

# The Spirit Lamp.

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# The Spirit Lamp.

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## AMORIS VINCULA.

**A**S a white dove, that in a cage of gold  
Is prisoned from the air, and yet more bound  
By love than bars, and will not wings unfold  
To fly away, though every gate be found  
Unlocked and open : so my heart was caught,  
And linked to thine with triple links of love.  
But soon, a dove grown wanton, false it sought  
To break its chain and, faithless quite, to rove  
Where thou would'st not, and with a painted bird  
Fluttered far off : but when a moon was past,  
Grown sick with longing for a voice unheard  
And lips unknissed, spread wings and home flew fast.  
And lo ! what seemed a sword to cleave its chain,  
Was but a link to rivet it again.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

**THE LAST DAYS OF THE UNIVERSITY.**

**T**HE last days of the University form the most romantic chapter of its long history. From the general overthrow of national institutions, which distinguished the first years of the great Reforming Parliament of 1898, the University of Oxford emerged safe. Marked out by her wealth, her learning, her reputation, and her antiquity as the natural prey of the Socialist leaders, she owed to the loyalty of her sons a fresh lease of life, in which, for a period, the fire of her spirit burned with extraordinary brightness, before finally its light was quenched. In that battle of Armageddon the sister University went down. The arrest of three persons of notorious character had brought it into sharp conflict with the Town of Cambridge: that year it happened that the Mayor was also member of Parliament—a man high in the councils of the democrats and embittered from boyhood towards the University. The son of a local plumber he had thrice been proclaimed the most certain choice for the University Cricket Eleven, and thrice had seen the season pass without receiving an invitation to play for his 'Varsity. When the question, what was to be done with the Universities, came before Parliament his vehement and tireless attack carried the day against the foundations of Saints and Sovereigns, and three votes made up the majority which decided that the first experiment of a University for the million should be tried on the banks of Cam. The debate had lasted two days, and the Oxford party left the House ten years older, but having done for their University what once her Colleges could not do for their king—saved her honour and her life together.

How much she spent in the contest will never be known, but it is said that thirty-seven private fortunes were drained to the last penny in her service, and more than one Radical member laboured for the rest of his days under the gravest suspicion of venality.

But Oxford was safe for a time. The Conservative rally throughout England had startled the most careful organizers in the opposite camp. Wherever books were read, wherever gentlemen played games, thence came money and enthusiasm and protests. And the feeling was so strong that the majority forebore extremes. Therefore, at the inevitable price of the loss of her Representatives in Parliament, Oxford retained her freedom and her revenues. Then her rescuers claimed their reward. There must be no more shilly-shallying about Reform, no more taint of sound commercial education; *Litteræ Humaniores* should again be a reality—God knows the public-school head-masters had little voice now! Harrow had become a Socialist centre, where Doctor Weldon lectured at the request of Mr. Tom Mann! And as for practical education in London, in Birmingham, in Manchester, Local Boards were supplying technical instruction and free breakfasts to all who asked.

So for a time Oxford was the home of everything cultivated, everything that gives pleasure after meat and drink and clothes. To Oxford crowded the men of Science and of Art; poets and philosophers jostled one another in her streets, just as in time of floods in tropical lands, strange and beautiful creatures of every kind find refuge together on any hillock that the waters make an island. While the long-deferred deluge of Reform was beating all other delightful things of the land into one level sea of muddy mediocrity, this City of Towers still stood like an Ark, and hoped for the rainbow.

As the last stronghold of Constitutionalism, Oxford became more truly than ever the Home of all Lost Causes. It is true that throughout towns and villages the Church was still fighting bravely on, but she used Oxford as her arsenal. And the Stage, elsewhere bewildered by daily regulations, and shackled by ubiquitous inspectors, blazed forth in the little theatre off the Cornmarket in such Opera, and Comedy, and



Tragedy as the century had never dreamed of. The death of the Poet Laureate of the day, in the Cathedral Church of Christ one Sunday evening, afforded a subject which at least one artist made immortal, and the Edition de Luxe which the Clarendon Press published of his last volume, is unique among the treasures of our Public Libraries for the splendour of its illustrations, the magnificence of its binding, and the exquisite beauty of its type,—every initial letter of which reveals the most curious fancy and incredible cunning of illumination,—no less than for the weird music of the last poetic voice of that England which was once called merrie.

In those days to proclaim oneself a Liberal was to court social ostracism; Radical was synonymous with Renegade. Yet there were two or three found, young men, born into the possession of vast wealth, which they were conscious they had done nothing to deserve, and therefore itched to make a proper use of. These with their followers occupied adjacent rooms in the High Street of the city, made a great point of keeping in touch with the Radical leaders in London, and always appeared in public wearing green hats and ties. But the University was in no humour for coquetting with the enemy; men felt that this was a time to close ranks and hold no parley. The whole party returned together one night after attending a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, without leave; they found the Proctors at the station, and next morning were sent down for good. With a general sigh of relief the University again plunged into the excitement of its new life, so strangely and intensely stimulated.

