct antithesis to the death-scene in *Brand*,) where he raves of the castle "east of the sun and west of the moon," not unknown to readers of "*The Earthly Paradise*;" he poses as a prophet in Morocco; and he finally manages to outwit Satan himself, without realising why he does so. All through the play Peet is the victim of the "mot" he has learned among the trolls—"To thyself be enough:" he cannot or will not learn the true key of life "Be thyself," by which the poet would seem to mean "Find thy true place in the universe and remain there." And this, perhaps, includes the well-known dictum of Socrates.

Besides the main contention, there are some few allusions scattered throughout the play to politics and other matters of ephemeral interest. Two instances only need be mentioned: they both occur in the scene in the madhouse at Cairo. The fellah with the royal

mummy on his back is a cut at the Swedes, who are extremely proud of their great king Charles XII., and who is represented by the mummy; while the episode of Hahn deploring the extinction of the language of the ourang-outangs is a sly laugh at the Norwegian purists and their "Wardour-street" Scandinavian.

It is curious to remember that this essentially northern saga was written beneath the Italian sky of Ischia and Sorrento.

A. R. BAYLEY.

Pembroke.

THE MAN IN THE NEXT ROOM.

THE man in the next room is a mystery to me. He is a big man, and he has a speaking nose; I say a speaking nose because I fail to see why a nose should not speak every bit as much as an eye. Let speaking nose therefore stand. Of course I don't want to know *why* he is a mystery to me. I am glad, very glad, that he is a mystery to me.

For a big man is no mystery but a mastery, and this is why he is quite repulsive. He seems to have a great many friends, judging at least from the noise they make in his rooms. They seem literally *all boot*. (By the way, why does the man with a great many friends always possess *the same friends*? If one says of a man, "Oh! he has a great many friends," the friends turn out to be the same always). But this man seems to have a great many *different* friends. He seems to know everybody, I mean all the people I don't know. He never seems to be particularly at home, but his friends always are. His rooms are a *lounge*, and I am slightly jealous of him. He is a very nice man, and I have called upon him, but the fact still rankles: *His rooms are a lounge!*

Now I like to make my friends comfortable, but my rooms are *not* a lounge. I give quiet little breakfasts and quiet little lunches, and quiet little teas, and quiet

little dinners, and quiet little suppers, but my friends never seem to drop in at any other times. Of course they *might* drop in, and I ask them to drop in, but as a fact they *don't* drop in.

I expect I am obsolete. When my friends come they don't seem happy, they don't seem at home. They look at my curios and my tiger-skins and my ingenious reading traps, but they don't stay unless I ask them to, and one doesn't always like to do this. Then some of my friends object to my other friends.

Yes: that is a point I am very very proud about, I don't move in any set. *I am a set.* I like to be above cliques and parties and sets, so I know everybody and anybody. But somehow the everybodies and the anybodies don't hit it off and then they blame me. The everybody comes up sometimes for instance and says to me, "Why, know Jones? He is a Philistine." Now Jones *is* a Philistine, but then, as I say to somebody, "I am above sets." And then Jones comes up and says "Why, know Brown? He's one of those beastly high-art chaps." Then I say to Jones, "Why of course Jones, but then I am above sets; I like to know everybody." And afterwards Jones and Brown hate each other worse than before. But what after all has this to do with the man in the next room? I had forgotten him.

And yet he is a very very estimable person, and he wears brown boots. Always? I wonder if his people wear brown boots? Perhaps brown-boots-wearing is hereditary with my next-door neighbour; perhaps it is not. At any rate he wears them. He always has flowers, too, in his rooms, nice flowers, such as you give two shillings a dozen for. If taste is purely a question of bad taste, perhaps my next-door neighbour—called, by the way, Arty—has taste. I *think* he has taste. I tried him the other day, and he seems to have read all the right people and none of the wrong people. I asked him one day if he read Rossetti. "Rossetti? of course, I always take Rossetti to bed with me."

