

The Spirit Lamp.

*An Aesthetic, Literary and Critical
Magazine,*

EDITED BY

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS.

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SONNET.

*A letter written in prose poetry by Mr. Oscar Wilde to a friend,
and translated into rhymed poetry by a poet of no importance.*

HYACINTHE ! ô mon cœur ! jeune dieu doux et blond !
Tes yeux sont la lumière de la mer ! ta bouche,
Le sang rouge du soir où mon soleil se couche . . .
Je t'aime, enfant câlin, cher aux bras d'Apollon.

Tu chantaïs, et ma lyre est moins douce, le long
Des rameaux suspendus que la brise effarouche,
A frémir, que ta voix à chanter, quand je touche
Tes cheveux couronnés d'acanthé et de houblon.

Mais tu pars ! tu me fuis pour les Portes d'hercule ;
Va ! rafraîchis tes mains dans le clair crépuscule
Des choses où descend l'âme antique. Et reviens,

Hyacinthe adoré ! hyacinthe ! hyacinthe !
Car je veux voir toujours dans les bois syriens
Ton beau corps étendu sur la rose et l'absinthe.

PIERRE LOUÏS.

BEETHOVEN'S CONCERTO IN E DUR.

THE pianoforte, in contrast with a full orchestra of string and wind instruments—how it excites our nerves—it stimulates imagination beyond the reaches of pure music. I doubt whether the marriage of the clavier with violins and hautbois be legitimate. But I will record some of the fancies evoked in my brain by the shuddering thrills of that disparity in *timbre*.

I seem to feel and see a rill of cold pellucid water flowing athwart hot masses of ebullient lava, the thrilling water-rill itself, emergent, irreducible to steam. Then moonlight glancing across and flooding a fierce pyrotechnical display of rockets and of Roman candles on the sea at Naples. Then blueish beams of aurora borealis palpitating upwards through crimson oceans of tremulous Arctic lights. Then sprays of alamander-flowers, detached against a background of burning taxonia-stars and bunches of flushed bougainvillia bloom, all smothered in the veils and woven verdure of a vast conservatory.

Beethoven evoked symphonious effects from the pianoforte. He brought the cold pure water-rill, the moon's frigidity, the pale auroral pulse, the amber bloom, into vital art-relation with volcanic forces in his sympathetic and aspirant orchestra.

The gloom and glory of intercepting and sustaining tones from wood and string. Tumultuary colours toned from volumes of contracted, intertwined, and interpenetrating instruments of sound that throb upon our sensibilities.

Beethoven, first of modern masters in the poetry of tone—unless, peradventure, Weber broke the path as pioneer before him—assigned its right place to the clavier among the organs fashioned by man's hand to translate the soul's emotion into music.

Beethoven brought the specific quality of the piano-forte into due relation with those elder and more potent instruments of metal, wood and string. He made us know it as a liquid, candid, self-eliminating, self-detaching spirit of sound—a spirit fit to raise its voice of transpicuous utterance among the host of congregated, soul-compelling, sense-subduing, force-evoking daimons of the orchestra.

Not indeed as a seraph or a devil to command, but as an angel to be loved and tended by the clamorous choir, to evoke their sympathy and their collaboration—standing the while aloof from them, although with kindred feeling—like the soul of a woman or a saintly youth, who keeps apart from the world's turmoil, but adds a clarity of accent to the concert of contending cries and groans and hymns and passions.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

HOW WE LOST THE BOOK OF JASHER.

EVERYONE who knows anything about art, archæology, or science has heard of the famous Fitz-Taylor Museum at Oxbridge. And even outsiders who care for none of these things have heard of the quarrels and internal dissensions that have disturbed that usual calm which ought to reign within the walls of a museum. The illustrious founder, to whose munificence we owe this justly famous institution, has provided in his will for the support of four curators, who govern the two separate departments of science and art, and the University has been in the habit of making grants of money from time to time to these separate departments for the acquisition of scientific or archæological curiosities and MSS. I suppose there was something wrong in the system, but whatever it may be, it led to those notorious jealousies and disputes. At the time I am writing of, the principal curators of the art section were Professor Girdelstone and Mr. Monteagle, of Prince's College, while I looked after the scientific welfare of the museum with Lowestoft as my understudy—he was practically a nonentity and an authority on lepidoptera. Now whenever a grant was made to the left wing of the building, as I call it, I always used to say that science was being

sacrificed to archæology. I mocked at the illuminated MS. over which Girdelstone grew enthusiastic and the musty theological folios which Monteagle had purchased. They heaped abuse upon me, of course, when my turn came, and cracked many a quip on my splendid skeleton of the ichthyosaurus, the only known specimen from Greenland. At one time the strife broke into print, and the London press animadverted on our conduct. It became a positive scandal. We were advised, I remember, to wash our dirty linen at home, and though I have often wondered why the press should act as a voluntary laundress on such occasions, I suppose the remark is a just one.

There came a day when we took the advice of the press, and from then until now science and art have gone hand in hand at the University of Oxbridge. How the breach was healed forms the subject of the present leaf from my memoirs.

America, it has been wisely said, is the great land of fraud. It is the Egypt of the modern world. From America came the spiritualists, from America bogus goods, and cheap ideas and pirated editions, and from America I have every reason to believe came Dr. Groschen. It is true that he spoke American with an English accent at times, at other times English with a German. But if his ancestors came from the Rhine, that he received his education on the other side of the Atlantic I have no doubt. Why he came to Oxbridge I cannot say. He appeared quite suddenly, like a comet. He brought introductions from various parts of the world, from the English Embassy at Constantinople, from the British and German Schools of Archæology at Athens, from certain French Egyptologists at

Alexandria, and a holograph letter from Archbishop Sarpedon, Patriarch of Hermaphroditopolis, Curator of the MSS. in the Monastery of St. Basil, at Mount Olympus. It was this last that endeared him, I believe, to the High Church party in Oxbridge. Dr. Groschen was already the talk of the University, the lion of the hour, before I met him, and there was already a rumour of an honorary degree before even I saw him in the flesh, at the high table of my college, as guest of the Provost. If Dr. Groschen did not inspire me with any confidence, I cannot say that he excited any feeling of distrust. He was a small, black, commonplace looking little man, very neat in his attire, without the alchemical look of most archæologists. Had I known then, as I know now, that he presented his first credentials to Professor Girdelstone, I might have suspected him. Of course I took it for granted they were friends. When the University was ringing with praises of the generosity of Dr. Groschen in transferring his splendid collections of Greek inscriptions to the FitzTaylor Museum, I rejoiced; the next grant would be devoted to science, in consideration of the already crowded galleries of the art and archæological section. I only pitied the fatuity of the authorities for being grateful. Dr. Groschen had now wound himself into everybody's good wishes, and the University degree had been conferred. He had been offered a fine set of rooms in a college famous for culture. He was a well-known figure on the Q.P. But he was not always with us; he went to Greece or the East sometimes, for the purpose, it was said, of adding to the Groschen collection, now the glory of the FitzTaylor.