But these Halycon days could not endure. In one of its earliest sessions Parliament passed a bill that compelled every male person between the ages of sixteen and sixty to work for six hours a day. This measure cleared Oxford in twenty-four hours. It was the last morning of the Summer Races, when a telegram announcing the majority in favour of the bill

reached the Vice-Chancellor. That evening the crowds on the barges and banks surpassed all experience. Gaily dressed from roof to water's edge with garlands of flowers and leagues of banners, the barges heeled till they were in danger of overturning. The last race of the last "Eights" was rowed, and won and lost; and then, amid the most profound silence, the last Head of the River, boat and crew draped all in black, rowed slowly down and up between the attentive thousands on either hand,—for the last time. Next day there were none in Oxford, but grey-beards.

They held a meeting in the Sheldonian. The oldest Professor was for dynamite; he proposed to blow up every Church, every College, every University building in the city; "Remember the fate of Cambridge," said he; "rather than see Oxford defiled by the hands of these barbarians, turned to vile uses of a viler pro-letariat, let us go down together with our flag flying. 'The hour is come.'" He found support, but calmer counsels prevailed. At the suggestion of the Vice-Chancellor, the Heads of Houses offered to receive sexagenarians of good character who should be able to pass the ordinary matriculation examination. That night the quads. were alive once more; every College was full, to the topmost rooms of its tallest New Buildings; it was like an universal Gaude, on a Titanic scale. For weeks the excitement never flagged. The Six Hours Bill had emptied two-thirds of the Fellowships in Oxford; and lists of vacant Tutorships filled an extra sheet of the "Magazine." The air was thick with examinations; the competitors for the first group of scholarships included three Head Masters, a distinguished General, seventeen Cambridge Professors, and an Arctic explorer. Men said that the standard of excellence attained in compositions for the University Prizes was higher than ever; how should it not be so, when the old practice of public disputations was revived, and a man might listen to Froude and Gardiner wrangling upon the function of historians, or compare

his notes with Huxley's after the Bampton Lecture? But their midnight conversations were the glory of the new undergraduates. Reminiscences of School, stories of Proctors, gave way to the curious experiences of a lifetime, the most compromising secrets of the world of business, of politics, of diplomacy, the most incredible adventures in lands yet unnamed and only once discovered. Perhaps the change of tone was most marked in the Clubs and Common Rooms. Games were no longer the inevitable theme of all, from the lounge in the sofa-corner to the reading-man dropping in for a look at the telegrams; for, though at Chess and Golf and Billiards the University could laugh at the brightest reputations ever won in Light-blue silk, yet Cricket and Football were things of the past. Politics, the rescue of the Constitution, were in everybody's mouth,—discussed from every standpoint of principle and expediency, of ancient saws and modern instances, of philosophic theory and civilized or uncivilized practice. In the phrase of the time, to know Oxford was a Conservative Education.

Out of this chaos of individualism a natural English tendency evolved Order in the form of Party. All varieties of opinion crystallized into two schools representing Moderate doctrines and Extreme principles. The one side counted all who were content to bide their time; who held that since Oxford had been saved, the word crisis was no longer applicable, and who were openly confident of her capacity to influence the triumphant democracy for good. These men believed in the innate "common sense" of the British working-classes; for themselves they selected the word *sane*, as expressing their attitude of mind. On this subject their opponents used very strong language,—as, indeed, upon most subjects. They saw no good in temporizing; not only patriotism but honour itself demanded their unflinching resistance to every fresh step made by the government. Hitherto the educated classes had ever led the nation; should they now tacitly stand aside, and watch it



plunge blindly into one madness after another, posterity would have little pity for their fate. No feeling of wounded pride, far less any cowardly fear of the loss of what little had been rescued from the wreck, should prevent them from sacrificing leisure, wealth, if need be life itself in the service of their country. "Our deaths will at least give England time to think," they said. To this the Moderates replied that an hopeless opposition would only drive the enemy to more sweeping measures; it was madness to strengthen the hands of the extreme revolutionaries. "We are riding a runaway horse; let us keep our strength to guide it round the corners of the road." "You are approaching a precipice," was the answer; "and you will not use the curb."

Meanwhile the government troubled itself little about the emotions of the city of refuge, the one little backwater in the stream of Progress. Struggling with the problems of Financial Reform, of Labour-regulation, of Foreign Affairs, it was unconscious of an opposition which was practically inarticulate; for the last election had reduced the Reactionary members in Parliament to a single figure. At vast expense the Oxford die-hards launched a great newspaper, which contained twice the matter of the "Times" at the price of one penny. Its information was carefully selected from the best text-books on Political Economy, and Social Ethics; its correspondents penetrated the recesses of the kingdom, seeking instances of the failure, or the evil effects of Radical legislation,—and they collected thousands such, without influencing a hundred votes. What paid better was the story that mocked a new representative's manners, or commented caustically on his private morals. Borrowing a hint from "The Star" this new "Freeman" planned and carried out a most systematic programme of personal abuse of the working classes; on these lines its headings and bills alone secured it an enormous circulation.

At Oxford the decent people of the Moderate section

washed their hands of the rag, at every Common Room meeting. The editors responded with a separate University edition containing "College news" that made the quieter dons writhe in their beds. So because the venture deserved success, its chance came at last. By some heaven-sent good-fortune—in its manager's words—one of its agents lit upon a clue to the occasional disappearance of a noted Radical minister. Following it up with ferret-like persistency he discovered a series of facts which burst upon his employers as a special miracle, and upon England as a providential warning. The Nonconformist conscience answered nobly to the call; the Cabinet was forced to surrender one of its most capable members, and although the scandal did but delay the course of business for a few weeks in a session that knew no vacations, still the incident served to call attention to the undying hostility of the University. The jolt to Democracy's triumphant car had been too severe.

