

**Impressions & comments : second series, 1914-1920 / Havelock Ellis.**

**Contributors**

Ellis, Havelock, 1859-1939.

**Publication/Creation**

London : Constable & Co., [1926]

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*ALSO BY HAVELOCK ELLIS*

THE DANCE OF LIFE

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS

(Three Series)

THE TASK OF SOCIAL HYGIENE

THE SOUL OF SPAIN

AFFIRMATIONS

THE WORLD OF DREAMS



*HAVELOCK ELLIS*  
IMPRESSIONS  
& COMMENTS

*SECOND SERIES*

*1914-1920*

CONSTABLE & COMPANY LTD.

10-12 ORANGE STREET · LONDON, W.C. 2

11526150

*First published . . . 1921*

*New Edition . . . 1926*

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## IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS

*January 5, 1914.*—I see that Professor Saville of the Archaeological Department of Columbia University recently found that among the early inhabitants of Ecuador, some hundred thousand years ago, carious teeth were bored and filled with gold and cement, loose teeth also being held together by gold bands, all contrived to show as little as possible ; dentistry, in short, in its aims and methods, was already on much the same level as among us.

We imagine that the refinements of luxury are the achievements of our modern times, the cheerful signs of our exalted Civilisation or the damning proofs of our increasing Degeneration. But, with all our effort, we hardly reach back to any stage of Human History or Pre-history when the same state of things—call it Civilisation or Degeneration—was not flourishing in the same degree, and even in the same forms.



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So it was that even in the romantic days of the semi-barbarous Elizabethan age, as we choose to suppose it, the end of dinner was announced by

. . . a silver basin

Full of rose-water and bestrewed with flowers.

And that in the classic days that fell more than a thousand years earlier Athenaeus brought together such a vast collection of refined luxuries to his marvellous Banquet ; and that long before Homer the men of Crete constructed their sanitary conveniences on exactly the same principles which it is the boast of modern hygiene to devise, while the costumes of their women, whose portraits were first lately revealed, evoked the surprised comment, " But they are Parisians ! " And now, in an age too far back to measure by human records, long before the traditional date of the creation of the World, we find men and women going to the dentist's to have their teeth stopped with gold.

We see here what Gourmont has called, perhaps a little pompously, " the Law of Intellectual Constancy," according to which there has always been the same amount of intellect in the world. You may put your Golden Age at the beginning of human history

or at the end. In either case you will be justified.

*January 15.*—Ortvay appears to have shown that, not only the whole of prehistoric research, but the very constitution of our teeth and our stomach, show that Man is an All-eater, *Homo omnivorax*.

This completely agrees with the view that has always seemed to me most reasonable. It is also the only view consistent with a high position of Man in the animal and spiritual world. No being could achieve physical and spiritual success who was not able to eat all things eatable. The highest evolution of organic complexity, the widest intellectual comprehension, the most versatile aesthetic sensibility, are inextricably bound up with that fact.

Loria, the distinguished Italian economist, who has ably and comprehensively discussed the synthesis of income, reaches a definite conclusion: in the past all forms of coercive association in the constitution of income have been exhausted, and now there only remains to adopt free association. It is not otherwise in the income of the organic body. The income



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of the body is not placed on a sound foundation until, with the coming of Man on earth, the basic natural fact of free association was recognised in the selection and combination of the elements of food. It is Man's part to exercise a fine economy of choice in an inexhaustible wealth of choice.

Those human people who wish to lay down arbitrary taboos on eating and drinking for the benefit of other people are always fair game. And have in some countries been eaten.

*February 11.*—There is no moment when I feel more at home in England, more English, and more proud of being so, than when I note the outbreak of that most quintessential English quality, the love of individual liberty. In other more or less allied countries, in the United States, in France, in Belgium, there is, or there has been under some aspect at some period, a jealous appreciation of the rights of the individual,—so long as he observed the elementary rules of law and order,—to his own liberty of action even when that liberty ran counter to the notions of the mob. But at the present day there is no country where so fierce and sensitive a resentment guards the attacks on



this liberty. See, in spite of all subtle encroachments, the freedom which we give to prostitutes in our streets, and the welcome which—notwithstanding our own arbitrary arrogance in India or in Egypt—we still accord to the political exiles of other lands. Or consider those South African strike-leaders deported back to our shores under martial law. One may admire the gentle vigour, the iron hand in the silk glove, which marked that action, and admit that possibly it was justified, but one enjoys the true British rage which greets that deportation.

I know how this feeling has become centred in England, a net in the sea to catch all the wild and restless free men whom their own countries irked or their own countries cast out. It is no special virtue ; I know how it came about, but I share it.

So it pleases me to see how the prim moralist and the enterprising policeman are forced to adopt all the shiftiest tricks of their respective crafts so they may avoid offending that profound instinct of the Englishman. Let them but offend, let them but seem to offend, by deviating a hair's breadth from their shifty path, and I rejoice to see the righteous ferocity of the Englishman flare up as he seizes the

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offender by the throat and flings him into the gutter.

*February 12.*—I have just seen *Parsifal* on its first introduction to England at Covent Garden, and I am impelled to compare this new impression of the opera with my early impression, some twenty years ago, at Baireuth. On the whole the new experience fails to bring the satisfaction and joy of the earlier experience. I ask myself why that is so. Is it my feeling for *Parsifal* that has changed? Or is it a matter of environment? I assume at the outset that no experience can ever be repeated, and that one can “never bathe twice in the same stream.”

Certainly the environment counts for much. Baireuth was a shrine of art towards which converged processions of pilgrims from many lands. The Temple on the hillside and all its attendant circumstances were calculated, in a degree unparalleled in the modern world, to evoke an inspiring enthusiasm of art. And everything there was pioneering, even the austere simplicity of the stage scenery, even the solemn shifting of that scenery before our eyes, a delicious revelation of the frank accept-



ance of an artificial convention. Covent Garden also has its own charm of convention. I seldom enter it without a thrill of delight at its antique, ascetic, eighteenth-century air. But a sacred temple of art, that one could no more call it than one could a very different building, the Opera in Paris. It is just a music hall, like any other, only a little more fashionable, where people go to digest their dinners by listening to music which lulls them with its agreeable familiarity. And in so far as the audience to-night was not of that type, and certainly to a large extent it was not, one received a painful shock. These people were not pilgrims to a shrine of art, but—they had come to church! There were smug young curates bringing their frail old mothers and doubtless seeking inspiration for next Sunday's sermon. And there was no applause! It was solemnly hushed down. These people had forgotten, if they ever knew, that when Wagner arrived for the first performance of *Parsifal* he brought with him in the carriage a large barrel of lager beer.

This environment has itself an inevitable reaction on one's feeling towards the opera. I begin to look at *Parsifal* in a new light, not as a work of art, but as a *pastiche* of religious notions which are still alive. I feel that I am



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asked to take the Grail scene as an Anglican Communion, Kundry as a Mary Magdalene, and Parsifal himself as a reincarnation of Jesus. *Parsifal* no longer seems the superb echo of the romance of the early Christian world, but merely an attempt to revive the waning zeal of Little Bethel.

*February 16.*—I sometimes wonder whether every civilisation may not tend to accelerate its own destruction by developing among its members an undue rapidity of nervous reaction, and at the same time by its skill in mechanical invention to make it possible for that unduly swift nervous reaction to exercise a still more unduly swift influence on the conduct of affairs. In all conduct of affairs—and the more so with the growth of civilisation, for that involves increased complexity—nothing is so necessary as prolonged time for reflection. Whatever, therefore, tends to lessen undue speed of nervous reaction, whatever tends to increase the difficulty of translating nervous reaction into practical action, so that reflection may achieve its perfect work, will make for the good of the world. How many people realise this? One asks the question when one sees the popular

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applause which greets all the efforts of human ingenuity which make for the reverse end.

We are told of Lord Lyons, an extremely able and very characteristically English diplomatist, whose prudence averted more than one war, that the only credit he ever took to himself was that he had "resisted the temptation 'to do something,' which always besets one when one is anxious about a matter." Can we claim that the nervous tension we now cultivate and the ideals of mere speed which we have set before us in the mechanism of life are calculated to aid us in resisting that temptation?

*February 22.*—It often strikes me how different reading is when one has garnered in the greater part of life's experiences from what it was when one was still at the seed-time of life. When one is very young, to read is as it were to pour a continuous stream of water on a parched and virginal plain. The soil seems to have an endless capacity to drink up the stream, sometimes with prolonged perpetual rapture, sometimes with impartial calm indifference, endlessly, unpausingly, with never a disturbing echo.

But when one is no longer young, to read is



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a very different matter. The parched plain has become a luxuriant forest with lakes and streams in the midst of it. Every image which enters it evokes ancient visions from the depth of its waters, and every tone rustles among the trees with a music so rich in haunting memories that one grows faint beneath their burden.

So now, when I open a book, it often enough happens that I lay it down, satisfied, on the page at which I opened.

*March 16.*—People may be divided into two classes: the people who like to drink the dregs of their cup, and the people whose instinctive preference it is to leave the dregs. This is a distinction which cuts deep into the moral life. The people of the first class are usually counted the more interesting, and necessarily they are able to extract more out of life, more pain, and possibly more pleasure, though one may question the quality of the extract.

Personally I am more in sympathy with those who belong to the other class. I have no wish to be in at the death of anything, and though it is true I have followed the Blatant

Beast to his captivity, I would usually prefer to leave a beautiful book unfinished ; I have never finished Dante's *Divina Commedia*, nor yet that human comedy, Casanova's *Mémoires*. Even when the restaurant band was playing, just now, a piece I like, I came out, by choice, before the end, even near the beginning, and find my pleasure thereby heightened. It is only so that we gain the possession of unending things. A man of this type, we may be sure, invented that legend of the monk who was called away to matins or evensong at the moment when a vision of the Virgin was vouchsafed to him. And, lo ! the vision was still there when he returned to his cell.