It was after a rather prolonged period of absence that

he wrote to Girdelstone privately, that he had made a great discovery, and on his return brought with him, he said, some MSS. which had been unearthed in the monastic library of St. Basil, where he bought them for an enormous sum from Sarpedon, the Patriarch of Hermaphroditopolis, and was willing to sell them to "some public institution" for very little over the original price. Girdelstone told several of us in confidence. It was public news next day. Scholars grew excited; there had been hints at the recovery of a lost MS., "which was to add to our knowledge of the antique world and materially alter accepted views of the early state of Roman and Greek society." On hearing the news I smiled. "Some institution," that was suspicious—MSS.—they meant forgery. It was described as a palimpsest MS., consisting of fifty or sixty leaves of papyrus. On one side was a portion of the *Lost Book of Jasher*, of a date not later than the fourth century, on the other in ancient characters the two notorious works of Aulus Gellius, which Suetonius tells us Tiberius ordered to be burned—*De moribus Romanorum*.

But why should I go over old history? Every one remembers the excitement that the discovery caused—the leaders in the *Times* and the *Athenæum*, the doubts of the sceptical, the enthusiasm of the archæologists, the jealousy of the Berlin authorities, the offers from all the libraries of Europe, the aspersions of the British Museum. "Why," asked indignant critics "did Dr. Groschen offer his MS. to the authorities at Oxbridge?" "Because Oxbridge had been the first to recognise his genius," was the crushing reply. And Professor Girdelstone said that should the FitzTaylor fail to acquire the MS. by any false economy on the part of the

University authorities, the prestige of the museum would be gone. But this is all old history. I only remind the reader of what he knows already. I had begun to bring all my powers, and the force of the scientific world in Oxbridge, to bear in opposition to the purchase of the MS. I had pulled every wire I knew, and execration was heaped on me as a vandal, though I only said the University money should be devoted to other channels than the purchase of doubtful MS. I was doing all this, when I was startled by the intelligence that Dr. Groschen had suddenly come to the conclusion that his find was after all only a forgery.

The book of Jasher was a thirteenth century Byzantine forgery, and he ascribed the date at the very earliest to the reign of Alexis Comnenus. Theologians became fierce on the subject. They had seen the MS.; they knew it was genuine. And when Dr. Groschen began to have doubts on Aulus Gellius, suggesting it was a sixteenth century fabrication, the classical world morally and physically rose and denounced him. Dr. Groschen, who had something of the early Christian in his character, bore this shower of opprobrium like a martyr. "I may be mistaken," he said, "but I believe I have been deceived. I have been taken in before, and I would not like the MS. offered to any library before two of the very highest experts could decide as to its authenticity." People had long learnt to regard Dr. Groschen himself as quite the highest expert in the world. They thought he was out of his senses, though the press commended him for his honesty, and one journal, which had been loudest in declaring its authenticity, said it was glad Dr. Groschen had seen the forgery that it had already anticipated.

Dr. Groschen was furthermore asked what experts he would submit his MS. to, and by whose decision he would abide. After some delay and correspondence, he could think of only two—Professor Girdelstone and Mr. Monteagle. “They had had great opportunities,” he said, “of judging on such matters. Their erudition was of a steadier and more solid nature than his was.” Then the world and Oxbridge joined again in a chorus of praise. What could be more honest, more straightforward, than submitting the MS. to a final examination at the hands of the two curators of the FitzTaylor, who were to have the first refusal of the MS. if it was considered authentic. If it was a forgery, and they decided on purchasing, they had themselves to thank. No man was ever given such an opportunity. Professor Girdelstone and his colleague soon came to a conclusion. They decided that there could be no doubt as to the authenticity of the Aulus Gellius. In portions it was true that between the lines certain Greek characters almost obliterated were legible, but this threw no slur on the MS. itself. Of the commentary on the book of Jasher, it will be remembered, they gave no decisive opinion, and it is still an open question; but they expressed their belief that the Aulus Gellius was alone worth the price asked for it by Dr. Groschen. It only remained now for the University to advance a sum to the FitzTaylor for the purchase of this treasure. The curators, rather prematurely perhaps, wrote privately to Dr. Groschen making him an offer for his MS., and paid him half the amount out of their own pockets, so as to close the bargain once and for all.

The delay of the University in making the grant caused a good deal of apprehension in the hearts of

Professor Girdelstone and Mr. Monteagle, and they feared that the enormous sums offered by the Berlin Museum would tempt even the simple-minded Dr. Groschen, though he had the interest of the FitzTaylor so much at heart. These suspicions were unfounded as they were ungenerous. The German *savant* was contented with his degree and college rooms, and showed no hurry for the remainder of the sum to be paid.

One night when I was seated in my rooms, beside the fire, preparing lectures on the ichthyosaurus, I was startled by a knock at my door. It was a hurried jerky rap. I shouted "Come in." The door burst open, and on the threshold I saw Monteagle, with a white face, on which the beads of perspiration glittered. At first I thought it was the rain which had drenched his cap and gown, but in a moment I saw that the perspiration was the result of terror or anxiety (*cf.* my lectures on mental equilibrium). Monteagle and I in our undergraduate days had been friends, but like many University friendships, ours had proved evanescent; our paths had lain in different directions.

He had chosen archæology. We had failed to convert one another to each other's views, and when he became a member of "The Disciples," a mystic Oxbridge society, the fissure between us widened to a gulf. We nodded when we met, but that was all. With Girdelstone I was not on speaking terms. So when I found him on my threshold I confess I was startled.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Certainly, certainly," I said cordially. "But what is the matter?"

"Good God! Newall," he cried, "that MS. after all is a —— forgery."†

This expression I thought unbecoming in a "disciple," but I only smiled, and said "Really, you think so." Monteagle then made reference to our old friendship, our unfortunate dissension. He asked for my help, and then really excited my pity. Some member of the High Church party in Oxbridge had apparently been to Greece to attend a Conference on the Union of the Greek and Anglican Churches. While there he had met Sarpedon, Patriarch of Hermaphroditopolis, and in course of conversation told him of the renowned Dr. Groschen. Sarpedon had become distant at the mention of the Doctor's name. He denied all knowledge of the famous letter of introduction, and said the only thing he knew of the Professor was that he was usually supposed to have been the thief who had made off with a large chest of parchments from the monastery of St. Basil.

The Greek Patriarch refused to give us any further information. The English clergyman had reported this privately to Girdelstone.

Dr. Groschen's other letters were examined, and had been found to be all fabrications. The book of Jasher and Aulus Gellius had been submitted to a like scrutiny, and Girdelstone and Monteagle had reluctantly come to the conclusion that they were also vulgar and palpable forgeries. At the end of his story Monteagle almost burst into tears. I endeavoured to cheer him, although I was shrieking with laughter at the whole situation.

Of course it was dreadful for him. If he exposed Dr. Groschen, his own reputation as an expert would be gone, and the Dr. already had half the money, which Girdelstone and he had paid in advance. Monteagle was so agitated that it was with difficulty I could get

his story out of him, and to this day I have never quiet learned the truth. Controlling my laughter, I sent a note round to Professor Girdelstone, asking him to come to my rooms. In about ten minutes he appeared, looking as draggled and sheepish as poor Monteagle. In his bosom he carried the fateful MS., which I had never seen before. If it was a forgery (and I am not sure now that it was) it was certainly a masterpiece. From what Girdelstone said to me, then and since, I think that the Aulus Gellius portion was genuine enough, and the book of Jasher the invention of Groschen; however, it will never be discovered if one or neither were genuine. Monteagle thought the ink that was used was a compound of tea and charcoal, but both he and Girdelstone were too suspicious to believe even each other by this time.