Then I asked him if he had read Swinburne, and he said all his people were so fond of Swinburne that he knew him by heart. Then I asked him if he dearly loved the minor French poets, and he said he dearly loved them and always read them at mealtimes. At last I began to think he was chaffing me, but he soon began to quote all the minor French poets and then I knew he was not. "Did he admire Burne-Jones?" Then he showed me the great big large Burne-Jones picture book, and asked me if I had seen it. I was obliged to say I couldn't afford it but should dearly like a copy. The next morning he sent round one with his compliments, and a verse from a French poet I had never even heard of. He knows everything about all literature, and he seems to write for really good magazines. He showed me some verses of his in *The Century*, and told me that they were actually paid for. I was surprised. But he is a good all round man as well, and has lots of pots about his room. He doesn't usually have them about, he says, "because they are so ugly, but one's friends like one to win things so one wins them," and "that," he continues, "is one's reason for winning them."

Yes.

That of course is one's reason for winning them. Then he writes all kinds of Arnolds, and Lothians, and Newdigates, and things, and *sometimes gets one*. Then he buys one copy for his mother and nobody knows anything about it except the *Oxford Magazine*. And then

But my *friend* in the next room wants me to join him in a quiet rubber, and he plays a *perfect* rubber. So I shall not say anything more about *my friend*, the man in the next room.

Z. Z. Z.

SIR THOMAS JONES.

A BALLAD OF MAGDALEN.

THE moon shines cold on cloister old
And silent is the night ;
It is the hour when Dons have power,
And Sir Thomas sits in his lofty bower
And round him many a wight,
Tried and true, a trusty crew,
And all of them longing for something to do.

The Dean sits in St. Swithun's tower
Drinking the whiskey neat,
And he pillows his hair in a goodly chair
With a "Liddell & Scott" for his feet.

Then up and spake Sir Thomas Jones,
An undergraduate he,
"Now who will dare to leave his chair
And raise the Dean with me?"

Then up and spake a youngern lad,
Sat by Sir Thomas's knee,
"Oh I will dare to leave my chair
And raise the Dean with thee."

And straight uprose the other wights,
In number half a score,
And they took an oath that, by their troth,
They were ready for Don or Devil, or both,
As they'd often been before.

* * * *

The first yell that the bold Dean heard
He stirred upon his seat ;
The neist yell that the bold Dean heard
He leapt unto his feet.

The third yell that the bold Dean heard
He opened wide the door ;
And the fourth yell that the bold Dean heard
He bounded over the floor.

And faster still and faster
Adown the stair he fled,
And through the quad and cloister
He ran, nor turned his head.

Like one who in the silent streets
Impales a public lamp,
And having once done that, retreats
And wields no more his "gamp,"
Because he knows a Proctor's man
Doth close behind him tramp.

So runs the scout at lunch time
Across the slippery grass,
While all who list may plainly hear
The splashing of the college beer,
The rattling forks and other gear,
The jingling of the glass.

So ran the Dean and stayed not
Till he came where he might see,
By the fitful gleam of a bonfire's light,
That lawless company.

And there was Brown the fresher,
Who twice had down been sent,
And Robinson of Winchester
Who "ragged" the President.

And Tomkinson the oarsman
Who steered into a rock,
And Smithson of the catapult
Who slew the great peacock ;*
The great peacock he slew by stealth.
That praised (in song) its plumèd wealth,
And shattered nerves and ruined health
Along the street Long-wall.

* About the beginning of this yeare, ye donnes of Saint Mary's College, commonly called New College, did gette for their pleasaunce and disporte a great foule called a Pea-cocke. Now this same accursèd beast by its grievous cries and wailings mightily cast down and dismayed his Majestie's liege and peaceful subjects of Oxenforde which chanced to dwell hard by it, which thinge became at the last a great cause of strife, for ye donnes of Saint Mary's College being of a high stomach would not brook that it should be slaine, declaring that themselves found no discordance in its notes and by all means defending and encouraging the monstrous foule. But at the last cometh one by night with a cunningly devised engine for casting stones, and slayeth it, which indeed though it be a lawless deed is yet, I hold, excusable insomuch that so damnable and grievous a beast ought not to live. Then ye donnes of Saint Mary's College were minded to get them another of these birds but there was like to be a riot among the people when they heard it, which when they saw they were afraid and made no more of their words. [A.D., *From ye Chronicles of Oxenforde.*]

And there was bold Sir Thomas,
 And many a one beside,
 Who ere this night, in wordy fight,
 Had tamed the donnish pride.

But suddenly when in their ranks
 The doughty Dean they see,
 All start, like one who, as a courter,
 Visits, by stealth, some tradesman's daughter
 And finds installed the college porter
 Revelling in cakes and tea.