It happened that at this moment Parliament had before it one of a series of Bills for the Better Taxation of Land. No difficulty was found in attaching to the measure a clause providing for the inclusion of the property of the University of Oxford, which had before been exempt from new duties under the special conditions extorted in the first session. This spelt ruin to the Colleges, and the Extremists went about in bodily fear, so fierce a blaze of indignation burst forth from those good and harmless souls who had hoped to end their lives within those quiet courts and under the shadows of those stately towers. When the dissension was at its height there came the Chancellor of the University, still hailed leader of the Tory party, and honoured not least in Oxford by the faction which strove to be worthy of that master of "flouts and jeers." His authority quelled the tumult of aged animosity, but he brought no hope. Day after day he sat in council with the dignitaries of the University; until some of the milder party despaired of any result, and

retired to put into effect a last scheme of their own. A chosen deputation proceeded to London and sought an interview with the venerable Prime Minister of the Queen. He received them with infinite courtesy, which if anything could have done so, would have softened the humiliation of their position. The boon they asked was nothing short of this; that the name of that ancient Alma Mater, of which he had ever been so proud to call himself a son; in which he had heard, and had delivered so many lectures; for which he had been elected, and from which he had been dismissed, and yet had borne against her no resentment,—that the name of Oxford should not be blotted out utterly from the land. For her sake they besought him to ask a favour from Parliament; that one College, though it were but a little one, might be suffered to retain a scanty revenue, enough to secure for it the possibility of a corporate existence.

The old man was touched; he left them, and on that very day claimed from the House of Commons one exception from their iron principles,—for the sake of a sentiment. By what means he succeeded, they knew not, but returned to Oxford that night with joy unspeakable. But the others had taken their decision, and, rather than receive mercy from the foe they detested, had shaken off the dust from their feet, and sought in our mighty colony of southern seas an England that still could reverence the traditions born of a splendid history.

EDMUND PHIPPS.





**MIRANDUS.****A PLATONIC IDYLL.**

**T**HE Conductor of the Grand Orchestra, which plays daily on the pier at Llan . . . (the rest is neither here nor there) was taking his benefit. M. de Beaulieu—naturally the programme styled him Mons de Beaulieu—as usual in such cases was about to introduce to the public a choice little thing of his own, the overture to a new opera, which shall some day eclipse the Herodiade. A dress suit of serviceable black, a very baggy “dicky,” and well cleaned gloves adorned his person as he stepped forward with a marvellous bow to his desk in the Band’s midst. The minor officials of the Pier Company formed a compact little claue in the sixpenny seats, and their vigorous efforts startled the audience into a show of life. A few hundred lack-lustre eyes were turned on the platform; here and there tiny children wriggled under the complacent regard of British motherhood; a few knickerbockered young men from Cottonopolis lounged against the iron pillars in attitudes studiously statuesque; there were many young maidens in the Hall.

The great work began with a soft and solemn movement on muted strings. A striking effect was to be produced towards the end of it by an unexpected clash of the cymbals; the cymbalist visibly thrilled with expectation; his left hand held one of the cumbrous pieces of metal high in the air, while the other was supported against his breast. A little bald-headed man peered out from behind a colossal drum, and watched his fellow percussionist with jealous eyes. ’Tis not over easy to hold a cymbal in position for long, and at the critical moment his left hand swung out of the curve, and the virtuoso missed his stroke. Whereat the warden of the “gospel drum” thwacked his sheepskin mightily, the conductor looked round with rage, the score floated slowly down into the reserve seats and certain well-bred women tittered. Moreover, a pursy little German, who sat in the front row, turned to his

neighbour and ejaculated scornfully "A scradge pand!"

The thing jarred on me and I rose to depart. As I paused to light a cigarette at the top of the Hall-steps I became the spectator of an official rebuke. A thirteen-year-old boy, whose bright curls stuck out from underneath a weather-worn blue cap—he wore grey knickers and his stockings displayed "potatoes"—was standing there in front of a sour-looking rotundity, who was rating him for lack of business energy. It appeared that he had ceased to cry programmes once the music had begun, and for this sin of omission was to be fined sixpence. Partly because the cold glare of the electric light failed to outshine the defiance of his eyes, partly because the luxury of rebuking an official is dear to the British heart—wherefore politicians become Home Secretaries, if they can—I found a florin and put it in his hand as I passed downward. But as soon as I reached the last step there was a movement behind me, and that symbol of benevolence described a shimmering parabola over my head, and was lost in the black and sluggish water.