I tried to console them, and promised all help in my power. They were rather startled and alarmed when I laid out my basis of operations. In the first place, I was to withdraw all opposition to the purchase of the MS. Girdelstone and Monteagle, meanwhile, were to set about having the Aulus Gellius printed and facsimiled; for I thought it was a pity such work should be lost to the world. The facsimile was *only* to be *announced*, but the publishing by the University Press to be got in hand at once. The text of Aulus Gellius can still be obtained, and a translation of those portions which can be rendered into English, forms a volume of Mr. Bohn's excellent classical library, which will satisfy the curious who are unacquainted with Latin. Professor Girdelstone was to write a preface in very guarded terms. This will be familiar to all classical scholars.

It was with great difficulty that I could persuade

Girdelstone and Monteagle, who had come to me, their enemy, and in distress, of the sincerity of my actions, but the poor fellows were ready to catch at any straw for hope from exposure, and they listened to every word I said. As the whole University knew I was not on speaking terms with Girdelstone, I told him to adopt a Nicodemus-like attitude, and to come to me in the night-time, when we could hold consultation. To the outer world, during these anxious evenings, when my outing was spoiled, and I would see no one, I was supposed to be preparing my great syllabus of lectures on the ichthyosaurus. I only communicated to my fellow curators my plans bit by bit, for I thought it would be better for their nerves. I made Monteagle send round a notice to the press:—"That the MS. about to become the property of the University Museum was being edited and facsimiled and published, and at the earliest possible date it would be on view in the Galleries where Dr. Groschen's collections are now exhibited." This was to quiet the complaints that already were being made by scholars and commentators of the difficulty of examining the MSS. The importunities of several religious societies to get a sight of the book of Jasher became intolerable. The Dean of Rothbury, an old friend of Girdelstone's, came from the north on purpose to examine the new found work. With permission he intended, he said, to write a small brochure for the S.P.C.K. on the book of Jasher, though I believe that he also had some curiosity in the Aulus Gellius, but I may be wronging him. The subterfuges, lies, and devices to which we resorted were not very creditable to ourselves. Girdelstone gave him a dinner, and Monteagle and I persuaded the Senate to confer on

him an honorary degree. We amused him with advance sheets of the commentary, and with assurances that he would be the first to examine the MS. He was quite a month at Oxbridge, but at last was called on business to the north by some lucky domestic family bereavement. Our next difficulty was the news that Sarpedon, Patriarch of Hermaphroditopolis, was about to visit England to attend an Anglican Synod. I thought Girdelstone would go off his head, and Monteagle's hair had already become grey in the last few days. Sarpedon was sure to be invited to Oxbridge. He would meet Dr. Groschen, and then expose him. Our fears, I soon found out, were shared by the German *savant*, who left shortly after news of the advent of Sarpedon, on one of those mysterious visits to the East. I saw that our action at once must be prompt, or Girdelstone and Monteagle would be lost. They were horrified when I told them I proposed placing the MS. to public view in the museum on the following day. A large plate-glass case had been made by my orders, and Girdelstone and Monteagle, who obeyed me like lambs, deposited their precious burden as I told them in the Groschen Hall of the FitzTaylor. The crush that afternoon was terrible. All the University came to peer into the glass case at the new acquisition. I must tell you that Dr. Groschen's antiquities had been placed temporarily in a fire-proof erection built of wood and tin, at the back of the museum, where they were waiting for room in the body of the museum. This erection was connected with the building by a long stone gallery, along which were placed plaster casts.

I mingled with the crowd, and heard the remarks, but I advised Girdelstone and Monteagle to keep out

of the way, as it would only upset them. Various dons came up and chaffed me about the opposition I had made to the MS. being purchased, and a little man of dark, sallow complexion came up and asked me if I was Professor Girdelstone. I said I had not the honour. He wanted to obtain leave to examine the MS. I gave him my card, and asked him to call on me, when I would arrange a day. He told me he was a Lutheran pastor from Bohemia.

I was the last to leave the museum that day. I was often kept in the library long after four, when the museum usually closed, and so I dismissed the attendants when they had locked up everything with the exception of a small door in the stone gallery which I usually used on such occasions. I waited till six in the evening, and as I went out I opened near this door a sash window and removed the iron shutters. After dinner I went round to Monteagle's rooms. He and Girdelstone were sitting in a despondent way on each side of the fire, sipping weak coffee and nibbling Albert biscuits. They were startled at my entrance.

"What *have* you decided?" asked Girdelstone, hoarsely.

"All is arranged. Monteagle and I will set fire to the museum to-night," I said, quietly.

Girdelstone buried his face in his hands and began to sob.

"Anything but that—anything but that!" he cried. And Monteagle turned a little pale. At first they protested, but I overcame their scruples by saying they might get out of the mess how they liked. I advised Girdelstone to go to bed and plead illness for the next few days, for he really wanted rest. At eleven o'clock

that night Monteagle and myself crossed the meadows at the back of our college, and by a circuitous route reached the grounds surrounding the museum, which were planted with rhododendrons and other shrubs. It was pouring with rain, unfortunately not favourable for our enterprise. I had brought with me a small box of combustibles from the University Laboratories, and a dark lantern. When we climbed over the low wall not far from the stone gallery I saw to my horror a light emerging from the Groschen Hall. Monteagle, who is fearfully superstitious, began chattering his teeth. When we reached the small door I saw it was open. A thief had evidently forstalled us. Monteagle suggested going back, and leaving the thief to make off with the MS.; but I would not hear of such a proposal.

The door opening to the Groschen Hall at the end of the gallery was open, and beyond, a man—who had his back towards us, and who I at once recognised as the little Lutheran—was busily engaged in picking the lock of the case where were deposited the book of Jasher and Aulus Gellius. Telling Monteagle to guard the door, I approached very softly, keeping behind the plaster casts. I was within a yard of the man before he heard my boots creak. Then he turned round, and I found myself face to face with Dr. Groschen. I have never seen such a look of terror on anyone's face before.

"You scoundrel!" I cried, collecting myself, "drop those things at once!" and I made for him with my fist. He dodged me. I ran after him; but he threaded his way like a rat through the statues and cases of antiquities, and bolted down the passage out of the door, where he upset Monteagle and the lantern, and disappeared in the darkness and rain. I then returned to

the scene of his labours. Monteagle was too frightened, as the museum had rather a ghostly appearance by the light of the feeble oil lamp. There was some dry sacking in a small cupboard. I had deposited it there for the purpose. This I ignited along with some native curiosities of straw and skin and wickerwork.

There were also some new unpacked cases of casts which the attendants had left there in the afternoon, which materially assisted the conflagration.