For while Sir Tom was making
 The squibs and rockets crack
 The Dean came up behind, and laid
 A hand upon his back.

And the doughty Dean he triumphed,
 For he got them all save one,
 And Robinson the younger
 Alone found legs to run.

* * * *

They fined Sir Thomas Jones
 And gated him at eight,
 And all the other trusty wights
 Endured the same hard fate.

And now in Senior Common Room,
 When the oldest wine is brought,
 When the Dean is drinking sherry
 And the Bursar's swigging port,

When the tallest yarns are spun out,
 And the broadest tales will pass,
 And "facetiores litterae"
 Are plentiful as grass

And when, in short, they're having
 A really festive night,
 When the oldest dons are *cheerful*,
 And the younger dons are tight;

The Dean still tells the story,
 In soul-inspiring tones,
 Of how alone he faced a score
 Or twenty-five, or even more,
 And caught Sir Thomas Jones.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

THE PURGATORY.

OXFORD, who loves to dream of Dante among her pilgrims, has rarely sent forth a more welcome work of a more gracious scholarship than this version of the Purgatory, by Mr. Shadwell, Fellow of Oriel: a version introduced by Mr. Pater, Fellow of Brasenose. All that is commonly said of Oxford's graces, or of Oxford's elegancies, whether in praise or blame, comes to mind upon the reading of this book; but the blame which lies with a certain languid delicacy and nerveless ease, sometimes attributed to Oxford writing, is impossible here. Mr. Shadwell has a preface of eight pages, Mr. Pater's introduction fills fifteen; yet for delightful precision of hard, logical criticism, reasoned, measured, definite, these two pieces of writing are masterpieces. Mr. Shadwell gives four reasons for his choice of Marvell's stanza in his version, Mr. Pater gives four reasons for the freshness and vitality of our modern attraction towards Dante; and I know not where to find more fortunate examples of close, convincing literary argument, put out with an admirable charm and beauty in spirit and in form. To convey pleasure to the whole mind, its sense of beauty and its care for truth, in this charmed way, is the writer's perfection, the crown of his scholarship and of his art. And the good manners of it! the urbanity, the courtliness, the simple mastery! Here is no rugged, ragged clumsiness of learning; no pretty petty foppishness of taste; here are just the serenity and the severity of good writing. These times of the pedant and the amateur have not too much of this fine quality, golden in its wise discretion.

Most lovers of Dante love but to meet him "in the milder shades of Purgatory," where

"the grieved and obscure waters slope
Into a darkness quieted by hope,"

as Milton and as Browning have it. May it be in part because they feel themselves more at home with

penitence and penance than with perdition and beatitude? And the austerity of Dante is never so tender as in the Purgatory; the human pity of the man goes out to the thought of it. Mr. Shadwell, then, has well done to translate the second Cantica; would that he had translated the whole of it! True, his version ends at a clear point; but the few remaining cantos, the vision of Matilda among the flowers, the vision of Beatrice, are in Dante's greatest manner. *Ben son, ben son Beatrice!* Yet it were a perverse ingratitude to our benefactor to reproach him for not giving us more than, in his deliberate judgment, he has thought good to give. His choice of Marvell's stanza is an inspiration of genius: as no other metrical scheme does it render the majesty of Dante's music, its clean, clear movement: that singular gravity which makes simplicity solemn, whilst leaving it natural and free. What Lamb, with his wonted insight, said of Wither's favourite measure may be said of Marvell's mighty line: "What longer measure can go beyond the majesty of this?" With an happy effect of compensation, the austere brevity of Marvell's rhythm, so terse and strong, becomes equivalent in the ear to Dante's elaborate linked rimes; Marvell's music carries us on with a like prolongation of repeated harmonies. The unique beauty of sound in the two shorter lines, with their stately closing syllables, does unquestionably reproduce the characteristic pauses and closes of Dante's more intricate cadence. All this, the rhythmical fashion of verse, Mr. Shadwell has meditated finely, producing a version of Dante, quite simple, quite dignified, and quite unforced. Other versions have their own great merits; but all of them have made Dante seem odd, quaint, a not perfectly comfortable poet, not wholly his own master: too much of a Lucretius, too little of a Virgil. One matter of detail may be brought before Mr. Shadwell here. He writes that, next to the triple rime, Dante's metrical characteristic is his use of the stanza: and that the *terza rima* has never been used by any English poet for original

composition. Certainly Byron, Shelley, Mrs. Browning, Mr. William Morris, neglect Dante's rule, but I may quote these lines from that strangely neglected poem, Canon Nixon's *Mano* :

“This Poem, in the Italian's measure made,
Commended be, if it some deal observe
The law which on his verse the master laid,
From which the most do in our language swerve,
Who have put forth the triple rime to essay,
(Many of greater name than I deserve),
That round the stanza still the structure play,
At end arrested somewhat : this his law,
Who gave such wondrous music to his lay.”