During the next few days I met him twice. Once I saw him tugging along a portly Gladstone bag so heavy that he had to lean right away from it, and holding his chin as high as it would go, and change hands every hundred yards or so. Remembering the aphorism that courtesy is the better part of charity—the learning of it had cost me two shillings—I merely nodded, but he was not disposed to forgive me as yet. Once again when the world went forth to pick up an appetite for the Sunday mid-day meal I received the "cut direct." Truth to tell no woman of the world could have done it so well; the firm round chin, childish inexorable lips, the cold fire of childish eyes, and the brilliant curls escaping from the tattered blue cap made me a picture-in-memory clear as a well-cut cameo. I turned round and looked after him perplexedly—to meet the child's eyes once more. Pride had died out his face, and I read there a pardon, which was almost a confession.

Next day an unwonted curiosity took me to the Southern end of the town, where was a stretch of muddy beach and a ramshackle jetty. Thereabouts was the original little fishing village, which had grown against its own good-will into "the favourite and healthy residential watering-place" of the cheap guide books. The fishermen had long since degenerated into longshoremen and those creatures of the basement, who draw water and hew wood for their lord and master the Cheap Tripper. Two seaworthy smacks lay under the sea-wall, and a number of wrecks—their bones cankered by the tides of an unearned prosperity—were an acceptable haunt for immature crabs. With his back against one of these ignoble derelicts stood my curly-haired friend (had he not confessed to be so much?) looking like a man with his mind made up. Two prentices of loafing were bobbing about in front of him seeking the opportunity to strike a decisive blow. The taller of the twain got in too close and had it in the eye, his companion-in-arms rushed in with head down and was picked up by a neat little upper-cut. In spite of the odds the issue seemed doubtful, until it became evident that a third combatant was to be reckoned with. A third had climbed into the skeleton boat, and stood there brandishing a broken oar. Before the solitary spectator could interfere the weapon fell, and the battle was over. The three stood irresolute, and then seeing me clamber down the sea-wall fled devious. A thread of crimson was woven into the flaxen hair, but two handfuls of salt water and my silk handkerchief restored the hero. He stood up erect, and so honoured me as to shake hands; I for my part refrained from smiling, and we parted with respect more or less mutual. In fact at our next meeting we conversed affably and by tacit consent the incident of the florin was forgotten. He was more useful than most acquaintance, would bring me my morning paper from the station, and he delighted in performing other free services after the manner of tame children. Of course I was not so ill-advised as to suggest payment.



One afternoon I suggested that we should take a walk, and my suggestion was favourably received. Two miles or less north of the town a great dome of rock rises sheer out of the sea a thousand feet. 'Tis the motive of all possible "bits" therabouts (to use the detestable phrase of the Artist, who chops up Nature to boil his pot) for many miles round. On clear open days it dominates the town, and in misty weather 'tis the ghost of a giant holding the sceptre of fascination over and above the sordid neatness of that favourite watering-place. And so we took our way northward.

For a mile we passed along crudded sand just out of reach of the gentle waves. The tide was at the turn. By and by we came upon shingle, and the shingle was followed by banks of pebbles gleaming-wet. "The low sun which makes the colour," shone across our pathway, and strewed it with gems, many-coloured, innumerable. Then appeared stones smooth and round as skulls, and fierce fragments of the living rock, among which were mirrors of clear water and nimble runnels departing seaward. At last we could go no further—for above us rose a great wall of granite thronged with gulls and "cormorants of the sea." We found a comfortable stone, and sat down.

Now I confess to mortality, and longed to cross-examine my companion as to his way of life. But he sat with his hands clasped on his knees looking out seaward, and I did not care to break his mood, but was content to watch the subtle changes of his face—getting thereby such a quiet pleasure as the musician knows when he reads some manuscript score of Mozart and the vision of a masterthought grows up out of silence. The child's eyes were crystal clear, and as often in the case of seafaring folk their colour changed or seemed to change with his thought—suggesting the stir of waters half-way towards the horizon or the limpid glow of the sky on a windy evening after rain. His eyes were as the Pool of Bethesda troubled by an angel—of Memory, his own or an heirloom.

Suddenly I was aware that I myself—or rather his conception of myself—had entered into his dream. Few grown up people can feel at their ease alone with a child, and there was that about this “thirteen” (as the school-board teacher would call such a creature) with his open face and proud eyes, which aroused and repressed curiosity. At last some fantastic folly reminded me that I had an unused paint-box and sketching-book in my lodgings. I asked him, if he would “run and get it” as I was anxious to sketch the sunset (amateurs rush in, etc.), and the readiness with which he ran off piqued me just a little. Accordingly I was left to spend an hour, as the prigs spend their lifetime, in the analysis of my motives. Firstly—I wished to justify the expenditure of certain monies. Secondly—I wished to impress my new friend with a show of versatility. Thirdly—I wanted to see if he would trudge three miles for my whim. Fourthly—a pest on the victim of introspection! I pulled out a newspaper and began to read. Why does the holiday Briton always carry a newspaper in his pocket? Why—the devil? Which latter question proved unanswerable, and I read as long as the light served.

Day was at an end, and the upper air was filled with the glories of an autumnal sunset. The sea had by now left bare a long tract of shining sand, in which the unearthly colours of the sky were reflected at my feet. Earth and sky were seen at one, and I stood between the Two Rainbows. At last the colours faded, and a faint glow of pink in the air and on the sands and against the grey granite behind me were all that was left of the untangled light of Day. Night fell—a starry silence. Overland the full moon rose. All at once I noticed that the child was standing at my side—empty-handed. The light was faint, and his eyes were too bright to be tearless. I laid my hand on his shoulder, and said—I forget what. He came closer at once, and laid a slender brown hand on my coat (of Scotch tweed, by the way), looked at me awhile, and then clasped me

round the neck. After a time his hands loosened, and he leaned against my shoulder breathing quietly and saying not a word.