*March 31.*—I wandered through the Palazzo Davanzati, delighted with the picture it presents of a reconstituted fourteenth-century Florentine house, as we may please to imagine to ourselves that its mediaeval inhabitants were accustomed to have it, even with the bed-clothes still on the beds and the wine still in the glasses on the table. It was almost deserted, but for a few English, and with a group of them in a farther room the attendant was absorbed in the task of earning a few



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supererogatory *soldi*. In the large hall was a young Englishman with his old mother. The Englishman, carelessly smoking a cigar, was lifting all the delicate objects for examination, strumming on the spinet, and generally assuming the lofty airs of the true-born Englishman outside England. His mother, from a little distance, turned round from time to time and anxiously remonstrated with him : " You must not touch the things. It is forbidden." He continued on his course imperturbably and silently. The old lady grew sarcastic : " And you call yourself a Government official ! What *will* they say ? " At last came the slow and emphatic answer : " I *don't* know and I *don't* care."

It seemed to me a highly typical English answer. I realised that the great doings of the English in the world, for good or for evil, have been largely built up on a basis of Not Knowing and Not Caring.

*April 2.*—This skilfully restored Mausoleum of Galla Placidia surely remains one of the supreme jewels of art. In this dim little chamber we seem to see the finest moment in the development of mosaic, by no means the

latest, for the later mosaics of the monumental church of San Vitale close by are far less beautiful. Here mosaic is simple and free and altogether lovely. There is an immortal serenity in the blue and starry dome which slowly grows clearly visible in the soft light diffused through the golden window slabs. See, above the entrance, the young Shepherd Christ and his sheep; the lyrical beauty and grace of that vision can nowhere be surpassed in this Ravenna whose old church walls are haunted by shadowy processions of solemn mosaic figures. Here is one of the shrines of our western world.

*April 3.*—A city wonderfully made up of ancient relics of building. In every backyard, it would seem as one glances in, there is a rare old well-head, or a few ancient columns, or a colossal head of Jupiter propped up on the ground to dry old rags. And one finds here all the germs in art of the Middle Ages, the beginnings of Romanesque and the beginnings, too, of Islamism. Even the abounding pierced stone-work is evidently the source of the fascinating pierced *moucharabia* work which seems so peculiarly Islamic. One sees, too,



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that what furnished the germs of these great movements was not—as one may have been incautiously led to suppose from seeing the crude reflections of it in the North—something rudimentary and primitive, but a very noble, living, and highly developed art—large, serene, accomplished—fitted for fine ends. San Vitale was a great work of living art, the work of highly skilled and large-brained artists who knew how to adjust their work adequately to the ends they sought. The Northerners disfigured this work in their rough attempts to imitate or to steal it, but their instinct was right when they came here for their inspiration. I see now that Ravenna, perhaps even more than Constantinople, and certainly more than Rome,—which had already begun to lose vitality,—was the direct source of the civilisation of our modern world.

*April 5.*—In Bologna one understands the Bolognese school of painting. I do not love those painters—on this point my tastes are completely conventional—but I see how they were the direct outcome of their environment, and that they even possess a realistic truth. Bologna is scarcely a beautiful city,—as Florence, I have this time at length definitely



realised, certainly is,—but it is a city with a strongly marked character of its own. Everywhere it is brown, and where there are no bricks and no terra-cotta—both of which abound—there are brown washes and brown paint. The ever-present arcades, recalling the Spanish city of Palencia, not only offer perpetual vistas of gloom and dark archways, but they necessarily lead to gloom in the ground floors of the houses, so that artificial light is needed even when the lightest rain is falling from an overcast sky on an April day. The Bolognese are habituated to gloom, even their churches are darker than is usual in Italy, and the fundamental character of light and shade in the Bolognese masters, as well as their prevailing colours, were already determined in the structure of their city. They painted what they saw. I seem also to discern here something of the characteristics and costumes of the people in the Bolognese pictures, though the type which I most easily recall from those pictures—the large dark eyes and dark skin, the fresh red colouring of the full face—was more present in Ravenna than it is here, where it now seems only to survive among the poorest and in peasants from the country outside.



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*April 6.*—I have no love for Italian churches, and never linger in them long and lovingly as so often in Spanish churches, Barcelona and Gerona and Palma and Zaragoza and Toledo and Palencia and Salamanca and Astorga—all the churches of all the beautiful cities whose glorious names I tell on the beads of memory. There is no genius for church architecture in Italy, because, I suppose, there is no genius for worship. (How could there be a genius for worship in the land that produced ancient Rome?) Italian Gothic is never Gothic in spirit, and scarcely in form. The campanile of Giotto, which seemed to Ruskin the supreme achievement in architecture, is pretty, even exquisitely pretty; it would perhaps be equally pretty if it were twelve inches in height instead of nearly three hundred feet. There is no church in Florence wherein I love to linger. Santa Croce, within, gives one an enlarging sense of satisfaction, but as a pantheon rather than as a church. Here at Bologna, San Petronio, which approaches more nearly than usual to living Gothic and contains so many interesting things, gives me no pleasure at all, and the smell of dirt which assails one at the entrance into an atmosphere of human effluvia such as I have never breathed in any Spanish



church would alone suffice to sicken any sense of pleasure, if such sense there were. Of all the interesting things it holds, I am only likely to carry away the memory of two, especially the first, which enjoys the advantage of being outside, the lovely reliefs of Jacopo da Quercia, with their free and delightful feeling for beauty, around the central portal, representing Bible history from the days when Adam delved and Eve span onwards. And then there is the Knight whom we see in coloured effigy on his tomb inside, near the west door, the youth who, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, as I learn from the inscription, having lost at gaming, angrily struck with his dagger the image of the Madonna outside the church, thereby knocking off a finger of the Divine Bambino, whereupon, filled with horror at his own deed, he fell to the ground powerless, was seized by the ministers of the church and condemned to death for his sacrilegious act. But then a miracle occurred. The youth recovered his lost vigour. We might have put this down to the natural elasticity of youth, but in the fifteenth century it was obviously the direct action of the pitiful Madonna. In the end the youth was pardoned and the Madonna's image removed to the interior of



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the church to receive the worship of all good Christians. So all ended well for everybody.

*April 22.*—I see that, in narrating his medical experiences, a physician records a case of what he terms true physiological death. A gentleman of sound heredity, excellent health, and a well-tempered mind, a good business man and a keen sportsman, living a life that was hygienically perfect, when approaching the age of sixty put all his money for greater convenience into a single investment—it was, we are told, the only time he was known to do a dubiously wise action—and shortly after lost nearly the whole of it, finding himself not indeed in abject poverty but no longer in affluence. Thereupon mind and body slowly collapsed and faded away. In a few weeks the man was dead. The autopsy revealed absolutely nothing wrong.

The reasons for living are not the same in all persons, and we may not all of us consider the loss of fortune a completely adequate reason for leaving the world. Yet to how many the thought of such a possibility of death must at some moment in their lives come deliciously ! When we have, foolishly or wisely, put all our

treasure—no matter whether the treasure of our money or our love—in one place and awake some morning to find that it is gone and our hearts are bankrupt, what is there left? There could be nothing better but to melt and fade away without the painful and wearisome interlude of disease. “What is better for a heart,” says Arthur Symons in his last volume of poems, “than to sleep and be out of pain?”

*May 20.*—It sometimes seems to me that one may regard a man's attitude towards the movement of the birth-rate as a test of his relationship to Nature, and a criterion of his right to live in the world. There is nothing so natural as natality, nothing that is so intimately connected with the physical and the psychic mystery of life. The man who places himself in opposition to its manifestations is a disturbing clog in the mechanism of the world's wheels. At the present moment all the great live communities of men all over the world are concerned in regulating and ordering more reasonably, if not more eugenically, the output of babies which once was left, not to Nature, which is Order, but to the fate of Chance, which is Disorder. Civilisation is bound up



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with the success of that movement. The man who rejoices in it and strives to further it is alive ; the man who shudders and raises impotent hands against it is merely dead, even though the grave yet yawns for him in vain. He may make dead laws and preach dead sermons, and his sermons may be great and his laws may be strong and rigid. But as the wisest of men saw, twenty-five centuries ago, the things that are great and strong and rigid are the things that stay below in the grave. It is the things that are delicate and tender and supple that stay above. And at no point is life so tender and delicate and supple as at the point of sex. There is the Triumph of Life.

*May 29.*—It would be amazing, if it were not tragic, to watch the spectacle of Morality as it is played out on the scene of modern life. In reality nothing is simpler than the moral process of life. Whatever men see the majority of their fellows doing, that they call Morality : whatever they see done by the minority outside that compact majority—a minority which is of course partly in advance and partly behind the main body—that they call Immorality. This is a commonplace which has often been



set forth. Yet how few there are who accept it simply and act in accordance with it! The mechanism is beautifully right, and yet they all want to stick a mischievous hand into it. If they belong to the compact majority they can never refrain from vituperating the small advance guard in front of them or the larger rearguard (blackguard they called it of old) behind them. And if they belong to either of the minorities, their sneers and their contempt for the great compact majority are equally persistent. And yet it takes all of them to make a world. Their vituperation and their sneers are of less account than what wind blows. Whatever happens, there must always be a majority and there must always be a minority. Nothing can destroy Morality. Nor can anything destroy Immorality. All that happens is that the minority of one age becomes the majority of the next, as the old majority subsides into a minority.

No educated person nowadays refuses to see that the world went just as well in the days of the old classic morality as in the days of the later Christian morality, and that neither was so much worse or so much better than the Nondescript morality of our own days. Yet they were quite different sorts of moralities,

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and consecrate quite different virtues. Every age has its own morality. A new morality is in every age knocking at the door. It is our best part to welcome the coming guest and to speed the parting guest.

*June 4.*—"He who recalls an object which has once charmed him desires to possess it again, and under the same circumstances," Spinoza laid down. And on that declaration Gourmont comments truly: "But the circumstances are never the same, and that is why one is deceived by women as well as by books. When a woman has not deceived us, it is because we have failed to penetrate all her mystery, superior to changing circumstances, and to our changing selves."

That is a profound verity, which we may pass by unthinkingly because it seems not to touch us. Yet one day we may find that it touches us, even at the heart's core. Who of us possesses some idolised woman, or some idolised book, and finds not, sooner or later, that he has, as Gourmont so graciously phrases it, failed to penetrate the woman's, or the book's, mystery?

Spinoza's road has led men joyously by



faith over many stony paths, and set wings to their feet, and inspired their hearts to tasks which, without that faith, they could never have achieved or attempted. That is the Road of Life.

Gourmont's road has led men painfully to penetrate the mysteries they thought they knew and to pierce to deeper truths than they had ever conceived, to learn humility for themselves and tenderness for others, and reverence to that Nature who is ever a magic Fiction and a divine Illusion. That also is the Road of Life.