But it is time to give some examples of Mr. Shadwell's art. Mr. Pater observes that the translator is “perhaps not least successful in the speculative or philosophic passages.” Mr. Shadwell has indeed, for instance, excellently rendered the doctrine of Aquinas, upon the lips of Statius, from the words of Dante, into the metre of Marvell; but such passages are not too apt for quotation. Here is a simpler passage :

“As from the pen forth issuing creep
One, two, and three, the timid sheep;
With eyes and muzzle pressed
To earthward stand the rest;
As doth the first, the others do;
And if one pauseth, they pause too,
Huddling, they know not why,
In mute simplicity.
So coming forth did I behold
The leaders of that blessed fold,
Their movements clothed with grace,
With modesty their face.”

Here is the meeting with Sordello the Mantuan :

“We came. O spirit, Lombard born,
What pride was there, what love of scorn!
In movement of thine eye
What stately gravity!
Never a word he deigns to say;
But let us pass upon our way,
Watching us in such guise
As lion couched that lies.”

Note how Mr. Shadwell has made each word of the Italian yield its full significance; how dexterous the phrase "stately gravity" for *onesta e tarda*. Again:

"I saw the Angel there, who came
The peace long wept for to proclaim,
And to unclothe the door
Of heaven denied before."

Nothing can perfectly render the *molt'anni lagrimata pace*, that exquisitely Dantesque phrase; yet the English is pure and fine in the extreme.

"O Saul, how there, thy sword thrust through thee,
Upon Gilboa's hills I knew thee,
Where never shall again
Fall dew nor any rain"!
"Euripides and Antiphon
Are with us there, and Agathon,
Simonides, and more
Whose brows the laurel wore."

When the translator is compelled to a greater concision than usual, he shows a rare skill in distilling the whole essence of Dante's words into one brief line; thus, in a famous place:

"The hour was come that on the sea
Softens the heart with memory,"

where, "with memory" represents the *che volge il disio*. Let us take one more passage, the stoning of Stephen, which Mr. Shadwell transmutes into the very semblance of a superb original lyric.

"And then I saw an angry crowd
Gather about a youth, that loud
Were crying 'Slay him, slay,'
And stoned him as he lay.
I saw him overborne by death,
That bowed him to the earth beneath:
Only he made his eyes
Gates to behold the skies,
To his high Lord his prayer outpouring,
Forgiveness for his foes imploring:
Even in that pass his face
For pity making place."

Ma degli occhi facea sempre al Ciel porte.

These examples will serve, these out of many, to illustrate the choice art of this new translator. He has confronted a doubly difficult adventure: for, apart from the rendering of Dante, it is to be remembered that there was further the task of rendering him into a metrical form, almost consecrated and unique, as the mould of a masterpiece. But Mr. Shadwell has caught the happy spirit of Marvell's Ode: which contains lines curiously like Dante's various works. When scholastic terms and moral thoughts are something hard in Dante, to disentangle and to set in order, he writes much in the manner of Marvell's

"For 'tis all one to courage high
The emulous or enemy;
And with such, to enclose
Is more than to oppose."

And these lines might be a version of some well wrought simile in Dante:

"So when the falcon high
Falls heavy from the sky,
She, having killed, no more does search,
But on the next green bough to perch,
Where, when he first does lure,
The falconer has her sure."