It was an impressive scene as the flames played round the pedestals of the torsos, statues, and cases, but I only waited for a few moments to see that my work was complete. I shut the door between the gallery and the hall, so as to avoid the possibility of the fire spreading to the rest of the building. I seized Monteagle by the arm and hurried him through the rhododendrons, over the wall, into the meadows stretching down to the river. I turned back once, and just caught a glimpse of red flame bursting through the windows. Having seen Monteagle half way back to the college, I returned to see if any alarm had been given. Some passers by had already noticed it, and a small crowd had collected in front. A fire engine had been sent for, while a local pump had almost been set going. I returned to my college gate, where I found the porter was standing, believing I had been in Trinity all the evening.

"The FitzTaylor is burning," he said. "I have been looking out for you, sir."

* * * * *

There is nothing more to tell. To this day no one suspects but that the fire was the work of an incendiary, jealous of Dr. Groschen's discovery. The

Professor has returned from the East, but lives in great retirement, and his friends say that he has never quite recovered the shock occasioned by the loss of his collection. The rest of the museum was uninjured.

The death of Sarpedon, Patriarch of Hermaphroditopolis, at Naples, was a sudden and melancholy catastrophe, which people say affected Dr. Groschen more than the fire. Strangely enough he had just been dining with the Doctor the evening before, for they had met at Naples purposely to bury the hatchet.

Sometimes I ask myself if I did right in setting fire to the museum. You see, it was for the sake of others, not myself, and Monteagle was an old friend.

R.

A FRIEND.

ALL, that he came to give,
He gave, and went again :
I have seen one man live,
I have seen one man reign,
With all the graces in his train.

As one of us, he wrought
Things of the common hour :
Whence was the charmed soul brought,
That gave each act such power ;
The natural beauty of a flower ?

Magnificence and grace,
Excellent courtesy :
A brightness on the face,
Airs of high memory :
Whence came all these, to such as he ?

Like young Shakespearian kings,
He won the adoring throng :
And, as Apollo sings,
He triumphed with a song :
Triumphed, and sang, and passed along.

With a light word, he took
The hearts of men in thrall :
And, with a golden look,
Welcomed them, at his call
Giving their love, their strength, their all.

No man less proud than he,
Nor cared for homage less :
Only, he could not be
Far off from happiness :
Nature was bound to his success.

Weary, the cares, the jars,
The lets, of every day :
But the heavens filled with stars,
Chanced he upon the way :
And where he stayed, all joy would stay.

Now, when sad night draws down,
When the austere stars burn :
Roaming the vast, live town,
My thoughts and memories yearn
Toward him, who never will return.

Yet have I seen him live,
And owned my friend, a king :
All that he came to give,
He gave : and I, who sing
His praise, bring all I have to bring.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

SALOMÉ: A CRITICAL REVIEW.

THERE are many forms of criticism which are unsatisfactory from many points of view. There is a form of criticism which proceeds from the critic who ignores the intention and the meaning of the artist, the critic who has something to say and means to say it, and uses the thing criticised for his purpose, either in support of his own theory, or as an example of the failure of that which offends against his own theory, completely ignoring the real intention and end of the artist whose work he is criticising, and in some cases deliberately giving a false account of what the artist has actually said or done. This is unsatisfactory from the point of view of the artist for obvious reasons, it is unsatisfactory to the general reader who decides whether a book is or is not worth reading or a picture worth seeing by what the critic says, and who expects to gather a more or less accurate account of the contents of a book or the appearance of a picture by reading a criticism of it. To the critic it is no doubt perfectly satisfactory; at least we may hope so, for it will be hard if no one is satisfied. This critic is of the impressionist type, the thing he is criticising varies with his moods; just as to the impressionist painter the

colour of grass is now blue, now violet, now bright red, and sometimes, though rarely, green.

Another and very common form of unsatisfactory criticism is that emanating from the critic whose ideas as to legitimate or wholesome subject matter are pronounced and limited. He is apt to ask questions, which he answers himself, implying that they admit of but one answer. "Do we want to see represented on the stage the character of a woman who is faithless to her husband?" or "Would it not have been better for Lord Dash to have frankly explained the whole affair to his wife at once?" he asks, with a forcible *num* or *nonne* at the end of his sentence. He is very trying.

But perhaps the most unsatisfactory criticism of all is that which emanates from the critic who has not seen, touched, or heard, or, in short, apprehended by any sense the thing which is the object of his attack; I say attack advisedly, for this sort of critic always attacks.

Mr. Oscar Wilde's one act French tragedy *Salomé* has received the charge of all these forms of criticism, that of the last of the three to an extraordinary extent. That mouthpiece of Philistinism, the daily press, surpassed itself in the stern and indignant condemnation of the book which it had not read and the play which it had not seen; never before it declared had such an outrage on decency and good taste been committed, never had a more infamous plot against morality and the Bible been nipped in the bud. For it *was* nipped in the bud, the censor had refused to license its production, England was saved from lasting disgrace. The daily press positively swelled with pride, it metaphorically slapped its chest and thanked God it was an

Englishman. It is hard to understand the attitude taken up by the anonymous scribblers who propounded these pompous absurdities. Why it should be taken for granted that because a writer takes his subject from a sublime and splendid literature, he should necessarily treat it in a contemptible manner, is a mystery it is hard to solve. Apparently it never occurred to these enlightened beings that the very sublimity and grandeur of such a subject would be a sufficient guarantee that the artist had put his very best work into it, and had done his utmost to exalt his treatment to the high level his subject demanded. To a man who takes for the scene of a vulgar farce, the back drawing-room of a house in Bloomsbury, and who brings on to the stage a swindling stockbroker or a rag-and-bone merchant, they are ready to listen with delighted attention, to laugh at his coarse jokes and revel in his cockney dialogue; good healthy English fun they call it. But a man who actually takes for the scene of a tragedy the gorgeous background of a Roman Tetrarch's court, and who brings on to the stage a real prophet out of the Bible, and all in French too! "No, it is too much," they say, "we don't want to hear anything more about it, it is an outrage and an infamy." O Happy England, land of healthy sentiment, roast beef and Bible, long may you have such men to keep guard over your morals, to point out to you the true path, and to guide your feet into the way of cant!

One word to the appreciative but journalistic critic. It is refreshing to find that he exists, but it is a pity that he is journalistic. The Tragedy of *Salomé* is written in French, and the appreciative journalist translates. It is surely a little hard on the author who

writes "Iokanaan, Iokanaan, je suis amoureuse de ta bouche," when the appreciative journalist translates "John, John, I like your mouth." But let that pass, he means well.

The scene on which the tragedy is enacted is a terrace of Herod's palace fronting the banqueting hall; a huge staircase leads down from the palace on one side, and on the other side is an ancient cistern walled in with a wall of green bronze, and in this cistern Iokanaan is immured. The young Syrian, captain of the guard, the page of Herodias, and the soldiers of the guard are standing or reclining about the terrace; within Herod and "those that sit at meat with him" are feasting. The note of tragedy is struck at the very beginning. There is a sort of ominous dead calm in the air, the soldiers are talking in low voices to one another; the young Syrian is gazing at Salomé, who sits within at the feast. "Comme la Princesse Salomé est belle ce soir!" he iterates again and again, till the page of Herodias, who has seen tragedy in the moon's strange face, rebukes him. "Vous la regardez trop. Il ne faut pas regarder les gens de cette façon . . . il peut arriver un malheur." But the young Syrian looks still. How like the monotonous reiteration of one short note at the beginning of a great symphony of music are the low spoken remarks of the soldiers.