So that if we are truly alive we shall accept the one Road as joyfully as we accept the other Road.

*June 6.*—For many months I have had no inclination to enter a theatre. Ten days ago an impulse took me to Drury Lane, where for the first time I heard and saw Moussorgsky's *Boris Godonov*, with Chaliapin as the Tsar. Ever since, *Boris* has dwelt in my memory as a great manifestation of genius and beauty and strength, superbly rendered by consummate artists, and I feel that I cannot rest until I have seen it and heard it again.

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There can surely be no such fine actor as Chaliapin, no such gracious personality, on the operatic stage, and nowhere but from Russia could one find such a chorus, especially in the bass, that so penetrates, inspiring and sustaining, with such long reverberating echoes, into the heart. And then to see these Russians, these real Russians, the Russians of life and not of the stage, acting so simply and so naturally, reproducing all the gestures and attitudes that are so delicious to see once more for one who loves Russia and the Russians !

It is the genius of Moussorgsky which all these things so magnificently interpret. And Moussorgsky typifies the Genius of Russia : a gigantic untrained child, strong and playful and spontaneous, manifesting itself with a magnificently original energy, and yet with all the child's naïve simplicity, sweet and enormous, like that beautiful young girl-giantess, Elizabeth Lyska, who wandered out of Russia on to the music-hall stage of Europe a quarter of a century ago. That is the genius of Moussorgsky. That also is the Genius of Russia.

*June 13.*—The Salvation Army is holding a great International Congress in London, and



London is swarming with Salvationists. I realise more deeply, what I have often felt before, the special temperament of these people as it is written in their faces. The faces, often enough, were clearly of no rarely fine texture to work on, but one scarcely notices it any more, for these faces are lit by the flame of an inward divine joy which radiates human love through a transparent mask. They are faces full of an eager vitality which has blossomed out in the presence of human needs. There is no effort after holiness in these faces, nor any constraint of virtue, but complete relaxation. I realise here the truth of what I wrote thirty years ago, that even laughter has in it something of that dilatation of joy which is religion. They have realised that religion is not a dogma, a creed, a painful obedience to a rule, but just emotion. That is what has not been realised by those innumerable Christian sectarians whose faces are so moulded into painful artificiality by professionalism, by virtue, by continual tension, by, at the best, some heroic struggle. The Salvation Army has understood religious propaganda better than it has ever been understood since Loyola sent forth his Army with just this same pretence of militarism, the same zeal, the same supple adaptability to human

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needs, the same frank acceptance of emotion. And the religious emotion of these Salvationists is so natural and so human that we feel it jars not at all with mere earthly love. Look at that boy and girl wandering arm-in-arm along Fleet Street, so absorbed in each other's personality, as happily and as sweetly in love as though they were not Salvationists at all, but just mere cannibalistic unconverted heathens.

*June 17.*—There is no human soul in sight on this large expanse of breckland, nor likely to be all day long ; far away indeed one faintly discerns here and there a human habitation but no indication of human life. So here among luxurious elastic hillocks we choose our place of repose. Here we may spread our simple meal, here we may discourse of the whole universe or read from the books we have brought, *Yang Chu's Garden of Pleasure* and *Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles*, books that seem to harmonise with each other and with our mood of the moment : the wise old Chinese philosopher of twenty-two centuries ago, renouncing nothing, yet seeking nothing, content with the concord between Nature and the



Individual, with the possession of the absolutely essential things ; and that series of marvellously variegated scenes from the European life of the fifteenth century,—once attributed to the genius of Antoine de la Salle,—scenes all the more true to life because distorted by no moral, and under the unfamiliar disguise of ancient manners bringing so vividly before us the same problems of human nature which perplex us to-day.

It is a warm day but soft. The warmth of the sun and the coolness of the air seem at this delicately poised moment of the year to alternate rhythmically in delicious harmony. Afar from the eyes of men, we are free to open our garments and so far as we will to fling them off, so that sun and air alike may play deliciously through on our flesh. Here is the atmosphere of Giorgione's Concert. Here is the Wilderness of Omar Khayyám. Yet still it is England, and our jug of wine is ale and the larks furnish our music.

In a few days, among the crowds of London streets, this day will seem to both of us a dream that was never lived in the world.

*June 18.*—It is a significant but at first

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sight a puzzling fact that the single surviving chapter of the philosophy of Yang Chu has come down to us embedded in the Taoist writings of Lieh Tzu. That is to say, that a disciple of Lao-Tze, the supreme mystic,—so delicately disdainful of the material and sensuous side of the world, so incomparable an artist in building the Universe out of Nothing,—has been the sole means of handing to us across more than two millenniums the brief utterances of the great philosophical anarchist who carried to the extreme point the Economy of Philosophy, and taught that if we know how to confine ourselves to the wise activity of the senses, the world would become a scene of perfect harmony, and of perfect joy, for all men.

It is puzzling, but only at first sight. For the mystic explanation of the Universe is the ultimate explanation and the largest. The philosophy of Lao-Tze could not have been comprised within that of Yang Chu. But within the philosophy of Lao-Tze there is room for all the sensuous joyousness and all the cynical daring of Yang Chu. The conventional moralists, after the manner of their kind, from his own day even to ours, have viewed Yang Chu with almost unspeakable reprobation. His Garden of Pleasure has found its



immortal refuge beneath the shield of Lao-Tze the Mystic.

*June 20.*—We went a pleasant walk to-day with the excuse of exploring one of the houses of the People's Refreshment House Association, a type of house I have never come across in my adventures among country inns.

This was a small inn in a very small village remote from any town. The village is indeed merely a few scattered houses around the church, a dilapidated church with roof so leaky that pools lie on its pavements. The inn, which stands opposite the church, was until lately even more dilapidated, a dirty and ruinous hole, we were told by the cheery and vigorous landlady who, with her husband, an old soldier, now manages the place under the Association's control.

To-day, with hard work and clearly no very great outlay, but obviously under the eye of a clever directing feminine mind from London, the old place has been transformed, and yet at the same time brought nearer to its original aspect. All the old features of the building are retained and emphasised, where they are useful and beautiful, but modern features are

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boldly introduced whenever modern demands make them desirable, regardless of archaeological harmony. Here is the bar-room where the village rustics may sit and drink as in any other public-house; for alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are alike supplied, and of the best quality, though the manager receives no profit on the alcoholic drinks and the walls are not covered by their manufacturers' advertisements. Here, also, are two neat, fresh, and pleasant bedrooms upstairs where the weary visitor from town may inhale the deep rural peace of this pleasant spot and listen to the song of its birds.

Reason is one, and the forms of unreason are many. The forces of Drink have joined hands with the forces of Teetotalism to attack the reasonable Temperance of the People's Trust, and have sometimes been successful. But Reason and Temperance, it seems, are not always crushed.

*June 22.*—We have walked some two miles from Worstead, through country lanes, on pilgrimage to the fourteenth-century iron-work on the south door of Tunstead Church. Worstead, though its name is known wherever the



English language is spoken, is to-day but a sleepy, straggling, almost deserted village around its boldly placed magnificent church, set in a frame of the most gorgeously poppy-stained fields that one may well find in England. Tunstead is a still more insignificant village, only inhabited by a few agricultural labourers, and its vicar leaves his work among the roses of his garden to fetch the very long and venerable key, the key of the south door, and with a glance, in these days of sacrilegious suffragettes, at the little bag my companion carries, he entrusts it to our keeping. As we approach the door a doubt almost begins to formulate itself. That iron-work—merely a boss for the handle, over the key-hole, and a spreading scroll-work of foliage in relief, so delicate and so consummate—can it really be five centuries old and not of yesterday? But the growth of such a doubt is speedily checked. We do not live in a world where iron springs into life so simply and so exquisitely as here, with so careless a grace of immaculate perfection. There is nothing in it, its rising and drooping curves are spontaneous and effortless, and the sight of it, even the vision of it in memory, may yet well be an inspiring joy for ever.

Tunstead Church is not unworthy to be the

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home of the finest jewel of artistry in iron-work which England owns. The vicar is tirelessly seeking for funds to accomplish repairs and restorations, but at present one cannot easily find any church in England which is at the same time so full of antique beauty and so untouched. The fine rood screen of the fifteenth century, not to be compared for its paintings to the unparalleled screen at Ranworth a few miles away, is yet more typically English. And here is the platform for the rood still left standing aloft, level with the doorway in the arch, and the marks in the beam of the body and limbs of the rood itself are still as clear to see as though the crucifix had been torn down yesterday and not nearly four hundred years ago. Even more interesting, and new evidence of the perpetual originality of our English churches, is the raised stone platform, about a yard wide, extending across the east wall of the chancel, with a vaulted chamber beneath and a grating open to the steps leading to the platform on the north side and a door to the chamber on the south. No one knows what this platform was for. But the whole arrangement, as others have pointed out, was admirably adapted for Mystery Plays. with the grating as a trap-door



to Hell, and the people of Tunstead perhaps anticipated my own opinion as to the virtues of a Church as Theatre.

That was long centuries ago. To-day the descendants of those people of Tunstead under whose eyes, probably by whose hands, perhaps by their brains, the daring and unique grace of this church developed, are a handful of agricultural labourers, only born to sow and to reap and to consume the perishing fruits of the earth.

*June 27.*—This is Yarmouth and to-day is Market-day. It is pleasant to recall the memory of a brief visit some twenty years ago, to confirm and extend the impressions then received. The only “sea-side resorts” which to me are pleasant or even tolerable are those which, like Fécamp, possess an organic life of their own and an individual aspect of their own, not those which are mere feeding patches for parasitic visitors.

Yarmouth has always possessed, and still retains, an ample, dignified, characteristic life of its own. It is in consequence of this self-conscious, individual, slowly matured organic life that it is so pleasant to wander about

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Yarmouth, whether through its great open spaces or its narrow ancient "rows," which yet seem never the abode of abject unsavoury poverty.

Yarmouth has always had a closely knit collective life which I attribute in part to its position of antagonism in relation to neighbouring towns and in part to the unity of its interests as a fishing town. Hence it is, no doubt, that of all large English towns Yarmouth is the town of a single church, and that the largest parish church in England, the Church of St. Nicholas, the fisherman's patron, who has so many churches also on the opposite coast.