Curiously considering it, this is a very great thing that Mr. Shadwell has done: this version of Dante in the stanza of Marvell: a double triumph that he has deserved. In his beautiful version, those who have no Italian are enabled, as Milton wrote, *ad illum Dantem libenter et cupide commessatum ire*. And with what spiritual profit! For while Mr. Swinburne may waste his words in reviling "the dead and malodorous level of mediaeval faith," less acrid spirits are beginning now to understand something of that vast structure in thought and faith, which Dante lit up with his fires of Hell, his mild lights of Purgatory, and his Paradise of the *Luce eterna*, the *candida Rosa*. It is barely possible to read Dante, from end to end, without feeling, what Owen Feltham has expressed, in words for once inspired, "Whatsoever is rare, and passionate, carries the soul

to the thought of Eternity. And, by contemplation, gives it some glimpses of more absolute perfection, than here 'tis capable of. When I see the royalty of a state-show, at some unwonted solemnity, my thoughts present me something, more royal than this. When I see the most enchanting beauties, that Earth can show me; I yet think, there is something far more glorious: methinks I see a kind of higher perfection, peeping through the frailty of a face. When I hear the ravishing strains of a sweet-tuned voice, married to the warbles of the artful instrument, I apprehend by this a higher diapason: and do almost believe I hear a little Deity whispering, through the pory substance of the tongue. But this I can but grope after. I can neither find, nor say, what it is." It was a prerogative of the genius in Dante, that he could find it, and could say what it was: interpreting the worlds with a lucid faith, a bold strength, which are not now grown childish, nor yet coarse. Nay, there is more matter of possible offence in the *Dream of Gerontius* than in the *Divine Comedy*. In especial, the *Purgatory*, as Mr. Pater delicately pleads, with its tender wistfulness of love and hope, should find fit audience now, and now not few. *Una lagrimetta*, thought Dante, could do so much, at the last of all, for the worst of men! Finally: whether or no we say, with Baudelaire,

Les morts, les pauvres morts, out de grandes donleurs,
none will refuse to say, or perhaps to sigh, with M. Verlaine:

Les morts sont morts, douce leur soit l'éternité!

LIONEL JOHNSON.



AMOR MYSTICUS.

VERSION IN SONNET FORM. BY MARIANUS.

(1) *From Greek Anthology.*

“**W**HERE is thy bow, thy backward-bending bow?
 Where are the reeds thou planted in the heart?
 Where are thy wings? thy torch? thy grievous
 dart?

Three crowns thou bearest in thine hands, I trow,
 And one upon thine head! Ah! wherefore so?”
 “The Love men buy and sell in open mart
 Ne’er gave me birth; I am not as thou art,
 A child of wild delights that come and go.

Sprung not of earth, I kindle evermore
 Pure Learning’s torch in minds unstained and fair,
 And by my grace the soul to heaven is led;
 Four crowns I twine, as there be virtues four;
 Three in my hands for virtues three I bear,
 But with the Crown of Wisdom crown my head.

(2) *From Meleager (Anthology), Honey of Love.*

Parched and athirst one summer day
 I chanced to kiss my dainty love,
 And straight my thirst was done away,
 Whereon I cried, Dost drink, O Jove,
 Thy Ganymede’s nectarean kiss?
 Grants he to thee this cup of bliss?
 For when I kissed my fair one’s lip,
 And won from him the promised toll,
 Ah! then I sipped or seemed to sip
 The fragrant honey of his soul!

(3) *Callimachus (Anthology), Set a Thief to catch a Thief.*

Our friend was wounded, all the truth we knew,
 Didst mark how bitter was the sigh he drew?
 At the third glass the roses of his wreath
 Their petals shed, and strewed the ground beneath.
 Love’s fire he feels and feels it to his grief,
 Good cause have I, ye Gods! for my belief;
 A thief myself, I can detect a thief!

(4) *Meleager. A Vision of Beauty (adapted slightly).*

I saw Alexis walking thro' the dell
At noontide hour when Summer 'gan to fell
 The bearded grain ;
And two-fold rays consumed me ; rays of Love
From his dear eyes, and rays from Sol above.
 But these again
Were by the Night allayed ; those other beams
By Beauty's phantom shining in my dreams
 Were kindled higher ;
And sleep, that rests the careworn, brought me care ;
Fashioning in my soul an image fair,
 A living fire !

P. L. O.

CAPRICE (Par P.L.O.).

LA CIGARETTE.

CIGARETTE à douce odeur,
Les tourbillons de ta vapeur
Ressemblant à la vie humaine,
Qui n'est que vaporeuse et vaine.

Comme dans l'air la vapeur fuit,
L'âme qui meurt s'évanouit
Dieu s'écrie ! Ah, si l'on regrette
Roulons une autre cigarette !