E. B. OSBORN.

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**SUICIDE TRIOMPHANT.**

**J**E suis le Dieu de suicide,  
Mon corps est froid, mon cœur est vide.

Mon temple est un tombeau béant,  
Ma 'providence' est le néant.

Venez, venez, gens misérables !  
Les dieux établis sont des fables !

Je suis l'ami du réjété,  
L'ami de toute infirmité.

Je donne la 'mort immortelle',  
L'oblivion perpétuelle.

Venez ; le chemin est étroit,  
Venez, venez, c'est votre droit.

Je suis le Dieu de suicide  
Mon corps est froid, mon cœur est vide.

*(Chansonnettes "Mandites.")*

P. L. O.

**A LEGEND OF THE ATLANTIC.**

**O**N pinions white she sped  
From a City of Prisons fled,  
Where men are but guests of the dead.

By the Pillars Twain she passed.  
The clarions of the blast  
Called her into the lonely vast.

The urn of enchantress night  
Dropped dew of a faint starlight;  
The moon in her dome walked bright.

In the midnight, bells on the lee,  
And fire in the open sea  
Made darkness a mystery.


Till over the tomb of Spain  
Blossomed the dawn again—  
Purple and gold without stain.

As Leviathan's self might leap  
From his chamber of sunless sleep  
Sunward, the height of the deep.

A hand, gigantic and grey,  
Loomed out of the white sea-spray  
And clutched her out of the day.

E. B. OSBORN.

**LINES SUGGESTED BY FRED. LESLIE'S DEATH.**

HEN I am dead, cremate me ;  
Please let my ashes lie  
In mother earth's dear bosom ;  
I have no fear to die.

Plant o'er my grave a rose tree ;  
Its blossoms sweet and fair  
Shall but remind thee, dear one,  
That I lie sleeping there.

The sentient days are numbered,  
And earth claims earth once more ;  
The soul dispersed shall mingle  
With loved ones gone before.

Yes, all must die ; repine not,  
Death but returns us where  
We came from in the silence ;—  
And perfect rest is there.

QUEENSBERRY.



**"GRAY AND GOLD."**

**T**HE Dean of St. Bride's College was an elderly man, in fact he was an old man, and when his turn came round to take the official deanship for about the tenth time in his career the other dons did not think he would accept it. Apart from the fact that the deanship brought a vast amount of trouble and worry and scarcely any increase in income, it seemed almost absurd that a man of his age and staid habits should place himself in a position, which would render him liable to be badgered by the boisterous undergraduate, and compel him to issue out of his rooms at late hours on cold nights, and quell disturbances, or to trample under his venerable feet the inevitable bonfire which experience had proved that every term brings forth. But he had accepted the deanship, and nobody could dispute his right to it, and accordingly the dons of St. Bride's College accepted the situation and thought no more about it. The Dean was sixty-three years old; he had a slim figure just a little bowed by his years, he was clean shaven, and though his hair was as white as snow, his blue eyes were as bright as a boy's; but he was rather tottering in his walk, and when his face was in repose the fire died out of it quickly and suddenly, and left him with that pitiable expression of collapse which comes over an old man's face when the fuel of animation and interest is not there to light it up. To-night as he sat in his room in an easy chair, with his head thrown back and the firelight just lighting up his pale face, he looked old and worn in the extreme, but even as it was an observer could have readily believed that in his youth he had been possessed of an extraordinarily beautiful face. Such indeed was the case, and a beautiful miniature of a young man with a delicate complexion, an oval face, and a curiously rapt and almost angelic expression, framed in a profusion of yellow hair, did no more than justice to the Dean's vanished youth. He had been a scholar of St. Bride's himself before he

became a fellow, and thus all his life had been spent in the atmosphere of calm beauty that surrounds an Oxford college; he had looked for forty years on the smooth green turf framed in its setting of carved stones and painted glass, and his life had inevitably become quiet and almost sleepy, his manner academic: yet he was too much a gentleman ever to become really donnish. As the Dean lay back in his chair in the firelight, there came a knock at the door; but the Dean was asleep and did not hear it; then the door opened and a boy in a cap and gown walked in. He paused when he saw the dozing Dean's pale face with its old worn look, he took off his cap and held it hanging down before him, and raised his other hand instinctively to his forehead as if to shade his eyes from the firelight, while at the same time he dropped into that attitude of natural grace which belongs only to a young man, the attitude of pause, with one heel raised from the ground and one knee slightly bent; there he stood, and something in the old man's face, something half grotesque and half pathetic, caught him half-way on the wings of motion and held him still. He had, a minute ago remembered his appointment with the Dean and had burst away from a crowd of noisy companions in a room filled with light, youth and cheerful faces, and shouting out that he would be back in a moment had rushed into the quad. and up the stone steps and so straight into the Dean's room. And then this scene of the dimly lit room, with one old man sleeping quietly, had struck with a sudden convincing force of perfect contrast on his senses which held him like the clutch of an unseen hand. He held his breath and looked, with parted lips, his cheeks flushed with running, and his hair gleaming like gold in the light of the fire, and the Dean woke suddenly with a start and saw his own youth looking down at him with a gentle pitying face. He had been dreaming, dreaming that he was a boy again with all his youth, and strength, and beauty, a boy who was going to do everything, who was to be a