Premier Soldat. Le Tetrarque a l'air sombre.

Second Soldat. Oui il a l'air sombre.

Premier Soldat. Il regarde quelque chose.

Second Soldat. Il regarde quelqu'un.

Premier Soldat. Qui regarde-t'il?

Second Soldat. Je ne sais pas.

Herod is looking, as the young Syrian is looking, at

Salomé, and the soldiers talk on, and anon the voice of Iokanaan comes up from the great cistern. Presently the Princess comes out, and the voice of Iokanaan is heard again. The Princess bids them bring him out that she may see him. He is brought out, and she stares in wonder at him, as he pours out words of denunciation and warning. She is first repelled, then attracted; he is beautiful, this prophet, but his eyes are terrible, "on dirait des lacs noirs troublés par des lunes fantastiques." She looks longer, and the prophet sees her looking and is wrath. The young Syrian begs her to go despairingly. But she is infatuated, now it is his hair, now his eyes, that she is amorous of, and now his mouth. "Laisse moi baiser ta bouche Iokanaan," she says, and the young Syrian her lover kills himself at her feet, but she does not even see him. Very touching and beautiful is the lament of the page over his dead friend. "Il était mon frère, et plus proche qu'un frère. Je lui ai donné une petite boîte qui contenait des parfums et une bague d'agate qu'il portait toujours à la main. Le soir nous nous promenions au bord de la rivière et parmi les amandiers et il me racontait des choses de son pays. Il parlait toujours très bas. Le son de sa voix ressemblait au son de la flûte d'un joueur de flûte. Aussi il aimait beaucoup à se regarder dans la rivière. Je lui ai fait, des reproches pour cela." Then Herod comes out with Herodias, and still he looks lasciviously at Salomé. Herod is the fox of the gospel, he has the cunning and the superstition of the tyrant who tries as it were to keep on good terms with the gods, he will not hear Iokanaan spoken lightly of, perhaps he has talked with God he says, it is not safe to treat him with contempt, he is afraid.

And now he begs Salomé to dance for him, but she is unwilling; and he makes the fatal promise to give her what she wills if she will but dance, and Salomé dances the dance of the Seven Veils, and claims Iokanaan's head on a silver charger. Herod tries in vain to turn her from her choice, he offers her the great emerald that Cæsar has given him, his white peacocks, his jewels, his treasures, the very veil of the sanctuary itself. But she is obdurate, and he yields. The order is given, and soon a huge black arm bearing a silver charger with the head of Iokanaan is thrust up from the cistern. Salomé takes the charger and apostrophises the head, triumphantly, mockingly, bitterly. "Tu n'as pas voulu de moi Iokanaan. Tu m'as rejetée. Tu m'as dit des choses infâmes. . . . Mais toi tu es mort, ta tête m'appartient, je puis en faire ce que je veux." Herod is repelled. "Elle est monstrueuse ta fille, elle est tout à fait monstrueuse," he says to Herodias. Then he becomes filled with horror, he shudders, and fear comes over him. "Eteignez les flambeaux," he cries, "je ne veux pas regarder les choses, je ne veux pas que les choses me regardent. Eteignez les flambeaux. Cachez la lune! Cachez les étoiles! Cachons nous dans notre palais Hérodiad. Je commence à avoir peur." The stage is immediately plunged in darkness, the slaves put out the torches, a cloud hides the moon, and in the dark the Tetrarch mounts the stairs. Again the voice of Salomé is heard, "Ah! j'ai baisé ta bouche, Iokanaan, j'ai baisé ta bouche, il y avait un âcre saveur sur tes lèvres. Était-ce la saveur du sang? Mais peut-être est-ce la saveur de l'amour. On dit que l'amour a un âcre saveur. Mais qu'importe? Qu'importe? J'ai baisé ta bouche

Iokanaan, j'ai baisé ta bouche." Suddenly a ray of moonlight falls and illumines Salomé, and as Herod turns he sees her and cries, "Tuez cette femme!" And the soldiers crush her under their shields. Such very briefly is the outline of this lurid tragedy.

One thing strikes one very forcibly in the treatment, the musical form of it. Again and again it seems to one that in reading one is *listening*; listening, not to the author, not to the direct unfolding of a plot, but to the tones of different instruments, suggesting, suggesting, always indirectly, till one feels that by shutting one's eyes one can best catch the suggestion. The author's personality nowhere shews itself.

The French is as much Mr. Wilde's own as is the psychological motive of the play, it is perfect in scholarship, but it takes a form new in French literature. It is a daring experiment and a complete success. The language is rich and coloured, but never precious, and shows a command of expression so full and varied that the ascetically artistic restraint of certain passages stands out in strong relief. Such a passage is the one quoted above: the conversation of the soldiers on the terrace; in which by-the-bye certain intelligent critics have discovered a resemblance to Ollendorf, and with extraordinary shallowness and lack of artistic sensibility have waxed facetious over. O wonderful men!

Artistically speaking the play would gain nothing by performance, to my mind it would lose much. To be appreciated it must be abstracted, and to be abstracted it must be read. Let it, "not to the sensual ear but more endeared, pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone."

It only remains to say that the treatment of St. John the Baptist is perfectly refined and reverend.

I suppose the play is unhealthy, morbid, unwholesome, and un-English, ça va sans dire. It is certainly un-English, because it is written in French, and therefore unwholesome to the average Englishman, who can't digest French. It is probably morbid and unhealthy, for there is no representation of quiet domestic life, nobody slaps anybody else on the back all through the play, and there is not a single reference to roast beef from one end of the dialogue to the other, and though it is true that there is a reference to Christianity, there are no muscular Christians. Anyone, therefore, who suffers from that most appalling and widespread of diseases which takes the form of a morbid desire for health had better avoid and flee from *Salomé*, or they will surely get a shock that it will take months of the daily papers and Charles Kingsley's novels to counteract. But the less violently and aggressively healthy, those who are healthy to live and do not live to be healthy, will find in Mr. Oscar Wilde's tragedy the beauty of a perfect work of art, a joy for ever, ambrosia to feed their souls with honey of sweet-bitter thoughts.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

T'AMO.

T'AMO nell 'ora quando l'alba spunta,
Allor che tutto il cielo ancora dorme,
E aspettando la nascita del giorno
Languidamente brillano le stelle.

T'amo del mezzodì nell 'ora piena
Quando ha potenza realmente il sole,
Allor che svengon anelanti i fiori
E spandon all' intorno ogni fraganza.

T'amo nella tranquill 'ora di sera
Quando del giorno finit' è la pena,
E gli augelletti nel frondoso bosco
Al sol che muore cantano l'addio.

Più t'amo ancora nella mezza-notte
Quando regnando la quiete sovrana
Posso cullarmi in dolce ricordanza
D'un amore per sempre, ahimé! finito . . .