I see, indeed, in Yarmouth and its people the intimate evidence of close contact, of real relationship, with the people and the civilisation of the opposite Low Countries. It is visible even in the most conspicuous traits of their architecture. Here are the step-like gables of Antwerp, and the curved gables of Haarlem, and the broad house-doors of Delft. The most delightful jewel of domestic architecture here, the almshouses for old fishermen in the Market-Place, is English yet with an exotic flavour of Flanders. Even the people have in their veins the same enriching alien element. See these



countrywomen and girls who have brought their produce into the market, often so bright-eyed and so well-spoken, and always so vividly alive ; those old unions with Flemish stocks from across the sea have clearly created new elements which we shall scarcely find in either of the parent stocks. The gain has certainly been to the women at least as much as to the men. These clearly are the women whose grandmothers buried their men in the neighbouring churchyard and duly inscribed on the gravestone, after the defunct's name, the leading fact that he was the husband of so and so. And what a charming market they set forth ! I do not know where in England one may find so attractive a market. For one notes, as nowhere else in England, so far as I know, a touch of the artist, however crude and elementary. See the almost pathetic little traces of taste, everywhere visible, how the bundles of flowers are placed around the joints of meat and between the fowls, and how pictorially these fowls are dressed for the cook, they might have come out of a Dutch or Flemish picture ; everywhere there is some curious little touch of feeling for arrangement or for colour, even in the way these three or four white eggs are placed on a heap of delicately green beans,

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every woman seeming to wish to blend harmoniously the varied produce she has brought to market. I realise that I am in the region which is the chief centre of English painting, the home of Crome and of Cotman, of Gainsborough and of Constable.

*July 2.*—I sometimes wonder why I can be so well content to make a meal off bread and an artichoke, though I had nearly reached middle life before I attempted to eat an artichoke. I mean of course that artichoke which is a Composite flower, and not the tuber which claims to be a “Jerusalem artichoke,” although it is not an artichoke and never came from Jerusalem.

Perhaps my satisfaction is in part due to the very fact that it is a flower, a beautiful and noble flower on its massive stalk, and indeed—though eating flowers may have become a sort of fashion—the only flower of which in our clime one can make a meal. There is also a certain orderly and almost aesthetic progression towards the heart of it, so that a predilection for the artichoke seems to assume some degree of fine taste. And the pleasure of eating it is enhanced by the fundamental fact



that it is eaten with the fingers, for the food that we eat with our fingers is ever that which tastes sweetest ; the relative distaste for animal food must be associated with the fact that we have acquired a disgust for eating it with our fingers. There is finally the exhilaration of the miracle that what remains of the meal is seemingly more than what constituted it, and so we are brought near to the days when twelve baskets full remained over at the end of some divine repast.

*July 4.*—After a period of drought we have had a day or two of rain ; now to-day again the sky is clear and the sun is bright. I sit in the Old Garden before the deep blaze of the roses and the penetrating blue of the delphiniums against the luminous greenery. I realise afresh how delicious a gift is the rain.

It has sometimes seemed strange to me that Henri de Régnier, who above all writers has celebrated the loveliness of the forms of water, hates rain. Certainly on our northern clime the benediction of rain is often too profusely poured. Yet, after all, there is no form of water more beneficent and even more delightful, so sweet to the ears as one listens to it

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from the shelter of one's bed, or to the touch as its soft beat overtakes one, or to the sense of smell as it evokes all the most delicate odours of the garden, or to the eyes which trace its fascinating path across the distant sky and watch the impact of its beautiful feet on the sea.

What would our London be without the rain which for ever washes its beauty fresh from stain and transforms its murky air into pure radiance ?

We feel the endless pathos of him who was "awearry of the sun," and surely there is some pathos also in them who are awearry of the rain.

*July 6.*—One is so often tempted in this world to allow oneself to be lashed into rage by its Intolerance, its Injustice, its Sordidness, its Imbecility, even its mere tame Monotony. And I am not at all sure that we do wrong to be angry, and that our Hate of Hate or our Scorn of Scorn is not fully justified.

Yet, after all, let us never forget also that we have been so constituted as to be able to regard the World as a Spectacle. Surely, the author of that fantastic book of *The Revelation*



of *St. John* has expressed not only the attitude of the man of science ("vicious types of character are not more numerous in one age than in another," is the result of Dr. Woods's painstaking investigation) but the eternal attitude of the artist. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This book may not altogether evoke our complete admiration. But no work of art ever written is based so largely on the sole sense of vision or more boldly metaphorises the World as a Spectacle.

*July 9.*—In the Upper House of Convocation yesterday the Bishops were called upon to express distress and apprehension at the large number of criminal assaults on children. They did so. The Archbishop of Canterbury rose to the occasion and declared that "the subject was so grave as to make one feel one was touching the very Gates of Hell; but there was something the Gates of Hell should not prevail against." Whereupon their Lordships "passed a resolution," in order to "demand yet further legislation on the subject." The

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Gates of Hell, they clearly saw, cannot prevail against a Parliamentary Bill.

One need scarcely pause to make the commonplace remark that whatever the efficacy of Parliamentary Bills as battering rams against the Gates of Hell, we can scarcely imagine any method more unlike the method of Jesus. Laws and law-makers, as Jesus saw them, are of this world. He disregarded with supreme contempt all the makeshifts of external regulation which cannot touch the soul. He was only concerned with realities.

It is a more serious matter that these Christians who so cheerfully, and so complacently, betray their Master, have on their side all the worldly wise and the secularistic and the atheistic, the general body of the Respectable Classes. They have all eaten of the same poisonous fruit, they all pursue the mirage of the same Artificial Paradise, they all dream of a world where evils will be removed by Parliamentary enactment. Let us but pass a new law, they cry, and all's well with the world.

What is the thirst for alcohol and morphia and all the poisons of the apothecary compared with the soul-destroying thirst for the poison of Laws ?



*July 21.*—When I ask myself what peoples of the world of the higher cultures have been more than others Artists, I find five whom I should place in the first rank: the Chinese (and subordinate to them the Koreans and the Japanese), the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Mediterranean peoples of Islam at a certain moment of their development, and the French.

The Chinese were supreme artists in philosophy and morals, in pottery, in painting, possibly in poetry; the Egyptians in architecture and sculpture and design generally; the Greeks in science and philosophy and poetry and sculpture; the Islamic peoples in domestic architecture and all the affairs of daily life; the French in architecture and painting and many minor activities as well. Moreover, all these peoples were not only supreme in more than one art, but they were supremely accomplished in the art of living itself; they revealed new forms of morality; they sought perfection in social relationships; they were artists in the smallest details of life; they knew of nothing so mean that it could not be made beautiful.

Other peoples have excelled at special points, as the English in poetry and the Dutch in painting and the Germans in music. But their artistic impulses have never been strong enough

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either to attain supremacy in many fields or to make the supreme conquest of life itself. There have only been the Chinese and the Egyptians and the Greeks and the peoples of Islam and now the French.

*July 24.*—Hartmann von der Aue in his *St. Gregory on the Rock* has described how for his great offences a man was chained to a rock in the sea for seventeen years. At the end of that time messengers came from Rome to the prisoner, purified and glorified by Punishment, to announce to him his election as Pope.

For many years I, and others, have maintained that the conception of Punishment is not of our time but a survival from the far past, and that it is our business to replace it by a more modern conception of the Protection of Society by the appropriate treatment, to the end of reformation, of those who offend against society. But I have never seen the complete modern decay of the old conception of Punishment more vividly illuminated than by this legend.

Punishment was a really living idea in the thirteenth century. And here we see that one of the greatest poets of that century thought it



perfectly natural and just that a man redeemed by the infliction of Punishment should be found meetest of all men to occupy the highest and most sacred post the world could offer. As a matter of fact, the Triple Crown was not regarded as a reward for Punishment even in the thirteenth century ; we only see that for a man who represented supremely the spirit of that age it was reasonable so to regard it.

But in this twentieth century not even the most minor of our poets would dream of canonising the most punished of our criminals, whosoever he may be, or of placing him upon even so much as the archiepiscopal throne of Canterbury. The conception of Punishment is a foreign body in our social system, a fossilised vestige of the past, done for and dead.

*July 28.*—Amid the endless procession of nondescript persons along the streets—who so often seem only differentiated, and that but a little, by their clothes—now and again one seems to perceive an indubitable person. As I was walking rapidly along near Victoria Station to-day, absorbed in my own thoughts, I chanced to pass closely a figure which in

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that brief single flash remains in memory, of all the undistinguished figures I have passed during the day, the vision of a Person. It drew my attention first by a doubt as to its sex. But the plain flat cap, set decisively on one side, and the man's light overcoat over the straight slender figure, a student's or an artist's, ended, one soon noted, in a blue skirt and little feminine feet. It was, too, one swiftly realised, a girl's face that fitted the figure so frankly simple in its originality, a grave sweet face, refined and intellectual, unassuming, almost shrinking, yet with the notable piquancy of a pronounced black down on the upper lip against the firmly toned matt background of the complexion. One thought of some Veronese or Paduan youth on the Shakespearian stage whose sister found it so easy to put on and off her brother's shape. A shy yet daring figure it was that passed me in that flash of vision, seeking to express itself, yet sad with the incompleteness of its own bisexual mystery.

*August 2.*—To-day, when war seems to be breaking out all over Europe, I take up the poems of Léon Deubel, that fine poet who



ended his life in despair at the age of thirty-five last year, and read the Preface by his friend Louis Pergaud.

What a different world ! If one thinks of it, surely a more adequate and satisfying world. For we see that when Man sets himself to tasks that are too great for him, when he attempts to create Empires and rule the world, in the infinite expansion of his imbecility and his impotence he becomes the incarnate Devil, in a very different sense from those "poor devils," as we condescendingly call them, who have fallen to the bottom of the social scale. Nothing can be more monstrous or more pitiful to-day—according as you like to take it—than the records of Emperors and Kings, of politicians and diplomatists. And the "poor devils" of our social state—whose chief crime is that they have not swept Europe and Kings and politicians off the face of the earth—when we look into their lives, come before us perfect in their human adequacy, even angels in their mutual charity and compassion.

Men talked of old of the judgements "written in Heaven" which reversed the judgements of earth, and one may well admit that even in the most scientific Heaven, wherever that may be established, it is the deeds of these "poor

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devils " which could most honourably be inscribed in letters of gold, when he has finally vanished from the barren earth, on the Tomb of Man.