poet, a philosopher, a golden letter on the scroll of time.—Then the Dean woke up and remembered that he was sixty-three, that his hair was gray, that he had written no poetry, and was only an old nonentity in an Oxford college, only one specimen of a never-ending type, and that the golden-haired boy before him was an undergraduate, who had come under his displeasure because he liked to keep his golden head on his white pillow in the morning, instead of bending it reverently in the dim light of the college chapel. The Dean sighed, and then got up and fumbled for a light while apologising for his sleeping state; and when the light was lit and the Dean had put on his official manner, and the boy had sat down on the extreme edge of a chair, and fumbled with his cap, and been unable to think of any excuse for not going to morning chapel, the Dean who for his dream's sake felt well-disposed to all boys, and golden-haired boys in particular, let him off with a mere rebuke and a kind word, and looked rather wistfully after him as he went out, being more than half-minded to call him back and ask him to stay and talk; but on second thoughts reflecting, with a rush of self-pity, that he was only an old don and that the boy would probably be bored with him, and would much rather go back to the other boys. And when the boy had gone the Dean picked up the miniature on the table and looked at it, and looked at his own face in the glass and sighed again. Then with an effort he pulled himself together, and bethought him that he had better go round and see young Brown the new fellow, who was always cheerful and had plenty to say for himself; it would cheer him up he thought, besides Brown was assisting in some theatricals that were being got up in the college, and there might be some rehearsing going on which would be amusing. So putting on his cap he went out into the warm summer air and crossing the quad. reached his destination. There was nobody in Brown's rooms; but the floor was littered with garments of all shapes and colours, wigs, swords, hats with feathers,

and other theatrical appurtenances, while two commoners gowns lying on one of the chairs showed that some of the undergraduates had been there. The Dean sat down and looked round at the confusion; then his eye fell on the make-up box lying on the table with a looking glass before it. He examined it curiously, and then went mad. He certainly must have been mad; what he did subsequently can hardly be explained, save on that hypothesis. First he shut the door, then he looked out of the window and, finding everything quiet, returned to the dressing-table, and proceeded to make himself up. He selected a wig from the heap on the table, a golden coloured one; he put it on and it fitted him exactly. He had evidently had experience of the art of making-up for theatricals, as he quickly and skilfully caused the lines of age on his face to disappear: a touch of black to his eyebrows, of red to his cheeks and lips, and he stood transformed into a young man. His figure was slight by nature, and the stoop of old age gave him, in his transfigured state, merely that loose and not ungraceful appearance of langour so often found in the young. Then he put on one of the commoner's gowns lying on the chair, and rested his college cap over the crisp gold curls of his wig, which completely concealed his scanty grey locks. When he had finished all this he looked in the glass, and beheld the reflection of a young man with small and delicate features, an oval face, bright blue eyes, and golden curls. The illusion was complete; the Dean smiled with joy, and then, turning away, cautiously opened the door and ran, yes, positively ran, down stairs. As he crossed the quad. the clock struck ten, and at the same moment somebody running with great violence, charged into him and nearly knocked him down. The figure stopped and apologised, and the Dean recognised his young culprit of half-an-hour ago. Evidently the boy had no suspicion of the real identity of the Dean, for he merely said "Oh, I'm awfully sorry," and then added "aren't you coming round to the rag?" "What rag?" said

the Dean ; " Oh, we're going to light a bonfire," replied the boy, " come on," and he hurried off. The Dean followed; he realised in exultation that nobody would recognize him, he would be taken for an undergraduate of some other college, and for one short hour he would be young again and help to light a bonfire, and be irrational and happy. So he ran on and joined the throng. The bonfire was already lighted, a crowd of excited young men were rushing round it, shouts of laughter were heard on all sides, fireworks were let off, and noise reigned supreme. Into all this the Dean plunged, he tore up chairs and hurled the fragments into the fire, he let off rockets, he shouted and laughed, and was perfectly happy. Finally he became aware that the college authorities were out, he caught sight of the Vice-president looming in the distance, he saw the Junior Dean trampling on the edge of the bonfire, there was a general scurry and he fled to his own rooms. Once safely there he bolted the door, tore off the wig, and washed the paint from his face. Then he looked at the looking glass and saw his old face, and the reaction came after his brief fever of excitement and joy; he buried his face in his hands, and then his heart began to throb terribly and he turned sick and faint. He staggered to the door, opened it, and looked out, but there was nobody there. Half-an-hour afterwards the golden-haired boy, passing up the staircase to visit a friend, saw him lying dead in his own doorway. The doctors said the Dean died of heart disease, and the golden-haired boy went to his funeral.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.





SAD TRUE INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF A  
CRITIC.