Ah sí! nel giorno e nella notte io t'amo,
Io t'amo, Amore, e sempre io t'amo e sempre,
E vivo sol nell' estasi beata
Con te sol bearmi nell' Eternità.

H. SOMERSET.

CONCERNING RULERS.

I WENT down yesterday to the Isis with Glaucon to see the practice of the rowers. When we were now close to the place of the triremes we were met by Adeimantus and Polemarchus, who were coming towards us, apparently coming away from the very place we were bound for. Polemarchus immediately began: "Socrates, if I am not mistaken, you are on your way to witness the practice of the rowers." "You are right in your conjecture," I replied. "Are you not aware," said he, "that the company of rowers whom you are interested in are not to appear to-day?" "I hear it now for the first time," I replied. "It is true for all that," interposed Adeimantus, "and I shall not be surprised if they do not appear again at all, either to-day or to-morrow, or indeed at any future time." "Pray why do you surmise this?" I enquired. "Because," replied he, "the rulers of their college have compelled three of their number to leave the city." "That is certainly a strong reason," I replied, "but for what offence have they met with this wonderfully severe treatment?" "That I am unable to say accurately," he replied, "but from what I have heard it was some drunken frolic, in the course of which the spirited element in their souls overcame the reasonable element to so great an extent that they lost their hold of the knowledge concerning things which ought and ought not to be respected, and wandered about the college

in a state half way between being and not being, imitating everything without exception, even down to the sounds of pulleys and wheels, the barking of dogs, the bleating of sheep, and the roaring of bulls, nay even the voices and gestures of certain of the rulers themselves, and indeed, if I am not mistaken, this last imitation of theirs was the chief reason why the rulers were so hot against them." "Well," I replied, "if what you say is true, perhaps we ought to blame them for imitating bulls and sheep and pulleys; but for imitating the rulers we ought not to blame them, according at least to my opinion, for a ruler considers the interests of the ruled, and surely it is right to imitate that which considers one's own interest." "It is not right if we are to believe what Anacreon says," interposed Glaucon. "Pray to what saying of Anacreon's do you refer?" I enquired. "That in which he says: 'Away! away! ye men of rules'" replied he. "For if the rulers are to be banished, as he seems to say, we shall not be able to imitate them, at any rate easily, for I imagine it is harder to imitate that which we do not apprehend by any sense, than that which we have constantly before our eyes and in our hearing." "Well," said I, "it is certainly no easy matter to disbelieve Anacreon, for he is a wise and inspired man. But what he means by his words you may understand, but I do not; for surely we shall not consent to believe that he means anything of this sort, for instance, that a state or any body of people should be altogether without rulers." "No we shall certainly not consent to believe that," replied he. "Then it appears that Anacreon means something different from this when he says 'Away! away! ye men of rules'?" "Most cer-

tainly," he replied, "but what it is I am unable to guess, but perhaps you can enlighten me."

"I am not at all confident," said I, "but perhaps he meant something of this kind, that there was something amiss with the rulers of states or colleges, which prevented their working as they ought to, and that a change in the rulers would enable these states or colleges to assume their proper form." "That is very probably what he meant," said Polemarchus, "but pray what is your own opinion, do you think any change would bring about what is required? For I know from what you have said before on many different occasions that you do not consider the present system satisfactory." "Well," I replied, "there is one change by which, as I consider, the required revolution might be brought about; but it is certainly neither a small nor easy one." "What is it?" enquired Glaucon. "Well," said I, "I will say it, even though I pay the penalty of being well laughed at. It is this: unless it somehow comes about that either the scouts secure the ruling power in colleges, or that those who are now called rulers or dons be imbued with the spirit of scouts, there will be no deliverance for colleges from evils." At this Adeimantus replied, "this is certainly a strange statement of yours Socrates, and I am at present at a loss to understand what you mean by it, but I will endeavour to agree with anything you suggest, and I may perhaps in my answers shew a degree of complaisance which will materially assist you in justifying your dictum." "Since you offer me such valuable alliance," said I, "I must make the attempt; and in the first place will you tell me if you think that a man who is the maker of anything may be

justly said to be the artificer, constructor, or manufacturer of that thing?" "He may." "The shoemaker then will be he who constructs or manufactures shoes?" "He will." "And the clockmaker he who constructs or manufactures clocks, the hatmaker hats, and so on with all the other arts." "Certainly." "The bedmaker then will be who constructs or manufactures beds?" "You are perfectly right." "Now answer me this. Do you remember that on a former occasion we agreed that there were three sorts of beds, of which one existing in the nature of things we agreed to attribute to the workmanship of God, a second we agreed to attribute to the upholsterer, and a third to the painter?" "I remember it very well," he said, "and we attributed them rightly." "Very well then," said I. "We agreed that God made a bed?" "We did." "And did not we just now agree that he who makes a bed is a bedmaker?" "We did so rightly." "Then God it appears is a sort of bedmaker?" "Apparently," he said. "Now do you admit that two people living in different places, but performing the same function under the same conditions, may be said to have a common function?" "I do." "And to a common function we apply a common name?" "We do." "Then a man living in Athens who makes boots has the same function as a man who makes boots at Corinth under the same circumstances?" "Obviously." "And although in Athens he may be called a bootmaker and at Corinth a cobbler, his function being essentially the same, this will make no difference; but the terms are identical and interchangeable, since they indicate identical things, and as far as correct nomenclature goes he may be spoken of in both places as a cobbler or in both places as a bootmaker, or in

either as one or the other, and so on." "You are perfectly right," he said.

"Are you aware then that what is called a scout at Oxford is at Cambridge called a bedmaker, and that the functions and circumstances of the two are identical?"

"I was not aware of it," said he, "but I am quite ready to take your word for it as far as I am concerned."

"Include me in that acquiescence of yours" put in Polemarchus. "And add me also," said Adeimantus."

"Well," I said, "let us agree to take this for granted, on the understanding that if we subsequently find that we were wrong then any conclusion which we come to shall be cancelled. And now I come to think of it we were making a ludicrous difficulty out of nothing." "How so?" enquired Glaucon. "Well," I replied, "we agreed just now that he who makes a bed is a bedmaker did we not?" "We did." "Well," I said, "I believe a scout makes beds every morning; or am I wrong?" "You are perfectly right Socrates," he said. "Well then a scout must be a bedmaker," said I, "and whether at Cambridge he is called a bedmaker or not will make no difference, since he actually is one." "You are right, it will make no difference," said he. "Well then," said I, "if Cambridge men tell us that a scout is not a bedmaker, but a something else, such as a 'gyp,' and if our friend Mulierastes gets excited and tells us that women make beds and not men, we will endeavour not to get angry with him, but will speak to him soothingly in some such way as this: 'My dear Mulierastes you are a charming and wonderful man, and your admiration for women is very creditable to you, but you must allow us sometimes to prefer the other sex both in bed making and in other transactions,