So when Human Stupidity is threatening War on every hand, and we grow weary of Hell in High Places, let us turn with joy to these humble and fallen men on the midnight pavement of Paris who live, without knowing it, according to the Sermon on the Mount.

*August 10.*—How unfailingly the Irony of Providence has arranged that every country's function of Moral Consciousness shall be exercised vicariously by all the other countries ! To-day, for instance, see how the virtuous English moralists point to the mills of God in Germany. The harvest of blood and iron which Bismarck sowed is now being reaped and the sheaves to-morrow will be gathered home. The fatal annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, which had made Europe an armed camp during the greater part of the lives of all of us, was the predisposing cause of the present cataclysm, and the annexation of Bosnia was the exciting cause. Finally, another aggres-



sion, the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, will bring a swift vengeance on the evil-doers.

So in England we are able to exercise the function of moral consciousness for a large part of Europe, in England, which on the occasion of the Boer War aroused the contempt and hatred of the whole civilised world.

*August 14.—Sub tegmine fagi.* The sky is a cloudless blue and the breeze murmurs pleasantly through the leaves overhead and the butterflies chase one another idly and the doves coo at intervals and the stream pressed by the water-lilies is almost too languid to move beneath the heat. Perfect peace seems to rule the world and the reign of Heaven begun on earth.

I note these things and I note them with only sadness. For to-day, it is said, five nations are beginning to fight the greatest battle in the history of the world, and over the whole cradle of human civilisation the Powers of Hell are let loose. *Vae victis ! Vae victoribus !*

*September 13.*—After all, when one reads Lanciani's *Destruction of Rome*, which I chance

to find on the well-filled shelves of this little cottage, one realises that there is a difference between the ancient Goths and their descendants not clearly indicated by the rhetoric of St. Augustine, whose *De Civitate Dei* I have lately been looking into afresh. The ancient Goths were sometimes incendiaries, but their chief motive was loot. They carried away precious things on a wholesale scale, but they developed no systematic methods of barbarism, no sacrilegious violation of the traditions of humanity. They even respected the sacred Christian enclosures of St. Peter and St. Paul.

But by the modern Goths all the things their forefathers did, and all the things they refrained from doing, have been formulated into principles, systems of iron and methods of blood, cold, hard, relentless, always to be justified by the supreme law of "military necessity." This is the heavy yoke now imposed on the patient necks of the laborious kindly sentimental Germans by their Prussian taskmasters.

Surely at no period of the world's history has it been so necessary as it is to-day to strike hard at Militarism. Never before has it been so clearly visible that all civilisation, even all the most elementary traditions of humanity



and brotherhood, depend on the absolute destruction of Militarism.

*September 27.*—Here in this remote hill-land of Buckinghamshire it is pleasant to feel the bright hot sun in autumn, even though the nights are keen, and to inhale the clear exhilarating air. It is pleasant to wander along the curving lanes, with their constant sharp rises and falls, and their far vistas, deserted, save for an occasional cyclist, of travellers, as the refugee from cities notes with delighted surprise; pleasant also to walk in solitude for miles through the silent beechwoods, now strewn with dead leaves, yet still with patches of fresh green and shafts of bright sunshine, so silent, so solitary, that one might expect to come on Robin Hood and his men round any thicket; one can well believe how often here the traveller of old disappeared for ever and how necessary was the office of the Guardian of the Chiltern Hundred whose business it was to keep brigands in check.

It is an ancient land, where the Romans have left their mark; but it can never have been a rich and populous land. We are far from East Anglia where the grandiose remains

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of an active and populous people are still so numerous. Churches here are few and simple, and the rural inns are for the most part only cottages. But though scanty, the population is of fine type, friendly and alert, unlike the heavier Saxons of farther south, and with an accent in their speech that recalls the north, slender, graceful, blue-eyed girls and merry, rosy-cheeked boys like their beautiful apples which now burden the boughs on every cultivated patch of orchard.

One soon seems to discern the spiritual temper of this land. It is that of a hardy, independent, unspoilt hill-folk, tenacious of individual rights, their own and other's. (It seems significant that the churches about here have retained their brasses uninjured by the passions of the seventeenth century.) I understand how it was that John Hampden, whose family had dwelt there for six centuries, belonged to the next village—where “Free” even to-day seems to be a Christian name—and how he easily found stiff-necked but well-tempered “village Hampdens” of the same self-sufficing, locally patriotic make, remote from King and country, to worry over ship-money, while to-day, it is curious to note, these highlands send many men to the navy



though few to the army. I understand, too, how William Penn came to live a few miles away, where his grave is still a shrine of this land, and how a little farther east in this same county Milton once found a home.

*October 12.*—Maurice Barrès, it appears, a while ago, in his perverse manner, referred with indifference to the bombardment of Rheims Cathedral: Let the monuments go, he said in effect, so long as we preserve the men. One may, however, well feel a sensitive sympathy with the pain and wretchedness now being so widely scattered over the richest lands and among the best people of our European home and yet also feel a peculiar pang and a fierce indignation over the destruction of the loveliest and rarest things that men of old have left to us. It is indeed a narrow view of humanity to comprise within its circle its crude material, sentient and full of promise, yet meant for death, and to exclude the most perfect revelation of its sentiency and promise, wrought for an immortal life beyond death, which whoso slays, as Milton says, "slays an immortality rather than a life." A finer inspiration than that of Barrès was in the spirit of a mere

ordinary soldier I read of in the newspaper to-day, a French soldier near Lille, badly wounded, and yet only moved by the thought of a mere monument, and that not even out of patriotism, for it was not on French soil. " 'Oh !' he declared, 'if we can only save Antwerp ! You know the towers with the bells which have chimed every quarter of an hour since Alva's days ? ' And in his anger, despite his wound, he raised himself to shout forth his protest against the loss of a magnificence which he had seen and admired and remembered."

After all, Pain and Death, in one form or another, sooner or later, are the lot of all of us, and so far as the race is concerned, it may not be so grave a matter how or when they come. What the race lives by is its traditions, its power of embodying the finest emanations of its spirit and flesh in forms of undying beauty and aspiration which are never twice the same. These traditions it is which are the immortal joy and strength of Mankind, and in their destruction the race is far more hopelessly impoverished than in the destruction of any number of human beings. For it is by his traditions that Man is Man and not by the number of meaningless superfluous millions whom he spawns over the earth.



So it is that while my heart aches for the fates of countless thousands of innocent men and women and children to-day, I am none the less sad as I think day and night of the rare and exquisite flowers of ancient civilisation I knew and loved of old, now crushed and profaned. I think of the broad and gracious city of Liège, of the narrow streets of ancient Louvain, crowded with rich traditions, of lovely and beautiful old Malines, its exquisite carillon still ringing in my ear, of Antwerp entwined with the earliest memories of my childhood, of Rheims which I saw for the first and last time only a few months ago, a shrine for the whole human race, which will linger for ever in my mind because it seemed to me that its walls and its windows held the most exquisite and human and daring pictures in stone or in glass which our northern race has created.

*October 19.*—My bells are jangled and fall silent. I am sorry. Yet I would not have it otherwise. They are not hung in an ivory tower.

By day and by night I think of the Great War. But I never have any wish to write about it. If I could I would forget it. In the

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Peninsular War, it is said, one of Wellington's generals was guilty of a flagrant act of insubordination, and Wellington, who in little matters was so hard a disciplinarian, took no notice. They asked him later how it was. "By God," he replied, "it was too serious." This war to-day seems to me the most flagrant act of insubordination committed by Man against Civilisation and Humanity. It is too serious for the lash of discipline to touch. We must leave it at that.

*October 24.*—I read in the newspaper to-day that a French infantryman was walking into his trench eating a pear when a shell whizzing through the air burst and the man was thrown to the earth in a cloud of dust. Before his comrades could speak he was on his feet again shouting angrily, "The pigs! They have made me drop my pear!"

I have long known that the pear may distort moral values. When I was a child the first and last time that I ever appropriated any of my parents' money without leave was to buy pears. Evidently pears made it worth while to become a criminal. (And has not St. Augustine confessed that, even when he was older



than I was, he stole pears ?) It is interesting to find that moral values are thus distortable not only under normal but under abnormal circumstances. That he had saved his life seemed to the infantryman but a little thing. For he had lost his pear. Our conventional valuations, which we often accept so easily, are evidently not of the essence of Nature, and in moments of sudden inspiration these commonly accepted conventional values are made to look small.

So my mind idly plays on the surface. Yet all to-day, beneath the surface, my deeper thoughts are fixed, and my heart is heavy, and all my dreams are of one afar, tossing on the sea.

*November 7.*—It is not easy, or perhaps possible, to remember a year which has been like this—in England and all over Northern Europe—so bright, so agreeably warm, so pleasantly temperate throughout, so abundantly fruitful. Now, even in November and here in London, the days are continuously warm and clear and often even bright and sunny, while rain falls at night—a meteorologic condition which has always seemed to me

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perfect for London in November when fog is for ever awaiting its chance, against wind and rain, to pounce down on the city.

The poet sang of "Nature red in tooth and claw." But we realise to-day that—if we are to adopt the conventional distinction—it is Man to a vastly greater extent than Nature who is truly "red in tooth and claw." To-day it is Nature rather than Man that comes before us as the exalting and civilising element in the world's life. Men—the men we thought the most civilised in the world—are to-day over a great part of the earth rending each other hideously by means of the most terrible weapons that intelligence can devise, sprinkling the soil with mutilated corpses, torturing women and children, inflicting a wider and vaster amount of complex suffering than it ever entered into the imagination of a Dante to conceive.

And over that spectacle we can almost believe that it is with a deliberate and conscious sympathy for her erring children that the Great Mother has covered the earth with such tender smiles and tears as never before, and lavished her sweetest consoling fruits with an unknown profusion.

*November 10.*—In places that have been the



homes of great spirits there is always for me—and I suppose for many—a peculiar charm, a haunting intimacy, a rarely inspiring and abiding joy. I cherish for ever the memory of the serene and beautiful town—if after thirty years it still remains so—of Stratford-on-Avon. The delightful little Prieuré on the bank of the Loire, in the island, as it once was, of Saint-Cosme—then regarded as the most beautiful spot in Touraine and lovely and lonely yet, though within easy reach of the great city of Tours—makes Ronsard, who loved it, a real person to me. I seem to have felt the actual breath of Rousseau ever since I visited the homes of that distracted spirit, Les Charmettes among the hills of Savoy and the specially fragile cottage of the Hermitage on the outskirts of the forest of Montmorency.