δί' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου.—*Aristotle.*

THE idea of going back, as a master, to the school at which I had spent three years as a boy, tickled my fancy enormously. Lying back in the corner of my first-class compartment—for a master has more dignity to preserve than an undergraduate, although his purse be no longer—I mused upon the probabilities of the coming month. Gradually that odd nervousness which always accompanies a journey to school came upon me again; I had thought it was dead for ever. Then I clung to my younger brother's last words of encouragement: "At all events you can't be worse than some of the masters we had." One of them seemed to rise before me as I had seen him stand, pathetically, when after every morning school his whole class stood up upon the desks and hissed at him. I shuddered. Oxford and its Schools had given me belief in my luck; but Oxford life had left me hopeless of ever regaining my powers of application. My old class-master had just met me on the London platform and had not known me, but it did not want that to tell me I had changed in ten years.

Arrived at length. I hurried to the room assigned me in the masters' lodgings. A former occupier had passed the first weeks of melancholia in painting the doors, fireplace, and mantelpiece a bright orange colour! I had never understood before how terrible the craving can be for some bright spot in one's life. On the table lay a letter in my father's hand-writing; it contained a few of those pithy sentences in which it has been his habit, at the end of every holidays and of every vacation, to sum up his impressions of my character, and point the moral of my faults. "I am curious to see," it ran, "whether this new life will increase your natural irritability." And, "Now that your life will be a sedentary one, you will find that you cannot eat half the quantity of food that you get through at home." Again, "If your work is much with books during the day, you had better take care of your eyes. If you read newspapers, etc., in your spare time, you will soon lose what little sight you have." It is from such letters that I have learned to smile grimly as men do in books.

I went out, feeling chilled. Five minutes' walk uphill—which, I realised, would have to be done every morning before breakfast—brought me to the school. I passed its back-doors with a sigh almost of relief, and, flinging open the iron front gate, marched up the stone-flagged path with an air intended to combine defiance with good humour. But my tug at the bell was too violent for anything but nervousness, and the butler's smile showed it. He ushered me—I felt the word like a blow—into the large and lofty drawing-room, in which the headmaster's daughters were dispensing tea to an ever-changing group of parents and boys. Introduced as an old boy and new master, I tried to make myself useful by pressing a poor little brute to have some cake. At the second request he got up and burst into tears, and had to be led away hastily to a window by his mother. After that I tried to be amusing. In an armchair next to me sat a sturdy young ruffian with a devil-may-care expression. I said to him, "Well, we're both new boys together." "Oh," said he, "I've been to three boarding schools already"; and I subsided, reflecting sadly that the rascal had already got two capital stories to repeat in the schoolroom; the "blubbing" of the other boy, and my fatuous remark!

But there was tragedy in the air besides farce. Opposite to us sat a mother, trying to be brave; I only caught one word, "India," and the lump was in my throat, too.

A lull in the pressure of arrivals gave me an opportunity of asking my hostess whether most mothers cried on these occasions. "Oh, yes," she said, "More mothers than fathers; but when the fathers do weep, they weep so violently!" It had been long my wish to see the proverbial strong man weep, so I stayed a little longer, till the headmaster's study door opened, and a tall, business-like father appeared, sobbing. One glance was enough, and I escaped to the boys' part of the house.

Tea was just beginning in the large, bare dining-room; the deafening chatter of a hundred voices ceased as I entered, and if ever I felt a fool in my life, it

was when I was making my way to the master's table in the centre. And allow me to know something about feeling a fool; I remember when I was made straight from a fag into a prefect, and had to tell those astonished dignitaries that I had come to join their mess at breakfast!

The German master sprang to his feet; "What! Smith? *Smith*?? SMITH???" Well, I never! So you have come back! *You*! I would never have believed it! Come to join the galley! Well, I *am* glad to see you: but,—SMITH!!!" This was encouraging. I had not looked at it in that light!

There were others of the masters, whom I had worked under ten years before, and amid a fire of question and answer, exclamations and laughter, I attacked my meat tea: it was six o'clock.

Enough of that; but I shall never forget that when I asked one, whom I had known well, to pass the bread, he remarked: "Still got an appetite, Smith? You won't have that long!" Or again, how politely I addressed another: "I'm afraid you have got a very bad cold," only to be met by the reply, not meant, I know, to be chilling: "*You'll* have a good many colds before you've done with this!" Should I ever, should I *soon* be like that? They all had a tired look on their faces.