Tennyson, in my opinion, is right when he couples them with devils, saying 'I never turned my back on don or devil yet,' for truly they are very devilish." "They are," said I, "but can we, after the conclusion we have come to, have any more doubt as to who should rule in a college, or is it not obvious to anyone that those who are godlike and perfect should rule, rather than those who are the opposite of this, even if they are not altogether devilish?" "It is impossible," he said, "to have any doubt, it is plain that the scouts ought to rule." "You are quite right," said I, "and though no doubt the wits will make jokes about us and think of us as visionary dreamers and altogether mad, we will not mind their laughter, but will rather consider that we ought to pity their ignorance and grieve that they should laugh at what they do not understand." "You are quite right," said he. "We were then, it seems, not far wrong when we conjectured just now that what Anacreon meant by those words would turn out to be something of this sort: that not these present ones but some other kind of rulers ought to rule; and that so far from wishing to be without rulers at all he wished only to have better and stronger rulers." "We were perfectly right, Socrates," he said, "but we must be going home now if you wish to enter the college gates with me, for I remember that the doorkeeper of our college has the character of a good guardian, and while, in addition to being swift of foot and strong, he is able to recognize his friends when he sees them, to strangers he is fierce and hostile." "Let us go then by all means," said I, and we all returned together.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

“MEN AND WOMEN WHO WRITE.”

SINCE it was first declared that “the style is the man” many a man has been discussing the proposition. Like astrology in old times, and like palmistry and phrenology in these, the dogma stimulates the chief interest of men, their interest in themselves. It is, therefore, like the black arts of the ancients, and like the white artifices of the moderns, a proposition of perennial concern. For the same reason, it has hitherto, in the fugitive literature of it, been one of autobiographic concern. Essayists on the theory have naturally been so anxious to see how it looks in relation to themselves that their pronouncements have been really chapters of personal reminiscence. That is deplorable in the interests of science. If people could see themselves as others see them, things would be all right. A.K.H.B. would put the essays on the subject into “volume form,” avowing that he had not edited the punctuation; and then you would have the theory tested with exhaustiveness and despatch. Unfortunately, however, people do not see themselves as they are seen; and the discourses are merely so many *obiter dicta* crying in wildernesses of introspection.

Now, to compare ladies and gentlemen of letters with their styles of expression in literature is undoubted cheek; but, after all, it is no worse than any of the

illustrious people testing theories in science by reference to themselves; and so, as the matter has become one of public interest, we may reassure ourselves against the feeling that we shall be outraging any person, or any principle, in offering a few examples of the true method.

Place aux dames, of course. Only, O ——! there are not many *places* to be allotted. When you come to think of it, the Woman's Movement is still, as regards letters, in its infancy. There have never been, in that matter, any man-made laws against which Woman has had to struggle in her desire for Emancipation; yet she has not emancipated herself in any quantity. We speak of the present. At this moment "the Women who Write," and write well enough to be written about, are a grievous few. They are so few, and as a rule so grievous, that one is tempted to doubt the assumption underlying the Woman's Movement. If she hasn't emancipated herself where no male things sought to hold her in, how are we to believe that she is fit to be where they do not want her? However, that is not the point. The point is that ladies of literary eminence are very few. This, as we have remarked, is annoying; but it simplifies matters in one respect. It is easier to come to a generalization when the items you have to survey are few than it is when they are many. It is specially easy in the present case; for in one sense all literary ladies are the same. The saying that the style is the man hits them off with few exceptions. It does so, at any rate, in so far as we have the pleasure of their acquaintance.

Mrs. Clifford, for example, the most distinguished lady novelist of the day, speaks to you exactly as her books speak. There is in her talk the same fluent

accuracy, the same unerring movement to the point, the same epigrammatic unpremeditation, which you find in her stories. She is all emotion, too, and metaphysical; but her emotion and her metaphysics are pleasing and impressive, for, unlike most women with the same interests, Mrs. Clifford, in her writings, and in her self, is candid, earnest, in no measure a superior person. The same may be said of Mrs. Arthur Kennard. Only, she personally is more charming than her works. She, too, in her writings, which hitherto have been mostly in *The National Review*, *The Quarterly*, and *The Nineteenth Century*, is swayed by what Mr. Courthope has called the Liberal Movement in letters (which, paradoxically, makes for Toryism in politics); and her talk is quickened by the same influence. There is, however, a difference between herself and her writings. Her writings seem deadly earnest. They give you the impression that she is sure of everything she says in them; but when you drink tea with her you are charmed to discover that she takes her own Voltaireism as lightly as her master took the conventionalities himself arose to riddle. Charmed, we repeat; for 'twere indeed depressing if lovely woman were as decided in her unbelief, her Liberalism at large, as she sometimes thinks she is. Mrs. Kennard's essays and herself are identical in that both of them give you an assurance the very opposite of that which they seemed concerned to convey. Mrs. Kennard, we see, has a novel in the press. It is sure to be good if she has not overweighted it with academic lore or clouded it with the fog of echoed scepticism. Mrs. Lynn Linton is another of the ladies who are of a piece with their works. She is full of emphasis bordering on ferocity. We

allude, of course, to her polemical doings. Her novels, the works in which she deals with humanity in general, are bright, humane, tolerant; and so is herself; but it is in her articles that she is most serious now, and in these, as in herself when the girl of the period swims into her ken, she is the most virile lady in the land. This is odd, seeing that her mission is to show that women should be womanly: a warning against giving yourself over to one idea. Mrs. Humphry Ward is a warning too. Her gentle face has a haunted look: she seems beset by the spectres of the decadent prigs with whom she has peopled the realms of empirical philosophy—particularly with that of the grievous David. Mrs. Ward will rank not far below George Eliot when she wakes up to the fact that young people anxious about the souls which they think they don't possess are material for the Salvation Army, rather than for literature. If the young people were frankly profligate, as they would have been in the Restoration time, it would not be so bad; but the religious instinct and the other make an evil and uninteresting mixture. When she realises this Mrs. Ward will cease to be haunted. She will be reconciled to herself, to the world, and to her pen. Lady Lindsay, Mrs. Stannard, Mrs. Edward Kennard, and Mrs. Laffan are all to be known through their novels; also Miss Olive Shreiner and the authoress of *Some Emotions and a Moral*. All of them take literature seriously; their own especially so. Miss Marie Corcelli is in similar case; but we are afraid to say more about her. Of the literary ladies who are exceptions to the rule that "Women who Write" are in strict accord with their writings, only two instances occur at this moment. These are Lady Jeune and Mrs. Mona Caird, who are

among the most charming women of our acquaintance. To read Lady Jeune, you would think her severe and puritanic in the extreme: embodiment of the spirit of all the Covenanters. She is the very opposite; yet it must not be supposed that either herself or her social essays are disingenuous. She is thoroughly in earnest when she takes pen in hand to write a few words to *The North American Review* or to *The National*; but, unlike most literary ladies, she knows that the Thoughtful Person, especially if it be a woman, is not seemly, not effectual, in real life; and is wisely as bright as a butterfly. Similarly, whosoever is introduced to Mrs. Mona Caird in fear and trembling suffers without cause. She is as gentle and winning as Mrs. Lynn Linton would always be if the girl of the period would be kind enough to depart this life. You could not imagine anyone less fitted to suppose that marriage could possibly be a failure.