To-day we have walked some four miles to a little cottage in the main street of the quaint old village of Chalfont St. Giles. It stands at right angles to the road and faces south to the little garden, an insignificant cottage of brick slightly timbered, like thousands of others; but here the blind Milton once came to live during the Great Plague, and here, it seems probable, he put the last touches to *Paradise Lost*. The room on the farther side from the road,

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they say, was his study, a very little simple room, low-ceiled, with small beams, yet large enough to hold the most gigantic of English poets, and not so simple but it remains standing alone of all the houses he dwelt in, save only the Old Rectory House at Stowmarket, curiously similar to this, as I recall, though on a larger scale, where he was the Puritan rector's pupil. Milton never saw the room in which he lived, though, we may be sure, he sat at the casement or in the now vanished porch to catch the clear wintry sun of the Chiltern Hills.

It was scarcely by chance that he came to live at the edge of the Chilterns. He had known the neighbourhood well in youth, and in old age he was drawn to it because it was the great centre of the Quakers, towards whom—with his instinct of freedom, his haughty self-reliance, his defiantly rebellious scepticism for all current creeds—there was so much to draw this Samson Agonistes of poets.

*November 17.*—The Funeral Service of the Church of England, when it becomes poignant with personal memory, is surely an impressive rite. As a religious statement it may cease to



evoke our faith. But as an affirmation of the boundless Pride and Humility of Man it remains superb. When the priest walks before the coffin as it is borne towards the choir, and scatters at intervals those brave and extravagant Sentences, we are at once brought face to face with the bared and naked forms of Life and Death. For the rhythmic recurrence of that Bravery and that Extravagance only heightens the pungency of the interspersed elemental utterances in the rite, those pathetically simple gestures which impart to it Beauty and Significance, "We brought nothing into the world and it is certain that we can take nothing out. . . . Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." After all, it is hard to see how the solemnity of this final moment when Life touches Death, and a man at last vanishes from the earth's surface, could better be brought home in its central essence than by the splendid audacity of a rite which calls down the supreme human fictions to bear their testimony at the graveside to all their Creator's Humility and all his Pride.

To me it has its double measure of solemn sadness. For to-day, maybe, that rite has in this Kentish graveyard for the last time been paid to any of the males of my house, who in

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centuries of old showed themselves so faithful to its observance, and in beautiful old churchyards of Suffolk and of Kent counted it their high office to scatter the grace of this final Mystery over so many human things that now are woven afresh into the texture of the world.

*November 21.*—I seemed to be in my room, where I now in fact find myself, and I became aware with a slight shock of a dusky object, at the first glance like a large spider, on the wall. It arose as I turned to it, and I saw a lovely butterfly. I threw open the window wide and shepherded the beautiful orange and black creature out into the blue and sunny sky.

It was a dream, as I realised when I awoke, and had no literal origin that I knew of, for there are no butterflies in bright skies now. But who knows by what subtle alchemy of the mind the symbolisms of our experiences are sublimed ?

*December 13.*—Last week the Queen's Hall Orchestra played the "Danse Macabre" of Saint-Saëns, and when the bones of so many heroic and unheroic men are lying buried, or scarcely buried,



on so many European plains, that daintily ingenious Dance of Death took on a new and more solemn significance. The light pathetic gaiety of its rhythm became the accompaniment of the awful vision. It was the spirit of Nature herself which seemed to make playful music to Man's tragedy, lightly dancing over the shallow graves he finds it so easy to dig and drawing music from his bones. This week the New Symphony Orchestra has played not only that piece but the "Funeral March of a Marionette." It is really an interesting manifestation of the musical mind.

The complacent saccharine lachrymosity of Gounod is antipathetic to me. This "Funeral March of a Marionette," I have always thought, is his one masterpiece, just as, and for a rather similar reason, "The Battle of Blenheim" is Southey's one masterpiece in verse; these pompously sentimental people need to be brought into simple playful reaction with the world, and the most demagogic politician may grow amiable in our eyes if we discover him pig-a-back with his children. Here at last Gounod felt that his sugary tears might be out of place and so was free to develop the playful tragedy of those delicious little beings of Man's creation which have always been so fascinating

and so suggestive to the artist and the philosopher.

One wonders if that is why the New Symphony Orchestra in the present unparalleled activity of the human puppets in shattering one another to bits on their little stage finds a fit occasion to play "The Funeral March of a Marionette."

*Christmas Day.*—It is said that the Great War has led to a revival of religion. One is almost inclined to believe it in this huge unfinished cathedral at the Pontifical High Mass to-day. The misty air softens the bare walls into homely beauty and the huge candles at the entrance to the choir flame slowly as though they had all eternity to burn in, and beautiful voices, liquid or deep, sweep through the air, bearing the sound of music that was made long ago, and of words that began in the early world, to a vast crowd which fills the place with its devotion and makes the old tradition still seem alive.

As the gracious spectacle of the Mass is unrolled before me, I think, as I have often thought before, how much they lose who cannot taste the joy of religion or grasp the significance



of its symbolism. They have no faith in gods or immortal souls or supernatural Heavens and Hells, they severely tell us. But what have these things, what have any figments of the intellect, to do with religion? Fling them all aside as austere as you like, or as gaily, and you have not touched the core of religion. For that is from within, the welling up of obscure intimations of reality into the free grace of Vision. The Mass is a part of Nature. To him who sees, to him who knows, that all ritual is the attempt to symbolise and grasp the divine facts of life, and that all the painted shows of the world on the screen of eternity are of like quality and meaning, the Mass is as real as the sunrise, and both alike may bring Joy and Peace to the heart.

When we have put aside those people who are congenitally non-religious and eternally excommunicate from the Mystery of the World, I find that Religion is natural to Man. People without religion are always dangerous. For none can know, and least of all themselves, what volcanic eruptions are being subconsciously prepared in their hearts, nor what terrible superstitions they may some day ferociously champion. It has been too often seen.

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*January 1, 1915.*—A year is over that has held for me more of sadness and loss than any year I can well remember. And submerging all personal griefs, this year has brought the greatest catastrophe—as one is sometimes tempted to regard it—that ever befell our race; a catastrophe that even for one who may seem remote from it brings personal pain. It has not only blotted out from the lovely earth many spots that for me were loveliest, but it has cut roughly athwart—who knows for how long?—my ideals for the world and my hopes for mankind.

I cannot tell in what lurid gloom mixed with what radiant halo this year will stand out from all the years in the eyes of men alive on the earth after us. Yet we, too, are still living, and for all living things hope springs afresh from every despair. So it is that I have begun this new year at the stroke of midnight with a new kiss.

*January 9.*—“French and German soldiers who had fraternised between the trenches at Christmas subsequently refused to fire on one another and had to be removed and replaced by other men.” Amid the vast stream of war



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news which nowadays flows all over our newspapers I chanced to find that little paragraph in a corner of a halfpenny evening journal. It seems to me the most important item of news I have read since the war began.

“ Patriotism ” and “ War ” are not human facts. They are merely abstractions ; they belong to the sphere of metaphysics, just as much as those ancient theological conceptions of Godhead and the Trinity, with their minute variations, for the sake of which once Catholics and Arians so gladly slew and tortured each other. But as soon as the sunshine of real humanity makes itself felt the metaphysics of Patriotism and War are dissipated as surely as those of theology. When you have reckoned that your enemy is not an abstraction but a human being, as real a human being as you are yourself, why want to kill him any more than you want to kill yourself ? Patriotism and War are seen for what they are, insubstantial figments of fancy which it is absurd to materialise and seriously accept.

So we see, too, how simply the end of fighting might be reached. We have but to bring men together as human beings, either in imagination or in reality, and they are prepared to violate all the abstract principles of

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Patriotism and War, to break any rule of discipline, rather than kill one another. We see it is not much to ask. It has been achieved on a single Christmas Eve in men whose hatred of each other had been artificially excited to the highest pitch. Is it much to expect that one day this process will be extended on the world's fighting-line until so many men have "had to be removed" that there will be none left to replace them?

*January 18.*—Of all living creatures none has within recent years become so vastly magnified to our human eyes as the Mosquito. Once it seemed just a troublesome little pest that we carelessly crushed and looked upon as a characteristic drawback to the fascination of any hot climate. But now we know that to the Mosquito has been given a greater part on the stage of the world's human history than to any other creature. Down the minute microscopic groove of its salivary gland, as Shipley lately puts it, "has flowed the fluid which has closed the continent of Africa for countless centuries to civilisation, and which has played a dominating part in destroying the civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome."



Yet there is nothing in the world that seems more fragile to us or is in reality more beautiful than the Mosquito. We have been almost as blind to the loveliness as to the deadliness of this fairy creature whose delicately alighting feet are unfelt by our rough skins. For its beauty is a function of its deadliness. Those huge emerald eyes on the dark background, those iridescent and transparent wings, the double-edged sword of its long tongue, the slender legs yet so mightily strong—all are needed to pierce swiftly and keenly and silently, with the maximum of force and of skill, the thick and heavily armoured epidermis of Man. One notes, also, that it is only the female who is equal to this achievement, for her partner is harmless to the great human beast which is the Mosquito's prey, and cultivates perforce a vegetarian diet.

So that if you would see all of Nature gathered up at one point, in her loveliness, and her skill, and her deadliness, and her sex, where would you find a more exquisite symbol than the Mosquito ?

*February 20.*—I sat this morning in the Old Garden. The air was soft and misty, the

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snowdrops and the crocuses were all opening, on every hand the bushes were bursting out into tender greenish-brown spikes, from the throats of blackbirds in the trees there came soft liquid notes, the song of serene gladness, of eternal peace. And I saw and heard and felt and knew in my heart that I was beneath the wings of the approaching Spring.

I can scarcely believe that the day will ever come of such decay of years or such desolation of spirit that I shall cease to feel, as I feel to-day, as I have ever felt, at the approach of Spring. For it seems to me that it is something deeper than my personal joy or even my personal consciousness. It is something more profound than personality, part of the life of the world, and one with the song of the birds, which is so calmly joyous, so essentially serene, because they seem to remember the first spring of the earth and to know that when they forget it the world shall end. So it is that they can be such fine artists of Nature and leave everything out of their song save peace and joy and the eternal Recurrence of Life.