THIS is true. It was a most pathetic Creature. I was enjoying, in a placid way, the mystical absurdities of my favourite Swedenborg, that humourist: my fire, my candles, my curtains, the gleaming backs of my books, warmed my heart towards all the world: I assure you, towards all the world. I was luxurious in my sympathy with the entire universe: for not a man had come near me the whole long day. Two hours I will read Swedenborg, dear Swedenborg; one hour will I write upon the lyrical element in Lucretius, or upon some other theme of superior nonsense, such as my editor loves; one hour will I dream over the fire in a cultured melancholy: and then, to sleep, to pleasant sleep.

The knock at my door was tentative, nervous, shy. I thought it was my private youth of genius: the grave poet, who comes twice a week to say nothing for ten minutes, looking mysteries incommunicable, with prodigious passion of pain, and infinite love of sorrow. The quaintest-mannered youth of genius! so happy! and blessed with such looks of dreary doom! He cares nothing for Swedenborg: he has a way of going straight to my shelves, of taking down Molière, and of reading him with a face of three fates in one. Anticipating, then, this friend so welcome for his silence, I said, in suitably sad tones, "Come in!" Entered to me, cringing, bowing, mincing, propitiatory, deprecatory, insinuating; entered to me, I say, the Creature. Waving his horrid hat, and smiling detestably, he began to harangue me, me, mildly waiting in courteous wonder, with words of an oily profusion. "My name, sir, is Edwin Brown, and I beg you to pardon me this unwarrantable intrusion upon your valuable privacy, which I should not have done but for my admiration of your fine work, sir, in the *Lyceum Review*." Here a gruesome smile. "In my poor way, sir, I am a literary man, without academic advantages, like Charles Lamb, sir. Always loved the

arts and letters, and many's the shilling I've taken from my bread and butter for a book." At this point a hollow groan, meant, I imagine, for the rattling cough of a consumptive. "Ah, sir, it's we scholars, excusing the familiarity, who won't sell our souls for pelf. A hard time I've had, and little favour, but there, Chatterton had the same." It was becoming serious: the fellow, voluble and of a garrulous middle age, held the floor, and smiled, and smiled, and was a villain. "Won't you sit down?" He sat down, cosily and confidentially, clapped his dreadful hat, wildly Tyrolese, upon the open pages of Swedenborg; unbuttoned his coat, and lifted up an unctuous voice. "You'll be wondering, sir, what brings me here." Said I, severely, "Not at all." I knew, that money was the final, formal, material, and efficient cause of the visitation. "You're very good, sir. It's not many gentlemen who'd have the patience to hear an old man tell his story. But there, it's sympathy does it: both of the brotherhood, sir, servants of the muses, and the household of faith. 'Streets, where Otway starved before,' ain't it, sir? Now you're a fine scholar, I can see: up to Greek and Latin, and a touch of Hebrew, I'll be bound, or Sanskrit maybe. Great thing, sir, a regular education. Never was at Oxford College myself: London Town was my University: 'stony-hearted step-mother,' as De Quincey has it. Bless you, sir, it's the bookstalls made me a scholar: under the gas-lights of a winter's evening." He gave a shiver, like a horse with the staggers, to illustrate his ancient woes. "Bitter cold in winter, sir." "Yes," said his victim, "I've known it cold in winter." "Ah, cold it is, and cruel winds sometimes. Fog too, sir, damp right down your throat." I put some more coal on the fire. "Some whiskey?" I suggested: determining to sacrifice myself to the Creature, and make a grimly cheerful night of it. "Well, sir, if whiskey's the word, I'll not say no, just to keep you company. Failing of the brotherhood! Burns, sir, inspired exciseman, 'farewell to Mary,' and a wee drappie. Know the

Scotch language, sir? You've a look of the Scotchman about you, too, excusing me." Had the mere name of whiskey made the Creature drunk? "Might I be so bold as ask for hot water, sir, and a lump of sugar with a lemon on top of it? By your leave, I'll touch the bell. Symposias, nectar and ambrosia, the feast of reason and ——" "the flow of soul," I observed, mechanically, like one in a dull dream. "Like old times come back, sir, this is, if you'll credit me. I'd a friend or two upon a time, sir, down Battersea way, a printer one was and t'other an auctioneer. Many's the honest glass we've had together, and quoted Lord Byron, sir. Bit of a Don Juan too, sir, in my time." And the greasy reprobate leered at me, slapping his knee. "Another failing of the brotherhood, that, sir! *We know!*" It was intolerable, and I interrupted the Creature. "It's getting rather late. You came to me ——?" "And thank you for the hint, sir! But you'd forgive this unwarrantable intrusion upon your valuable privacy, sir, if you knew the pleasure it is to me to meet a gentleman and a scholar. And here's the materials, sir, piping hot, and I take the liberty of drinking your very good health and all prosperity. It's roses, sir, I take it, as the ancient Greeks and Romans would have put on their heads on similar occasions, and a skeleton in the cupboard. Nothing like the ancients now-a-days, sir! Why, there's Mr. Gladstone, now: its struck me, as he's what you may call cut out to wear a toga, sir, all over him in folds and trailing a bit on the ground. Interested in dress reform, sir? There's that hat of mine, now: if you'd be kind enough to reach it me ——." With alacrity I removed the Tyrolese horror from my Swedenborg. "A deal more shapely, sir, in my way of thinking, than the fashionable hat. But that's not here nor there. You were asking, sir, and very natural, I'm sure, what I've been bold to see you upon. It's my *magna opus*, sir. I'm a humbler journalist than you, sir, and the likes of you: Fleet Street hack, sir, and not much of that.