After the ladies the bards; and first of the bards Mr. Wilde, because Mr. Wilde is very feminine. That is the first impression—your impression when under the spell of his soft manners, his coy intonations, his frank acquiescence in your knowledge that he is a poet. (There is only another poet among our acquaintances who is not inclined to derogate the idea). Still, Mr. Wilde is manly enough at heart. You will find that out for yourself if, happening to talk politics with him, you express any doubt as to whether his countrymen would fight for England if we chanced to be landed in a war. Then who shall say there is not a very manly tone throughout *Lady Windermere's Fan*? (We won't mention *Dorian Gray*). It is a tone of cynical manliness, no doubt; but that, in these days, is not an

unhealthy symptom. Cynicism was never yet known to be real, and in Mr. Wilde's case it is very unreal indeed. Still, it is not useless. There are two unrealities in the mental attitudes in which men and women hold themselves towards life. There is the unreality of the belief that humanity is so desperately wicked that it behoves us to envelop ourselves, by way of example, in a High Moral Tone; also there is the unreality of modern cynicism, which exaggerates the virtue of men and women at large in order that we may be rid for a time of the self-imposed and rather impious duty of being avowedly moral. The worst we can say of Mr. Wilde is that he has wholly abandoned himself to the mood of the hour; the best, that there has never been any mood of the hour which has not had some spirit of good in it—which is, perhaps, an unanswerable justification. Mr. Swinburne you would never know to be a poet at all. He will talk to you about swimming, Home Rule, sport, scholarship (his, perhaps, is the widest scholarship in England)—anything but poetry, at least his own;—and a most charming companion he is—urbane and bright; and modest to a degree which makes you wonder, in shame, what on earth you are doing in his presence. Lord Lytton was a man of the same type: only, he, who had (as it were) a wider manner of the world, was not so much afflicted with reserve about himself. Like Lord Beaconsfield—"I too am a gentlemen of the Press," he said; "and I wear no prouder escutcheon."—Lord Salisbury seems to remember that first of all he is a man of letters. He chats very happily about his *Saturday Review* days; and is no wise concerned to dispute the (borrowed) estimate of the Nonconformist Conscience, that he is "a master

of flouts and jeers." Many things in this age are none the worse for a flouting and a jeering; and men of letters, as distinct from "Men and Women who Write," are the men to do it. Mr. William Watson has been indisposed so long that it would be rash to estimate him with much assurance; but he too, from what we know of him, resembles most great poets in being a manly fellow first, and a singer (as it were) casually. Mr. Theodore Watts is not unconscious that he is skilled in the building of a sonnet; but neither does he, in private life, seem primarily a poet. There is no practical affair in which he is not interested, and, so far as we have seen, none in which he is not able to instruct you. Of Mr. Alfred Austin we could write a volume without exhausting the subject. He is even more poetical than his lyrics—which is saying much. Like Mr. Wilde, he has a good deal of the woman in his manner; but there is no lack of virility under his pretty ways. Of him more than of any other bard now among us, it may be said that the poetry is the man. He is as open as April in *Fortunatus*, and as delightful in his candour. We are unacquainted with Mr. William Morris and Mr. Lewis Morris. Apart from them, all the poets, it is notable, are Tories—very high Tories indeed.

If we were to call the roll of the men prose-writers, this paper would fill *The Spirit Lamp* for two or three numbers. Besides, to hop from the bards to the prosaists were an anti-climax. Suffice it to say that all the men novelists of our acquaintance—Mr. Blackmore, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Mallock, Mr. Black, Mr. Julian Sturgis, Mr. Charles Eden, Mr. Besant, Mr. Rider Haggard, Mr. Barrie, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Gilbert Parker, Mr. Hall

Caine—are (with a possible exception in the case of Mr. Caine) very unlike “Men who Write” in their personal manners; and that the same may be said of Mr. Edmund Gosse (partly), Mr. Andrew Lang (with emphasis), Mr. Churton Collins, Mr. Augustine Birrell, Mr. Kebbel, Mr. Frederick Greenwood, Mr. Courthope, and other essayists; as well as of all the able editors, most notably Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Henley, Mr. Sidney Low, Mr. Hutton, Mr. Townsend, and Mr. Cust.

In short, whilst the aphorism that “the style is the man” is applicable to almost all the “Women who Write,” it is inapplicable to nearly all the men; but it is so only in a certain sense. It is inapplicable to them as men of the world, because, unlike women, men, in their commerce with society, are apt to be in terror lest they should be regarded as notabilities, and inclined to be ashamed of earnestness of any kind. This is true despite the fact that in some cases fellows of frivolous manners are seriously philosophic, and even religious, in their books, and that in other cases there is what Mr. Quiller Couch calls a “Come!-wade-with-me-in-gore” tone in the novels of youths whose manners are mild and chest-measurements small. In these cases, the style, if it be not quite the man, is the man as he would like to be: which, if we had two more pages at our disposal, we could show to be pretty much the same thing.

FLÂNEUR.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS died at Rome on Wednesday, April 19th, after an attack of pneumonia that lasted only two days.

It is not necessary here to make any detailed reference to his life and literary work. Suffice it to say that the world has lost in him a sweet poet, and a biographer, translator, and essayist, as learned, as graceful, and as brilliant as any that it has ever known. Only those who knew him can realize what a friend and what a man he was. A man of a kindlier heart or a sweeter nature has never lived.

It is only three months since, drawing a bow at a venture, I wrote to John Addington Symonds asking him for a contribution to the *Spirit Lamp*, a request which he complied with by sending the lines "To Leander" (some of the best he ever wrote) which appeared in the February number of this magazine, and a letter of kind encouragement and interest which came like a sunbeam in mid-winter. From that time to this he has been as much to my life as the sun is to a flower, and to read again his last letter written three days before he died, and received on the very day of the announcement of his death in the papers, is like

drinking the last drop of a great well which one had thought would spring for ever in a thirsty land, how thirsty who shall tell seeing how small a way I have walked in it? Alas! too, he had not finished his work, there was more to do; there were chains he might have loosened, and burdens he might have lifted; chains on the limbs of lovers and burdens on the wings of poets. I can say no more. Words, words, words,—what are they? Only I see before me the bleak bare space in the way, and hear in the air the beating of the wings of the angel of Death.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.



SICILIAN LOVE SONG.

WILL the hot sun never die ?
He shines too bright, too long.
How slow the hours creep by !
Will the thrush never finish her song ?
She is singing too merrily.

Oh when will the moon come, pale,
And strange ? I am weary, I wait
For the sad sad nightingale
Ever sobbing insatiate.
Will the day-light never fail ?

Take wings relentless light,
Die quick unlovely sun !
For my love will come with the night
When the dreary day is done.
Come soon ! come soon ! sweet night !

His lips are sweet and red,
Where starlight and moonlight mingle
We will make our bridal bed,
Down in the cool dark dingle,
When the long day is dead.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R.T.—See Notice to Correspondents; you did not send your name and address. Your poems were very nice, but not quite good enough to put in.

A.R.B.—I like your story very much, but I dare not publish it. Your verses are crowded out of this number, but I will put them in my next.—ED.

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