*February 28.*—“The happy character of the English,” wrote Muralt, “is made up of a mixture of laziness and good sense.” That



observation of the sagacious Swiss gentleman in his memorable *Letters* is still worth meditation, like so much else that he wrote, even after an interval of more than two centuries. Our laziness, under new conditions, may have taken on an appearance of even feverish and neurotic activity, and our good sense may sometimes have assumed strangely unrecognisable disguises, but fundamentally the English character is still marked by that happy mixture of laziness and good sense. It lies beneath such confused sort of success as we have had in the world, our love of freedom, our voluntarism and hatred of compulsion.

To-day it explains the deep repugnance we see among us to anything like conscription in the making of our armies, even in the face of vast masses of enemies organised on that basis, and even though we have in our midst a noisy crowd of people with un-English names, Pro-Germans—to adopt the jargon of the moment—who would force on us that system of compulsory conscription which our good sense tells us must be disastrous now that we are outgrowing the days of the press-gang. In everything we show that mixture of laziness and good sense which makes us amateurs of genius among the nations.

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It is the other way with the Germans ; they are marked by a mixture of industry and bad sense. They trust to laborious organisation because they have not the tact which trusts to laziness, just as the mathematical mind sometimes seems to rely on its symbols because it has not the natural instinct to reason without formulae. To the superficial observer industry seems much better than laziness. But our English sense tells us that if industry is force it is centrifugal force, dangerous if not held in check. It was Shenstone, an Englishman, who wrote : " Indolence is a kind of centripetal force." Industry and bad sense may not perhaps prove the best guides to the German people.

*March 2.*—Hitherto I have always turned away from a picture of Nicholas Poussin's with disquieted feelings. I have seen its elevation of attitude, its austere independence, the admirably fine qualities of its composition,—the qualities, in short, that make Poussin one of the supreme representatives of the Norman spirit,—but Time has always seemed to mark his work with a harshness of colour, a frigid artificiality, a false classicality, which put



Poussin away from me on an antique pedestal with the other great Norman of that age, Corneille. Not one of his pictures—and I have seen so many—has given me any satisfying vision of beauty or any enlarging thrill of joy.

But to-day I was wandering through the deserted rooms of the Grosvenor Gallery. They all seemed a Paradise. Here one was afar from the fantastic madness of the war, from all the frothy passions of the moment, among the serene and eternal realities of the world, the lovely embodiment of its finest moments by its finest artists, never till now brought to light in a public gallery.

I chanced to come before Poussin's "Triumph of Pan." It is the kind of picture of pagan revelry which the grave and austere Norman so loved to paint: a vision of nymphs and fauns and satyrs and goats. But this time the great artist's inspiration has lifted him to a height from which all that in his work seemed to me defective is no longer visible; here at last is beauty and joy. The thirteen figures of the composition are wreathed harmoniously together—with that vital movement, so eternal in art, one may sometimes see even in the Post-Impressionists—and each figure is yet animated by the happiest abandonment. The

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firm grip of the strong Norman, the compressed passion which surely lay in his heart, are here superbly fused in creative achievement. There is the wildest abandonment, and it is all held under the control of the great artist's head and eye.

So now at last I hold the clue to Poussin, and when again I approach his work I can apply the key I have found in "The Triumph of Pan."

*Good Friday.*—I wandered into the Westminster Cathedral where in the presence of the Cardinal Archbishop the Bishop of Cambusopolis—wherever that may be—was officiating at the Mass of the Presanctified. New and bare and unfurnished, this Cathedral is yet so large and open and finely proportioned, and its high altar so raised and well spaced, as one views it from afar, that the Offices of the Church seem here fittingly at home. One follows with pleasure the movements of the ritual dance executed before this devout crowd, increased, it is clear, by many Belgian refugees.

Nowadays an enlarging group of scholars find reason to believe that Jesus never existed, and that the Gospels are a legend which may



be traced to definite sources. Every detail of the story, they tell us, may be accounted for. But, for my own uninstructed part, I allow a doubt. Man, it seems to me, always likes something that once was living around which to weave the silk cocoon of his imagination, at the least some grain of plain real sand upon which to mould the delicate fantasy of his pearls, and Binet-Sanglé seems to me to present a formidable argument when he seeks to show that the details of the story of Jesus, if invented, imply a knowledge of mental pathology (of the syndrome of Cotard, to use his technical phraseology) which has only been available in recent years. Still, however we look at it, we must admit that the figure of Jesus recedes as the world grows older, until we can no longer discern whether we are gazing at the shadow cast by a suffering and pathetic idealist against the radiancy of the human imagination or at the pure flame of that imagination itself, burning in the void.

In either case how inspiring ! The world is no longer presented to us as the little stage on to which suddenly rushes the bungling Playwright Himself in a wild and hopeless effort to mend the fiasco of His own actors. The universe expands and we see the soul of man

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rise to its own supreme rights, no longer the plaything of Gods, but itself the august creator of Gods.

And so we may find a new beauty and significance in the Mass of the Presanctified. It ceases to be the dance of the Slaves of God; it becomes the dance of the Masters of Life.

*May 27.*—Our Anglo-Indians, I hear to-day from one of them, are loud in their denunciation of the peasant women of the Pas-de-Calais and the servant girls of Kent who run after Jack Sepoy and even pay for what he gives them. The Anglo-Indians have slowly and painfully built up in India an exalted ideal of the European woman to which the Indian man is taught that he cannot aspire. Now this beautiful dream is shattered, and in their desperation our Anglo-Indians are even tempted to hope that the Indians who have learnt the truth may never return home to tell it.

But the peasant women of the Pas-de-Calais and the servant girls of Kent have their beautiful dream too, and there is room in the great heart of Nature for the one dream and the other dream.



*July 1.*—We have walked to Wrington on a pilgrimage to the famous church tower, which turns out to be a large and simple and firmly organised pile without any special originality or distinction. And then, but not without some hunting, we find—removed from the cottage to which it was first affixed and now half concealed against the churchyard wall—the stone slab which states that here was born John Locke. His mother, who had come to church, being prematurely seized by the pains of childbirth, hurried out to the nearest cottage just outside the gate—long decayed and replaced by others which in their turn have grown old—and there gave birth to her immortal son.

So it was that the revolutionary thinker who created so great a panic in the Church, by sweeping away the elaborate theologically consecrated conceptions of two thousand years concerning the mind and looking at it simple and naked as it comes forth from the womb, was himself almost born in a church. That story is long past. Wrington Church so far admits its connection with one of the glories of English philosophy as to shelter within its precincts this soft slab which its flaking surface slowly renders indecipherable.

*July 3.*—I have been spending a week wandering in Somerset, an altogether new region to me, between Wells and the sea. I have seen many churches and much scenery, but the two things that seem to dwell most in my memory are not of the rank of accredited sights: one the tomb and recumbent effigy of the monastic official called Camel, which lies in a corner of the church of St. John at Glastonbury, I suppose of about the fifteenth century, a delightful piece of work to find in England; the other is the mass of fragments of highly tinted statuary that are piled up in the church of St. Cuthbert at Wells. No record of their making seems to be extant; at all events I can find no reference to them among the numerous references to St. Cuthbert's in the Wells Archives lately printed. It is a church of the "Perpendicular" manner, and the statuary seems of the same age, the end of the fifteenth century or even later, the very latest Gothic age, marked by facile accomplishment and free romantic charm faintly tinged by the approaching Renaissance, the touch on them, as it were, of a provincial English Goujon. Torn down and broken years ago by Protestant zealots, here they lie neglected, piled up on window-ledges



and the floor, torso-less heads and headless torsos, while the rows of niches in the transept stand empty. No guardian of this church seems ever to have troubled to call in some craftsman, possessed of knowledge and insight, to pore over these fascinating fragments, to re-read their maker's thoughts, to piece them together again in their old niches, to recapture something of their gay and variegated beauty.

It would be well worth doing. The western men, gifted with a fitting medium, worked as happily in stone as the men of the east counties in wood; and surely this array of images must have been one of their happiest final efforts.

*July 4.*—The more I look at the west front of Wells Cathedral the less I like it. A belauded west front no doubt, more so, perhaps, than any in England except Peterborough. That is a mere meaningless façade, put up in a hurry by ambitious monks who were reckless of the fact that what they were putting up had no organic relation to the church behind it and was, therefore, quite false. The front of Wells is not false but it is crude and incompetent. What we see here,

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indeed, is not characteristically a west front at all, but just a wall, with six great buttresses projecting from it and an arcading that runs right across it below, while through this arcading, as by an afterthought, the west door has been awkwardly pierced. One thinks of the west front of many a French church, so perfectly planned and proportioned, so enchantingly beautiful; and indeed, even in England, the west front of, for instance, York is lovelier far than this of Wells. It is true that the sculpture here at Wells is fine, not to be compared with that at Chartres or at Rheims, yet as fine no doubt as anywhere in England, but it is obscurely and ineffectively arranged amid the irrelevant buttresses, hard to see, better seen by far in the photographs that illustrate the study of English Medieval figure sculpture by Prior and Gardner.

Wells Cathedral remains a charming and interesting place, not least so by those accessory buildings which give it so remarkable an air of completeness. I come again and again to the ancient worn staircase which starts from the transept and partly winds round the Chapter House and partly goes forward to the bridge leading to the delightful Vicars' Close, where dwelt the vicars we read about



in the Archives, who were so incorrigibly human, so lazy and insolent and dissipated and wanton.

*July 11.*—There has been a revival of interest lately in the writings of Walter Bagehot, mainly due to the publication of his biography. It is interesting to remark among the comments of the critics who have thus been led to consider, or to reconsider, his work, the recurrence of one note: the tameness of Bagehot, his mediocrity, his inability not only to fall but to rise, his serenely limited common sense, unable to recognise the unusual and exceptional for all his common sense. his perpetual attitudes as of a Tory on the spiritual plane. The critics seem to leave Bagehot with a regretful feeling of disappointment.