As I walked home that night, not very buoyantly, I heard rattling down the hill behind me, towards the station, the unmistakable wheels of a hansom. I turned instinctively, and in the instant's light, as it dashed by, saw the faces of a lady and a boy. I thought she seemed a little vexed and worried, but his face had something about it unearthly, startling. He was gazing straight before him with a far away look in his eyes; his heart was bursting with joy, with relief. I guessed what it was; his mother had brought him down on the chance of there being room for him at the last moment, but there was no vacancy, and for four months more he was safe,—at home.

I went on to my dreary room.

THE PELICAN.

**A SHORT NOTE UPON A NEW VOLUME
OF POEMS.**

SILHOUETTES

BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

ALTHOUGH the rare and exquisite books of M. Paul Verlaine have been much read and more talked of by all English people who lay any claim to culture, yet we know of no recent volume of verse which bears stamped upon it any trace of his influence, save the one Mr. Symons has just given us. If the slight volume of silhouettes had but little merit, yet it would claim attention for this one characteristic, namely that he is the first English poet to produce verse thoroughly steeped in the delicious languor and exotic ennui which are the very essence of the great French master's being.

Like Verlaine he is an impressionist, and strives to express his impressions in the simplest words possible—words simple indeed yet chosen carefully. If, as one great English critic said, it is the consummation of literary art to express one's ideas in the most suitable language, then Mr. Symons is a very great artist indeed and has no parallel amongst all our minor poets.

Take as example the first poem in the book "After Sunset;" the idea is slight, the words and metre simple, yet it is filled with a strange and subtle charm. It is as follows:

"The sea lies quieted beneath
The after-sunset flush,
That leaves upon the heaped grey clouds,
The grape's faint purple blush.
Pale, from a little space in heaven
Of delicate ivory,
The sickle moon and one gold star
Look down upon the sea."

This is pure impressionism; it is like a picture of Whistler's, or one of the wonderful atmospheric studies of William Stott of Oldham.

Being a disciple of Paul Verlaine and less directly of Rossetti, there is little nationality in Mr. Symonds, he is more French than English, and this may alienate him from careless readers. But if we miss in his verse any note of really English tone, yet we are also spared that vulgar bombast and cheap patriotism which disfigure the works of another minor poet—Mr. Blunt.

Mr. Symonds is *décadant* to the core, there is nothing in him of that *joie de vivre* which is so strong a feature in the English character. He writes as one bored with life; he is a pessimist and a cynic. Nearly every poem in the book is unhealthy; the atmosphere is that of the hot-house. Those of the poems which deal with nature are melancholy in the extreme, and those that deal with mankind show a morbid love of depicting sin in its most hectic colours. Mr. Symonds studies human nature upon the Boulevards and in the music halls, and the results of his studies are certain poems in the book which more closely resemble "Jenny" than anything which has been written since Rossetti died.

To those who see no charm in decay, and whose ideals of beauty are confined entirely within the limits of the healthy and the normal, it would be futile to recommend such a book. These are the orchids of the muse, and he who loves but wild-flowers may not approach them.

But the chosen few who love their Baudelaire as well as their Matthew Arnold: to whom the air of the hot-house laden with the overpowering perfume of exotics is welcome as the breezes that blow over sea-bound meadows, these will find in this slender book precious works of art which, bizarre though they be, nevertheless shew that the spirit of beauty still lives amongst us.

STANLEY ADDLESHAW.

FROM MIMNERMUS.

NO us like leaves which in the flower of spring
Grow nurtur'd by the sun's fast fostering rays,
E'en so for one brief cubit space of days,
Youth's flowers bring
Delight.

Then from above we feel not any breath
For good or ill: but close the black fates stand,
One holding cruel Age within her hand,
The other, Death.
Ah! slight

Too slight the fruits of youth's quick fading tree,
Which like a passing gleam of sunshine fly:
'Tis better when those days have passed to die
Than thus to be
Alive—

For then wild waves of trouble on us roll:
Our house is wasted of its substance, till
The aching void of poverty to fill,
With weary soul
We strive.

Others with eager longing for the birth
Of children vainly sigh: yet they too go,
They pass still longing to the shades below,
Under the earth.
Again,

Unsatisfied—Another strives to live,
Tho' sickness fills him with soul-killing care.
Nor wilt thou find one man to whom his share
Zeus does not give
Of pain.

ῥγγ.

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