I've queried sometimes, if you'll believe me, whether it's literature at all. There's style, sir, in a smart paragraph, not a doubt of it: and a bit of fancy now and then. 'A touch of nature makes the whole——' " "world kin," from the depths of my dejection. "But I've kept the sacred fire alight, sir, at home, in my scrap of a lodging. Books is the best part of my furniture, sir: my purse wont run to high art decoration like this of yours here. A shelf of books, sir, and a table and chair. Well now, there's a lot of books, sir, that's published under the name of Bohn, as you've heard of, I make no doubt. Miscellaneous reading he publishes, to be sure, and pretty cheap on stalls. Now there's a volume or so, I picked up in the Borough, ah! a matter of six years ago, translations from the ancient Greek, sir: sort of plays they are, by an author, name of Euripides, if you'll excuse the right pronunciation. Well, sir, I read those plays straight through, and blessed queer style they were. Not natural, said I: not what you call natural. But there's beauty in the things, if a man could come at it; fine morality, sir, and a neat way of argument, and lots of pretty pictures. I've seen bits in Surrey, sir, with fine trees in 'em and a winding stream below, and that's ancient Greece to my conception of it: kind of what the company in those plays describe, where the're talking a trifle at random, wandering, as I may say. Well, sir, I sat of a night and read them in that translation of Mr. Bohn's, till I thought, here's good stuff, I thought, only wants a touch of style to make it real fine. I'll turn it into blank verse, said I, and get a scholar to overhaul it. And, as I'm sitting here, sir, I've done it, and here it is, and you're the scholar, as I want to overhaul it!" The Creature had explained: and it was *not* money: it was unendurably worse.

Silence. I gazed upon the glowing Creature, whose poetic rapture has thrown a ruddy flush over his unwholesome face; he lay back with the air of a conqueror. Suddenly he rose, and dived both hands into

his coat tail pockets. With considerable exertion, he lugged forth a vast roll of manuscript, from other pockets he produced other rolls, he piled them together, flattened them with a proud caressing hand, and lumped them down upon Swedenborg. I temporized. "My dear sir," in a tone of unfeigned cordiality, "may I ask what induced you to come to me in particular?" "Here's the truth of it, sir. I know well enough I'm no scholar, though I like to think I am; but no classics, sir, no scholarship! Sound doctrine, that? So I said to myself, 'It's a scholar I want to overhaul my work, and I don't know one. It's a literary paper where the real scholar's write, a high literary paper to help me out.' So I go on a Saturday morning, and I buy *The Lyceum*. I see your name, sir, at the tail of the first article I chanced upon. 'Take it as an omen,' said I, 'and go to him!' I hunted up your name in the directory, and here I am, and here's my poetry; and I make bold to ask you, sir, to put it fair and square, scholarly, so to call it. I'm a poor man, sir, and I can't make it worth your while so far as pecuniary profit goes, but your name will appear, sir, in my book. And now I'll trust the manuscript to you, sir, and take my leave." He finished his third whiskey, and lurched to his feet; he had nerved himself to the interview by many previous drinks. The situation was impossible. I ran a hurried eye over the sprawling pages, and choked with internal laughter at sight of the most delicious absurdities; then a splendid and kindly lie occurred to me. There was a grotesque pitifulness about the Creature which forbade me to give him an abrupt refusal, so I lied to him. "I congratulate you, Mr. Brown, upon the completion of your work, but I must decline the honour of revising it. By a singular coincidence, I am myself engaged upon a translation of Euripides in verse, and I could hardly examine your version while I am busy with my own. I might unconsciously borrow your ideas, and plagiarise. But I will give you a letter of introduction to a friend of mine, a better scholar than I could ever be, with more leisure, and not employed



upon Euripides. I am sure he will do all he can for you." I wrote him a note for my silent poet, who has the kindest of hearts, and would certainly give the poor Creature his death blow in the gentlest manner. For a second or so he looked dejected; but his face brightened up, and he exclaimed, "I see it, sir, point of honour among the brotherhood. I admire your delicacy, sir, and I wish you good-night, thanking you for your kind hospitality." He gathered up his manuscript, disposed it about his person, assumed the hat of Tyrol, and with many unsteady bows made for the door. I guided his wandering steps down stairs, wished him good luck in the hall, and watched him as he swung off into the night. His true name—need I say it?—was *not* Edwin Brown. The Creature deserves so much at my hands; he was amusing and rather saddening; and I keep back his name.

But, shade of Plato! surely mine was a generous and noble lie? My conscience is clear; even though my silent poet should wear hereafter a darker face of woe.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*Veau-Marin*.—A letter for you requiring an answer has been sent to the Union.

*P.L.O.*.—Of your two French poems, one as you may see appears in this number: the other is quite charming, and if ever I feel an inclination to make a short sojourn in one of Her Majesty's jails I shall seize the opportunity of printing it.

*Exoniensis*.—Not suitable.

*J.A.C.*.—Your poem is quite unintelligible, the greatest intellects of modern times have failed to extract a meaning from it; will you explain it? or write another?

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