I may note that in all this Bagehot was a typical man of Somerset. He was so in appearance, with his high colour and sturdy form, the representative of a dark-haired race which is scarcely Celtic but, we may suspect, older and more aboriginal, and he was equally of Somerset type in his mental make-up, the fellow-countryman of Locke and of Hobbes

(highly typical, like Wren also, though both came from neighbouring Wiltshire) and of Thomas Youlg, of Pym and of Prynne and of Hales the "ever memorable," of the wonderful Roger Bacon, so daring and so insolent, and of Dunstan, if indeed he really belongs here, the most versatile as well as the most forceful of English saints. They are a sturdy people, independent to arrogance, even contentious in their caution and scepticism, determined to see things clearly and to see them for themselves, and so seeing many things that had never been seen before, yet tenacious and conservative; and Father Parsons, the last devoted martyr of the ancient faith, was a man of Somerset. They are not apt to be carried to any point of exaltation. Their most authentic poet, before Southey, is Daniel, for they are poets in the world of thought, even of science, rather than in that of emotion, but they are largely responsible for so great a figure in English literature as Fielding, and entirely, in another field, for Robert Blake, while Dampier, alike in his strength and in his weakness, is their characteristic son. Their ideal state would seem to be a sort of Republican Toryism in life, and robust Positivism in thought.



Now this is an admirable temper of mind. It is the temper of even the greatest and sanest spirits. Is it not the temper of Rabelais and Montaigne and even Shakespeare? But those great spirits, while they stood firmly on a solid, commonplace, if you like, bourgeois foundation, instinctively sought to transmute it by the fire of passion, a rapturous eloquence, a perpetual thirst for an ideal beyond. They knew that mediocrity must be golden, they carried common sense to the point of heroism, they converted commonplace into rapture. The men of Somerset were planted stolidly enough on the threshold, but rarely passed it; only William Blake, if, as I can well believe, he belonged ancestrally to the men of Somerset (for I no longer accept the suggested and unsupported Irish ancestry), altogether dwelt in this House of Flame while yet bearing the tenacious spirit of Somerset within him, and he was born elsewhere and was most likely of a more mixed breed.

*July 17.*—A thrill of joy passed through me as we drove along the beautiful road and my eye chanced to fall on the poppies in the field. It has always been so since I was a schoolboy

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and I suppose it always will be. A friend said sadly this spring that for her the war had taken all their beauty from the daffodils. I do not feel that, but rather the reverse. Behind the passing insanity of Man the beauty of Nature seems to become more poignant and her serene orderliness more deeply peaceful. So when men tell me how they have lived in the trenches ankle-deep in human blood, I think how Nature has shed these great drops of her pure and more immortal blood over the green and yellow earth. And I dream lingeringly over the poppies in the corn at Merton as I went through the narrow paths on my way to school, and the incarnadined slopes of Catalunia in spring, and the rich scarlet of the large fields around the beautiful old church of Worstead, and now the soft bright red splashes that shine here to-day, as we drive among the Chiltern Hills.

To allow our vision of Nature to be disturbed by our vision of Man is to allow the infinitely small to outweigh the infinitely great. If we keep our eyes fixed on Nature, whose most exquisitely fantastic flowers—when all is said and done—we ourselves remain, how little it matters! Voltaire, as his *Micromegas* remains to testify, was wiser. Nature continues the



process of her resurrections, whatever may happen to the animalcule Man.

*August 8.*—A distinguished writer and critic is accustomed to say that all writing, however serious, must as an essential condition be “amusing.” That is to say that it should, as he would himself probably put it, fulfil the Aristotelian demand for perpetual slight novelty. The gravest writing is thus subsumed under the same heading as the pun, which has its effect by force of the sudden surprise it occasions. Art, even when tragic, has this as its fundamental and almost physiological effect. Even the Gospels, if we enter the Kingdom of Heaven in the true child’s spirit, should be divinely amusing.

This occurred to me afresh to-day when I found myself reading a serious page, which I had myself once written and half forgotten, with a perpetual slight smile. A reader of my most serious books once expressed to a friend his uncertainty as to whether I was myself aware of the humour he found in them. I am glad he felt uncertain. And if it is that same perpetual slight smile that plays on some reader’s face I suppose I should be well content.

*September 12.*—We have just passed through the loveliest week of all the year and the harvest has now at length been safely gathered in. Yet, once more, I notice the way in which some people seriously and deliberately resent the beauty of Nature when there is war among mankind. This beauty, they say, merely shows that Nature is blind and stupid and dead. Now that attitude is curious, rather pathetic, a little comic. What was it they expected?

We could understand such an attitude among the inhabitants of a mity cheese, in face of the nonchalant serenity of diners who eat cheese. We could understand it among the last representatives of the Mammoth or the Dinosaur, vaguely apprehending that with their disappearance from the earth the universe would henceforth be shrouded in gloom. But it is the peculiar privilege of Man, beyond any other animal, to look before and after, to pierce with clearer vision the many-coloured dome of his world and divine the unstained radiance beyond. In so far as he fails to do this he is still in the sub-human stage; in so far as he succeeds he is not only more human, he is nearer to the all-embracing heart of Nature. The more human we are, the better able we are to join in singing Nature's exultant song.



*September 21.*—Every act of civilisation, I read, is an act of rebellion against Nature. It is curious how this notion persists. Even exquisitely acute people, like Baudelaire, have cherished it. One need not proceed to analyse the varying ways in which men have used the word "Nature," for it has been done before. Yet in so far as every act of civilisation is an act of rebellion against Nature, so is every act of Nature an act of rebellion against the Nature that went before, even from the very beginning of life. For all life is a tension of forces, an elaborately contrived device for holding natural tendencies in suspense, an interference with an existing order. Every chemical combination may be said to be a resistance to Nature, an attempt to establish an "unnatural" stability which Nature is ever seeking to destroy, and this process is at play among all the phenomena of life. In the same way Nature created the ruminants which the carnivores slay, and Man slays them both; it is all equally "unnatural." Man clothes himself with skins and adorns himself with feathers that were first the clothing and the adornment of other creatures. It is all unnatural or all natural. The difference is that there the method was slowly and

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unconsciously developed, here swiftly and consciously. But why in that form more natural than in this ?

We may say, if we like, that Unnature came into the world at the outset and has continued throughout. Or we may say, if we like, that it is all Nature. But there is no intermediate position. No doubt, for a spirit that lived in the sun or the moon, this fantastic planet, Earth, would seem radically Unnature, the sea itself, the womb of all life, would not be natural ; nothing could be less natural than the birds in the air or the beasts on the land or the fishes in the sea, all occupied with their variegated devices to elude Nature as known in the sun or the moon. For my own part, I find it all Nature, alive with that adorable beauty which—rebel against it in our foolish moments as we may—Nature must in the end always hold for us. So that even before the wildest aberrations of the human imagination I still find myself of Shakespeare's mind, and murmur before every art that changes Nature, " The art itself is Nature."

*September 24.—Incessu patuit dea,* wrote Virgil. The special gait which suggests the



goddess is not, indeed, nowadays, if ever, necessarily the outcome of any divine occupation, but more likely of servile duties. The possibilities of beautiful feminine gait were first revealed to me as a youth in two persons—one Cornish, the other Irish—I came across in Australia, and I recall the charming surprise of one of these, the Irishwoman with hieratic air, when I told her that I knew that as a girl she must have carried burdens on her head. When I first began to visit East Anglia I noticed the peculiar gait of the young women, not often to be seen in a recognisable form but, it seemed to me, characteristic when found, the expression of reserved energy combined with alert vitality, a naturally rapid walk yet not hurried, with long easy strides. Just now in the dusk, here at Brandon, as we were returning to our hotel, a young woman passed with the swift large stride of this walk, its natural soft footfalls, as of a tiger which had acquired respectable businesslike habits, and yet still bore the impress of the days that were past.

One cannot but wonder in what recesses of intimate energy, or in what remote racial experiences, the secret of the idiosyncrasies of walking may sometimes lie. For this is perhaps

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the ancient primitive English walk, that swift walk which foreigners noted centuries ago, and were puzzled to reconcile with English indolence.

*November 1.*—A charming and vivacious woman, highly intelligent, full of interest in life, came to lunch with us. A few days after, in response to an invitation, she sent a mysterious telegram of farewell. Now, a little later, we learn she has made an attempt, happily frustrated, at suicide.

My present feeling—and it is to me new and accompanied by a sad smile—is of the youthfulness of such a proceeding. The search for Death, after all, is an index of vitality, of a vigour that has too impatiently sought to conquer the world's problems and when, for a moment, these seem too hard, rushes impulsively at Death because it knows in its heart that it is itself far too alive ever to be sought by Death.

For myself, now when the cataclysm overwhelming the world has brought to me a sense of age such as I have never had before, the search for Death becomes at the same time more alien than ever before. When life and



strength seem to be ebbing away, the idea of actively courting Death grows absurd. Rather one's impulse is to remain quiet, as serene and self-possessed as may be amid the devastation around. Let Death do the courting! We may not be so hard to win, but let the chief responsibility be hers.

*November 24.*—Yesterday I noticed scarcely any gulls on the sands of the bay. To-day there are thousands of them. I conclude that they arrived this morning. This is further indicated by the excitement that prevails among them. One great band flutters over the water, noisily squabbling, and more sober groups silently promenade, or stand in meditation, on the long stretch of sands. I gather that, like me, they are glad to return to their winter home from the keen war of the elements farther north. I imagine that they still cherish the faith—which also never forsakes me—that amid the soft rains of this beautiful air it is possible to cross the abyss of winter on the bridge of a rainbow.

*January 4, 1916.*—I have been reading Herodotus for just thirty years and I am yet

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far from the final book of Calliope. (I still read him, as I began, in English, in the eighteenth-century version of Beloe, which I imagine to be the best, even if not minutely accurate, just as the pretentious, commonplace, and bowdlerised translation of Rawlinson must surely be the worst.) The extreme slowness of my passage through this Universal History is the index of my joy in the journey. Every chapter—and how many of them there are!—seems made to linger over for the ravishment of its delicate surface, and the richness of its unplumbed depth. Herodotus is in this, indeed, more especially delightful that he combines harmoniously two opposed qualities: a beautiful naivety of surface and beneath it a profound suggestiveness. His immensely varied wealth of detail is always interesting even for its own picturesque sake, and never trivial even when it concerns the smallest things of life, because it is always chosen by the hand of a supreme artist. But beneath it is an inexhaustible significance. All the problems of life and of knowledge are presented here, clues to all the solutions of them since devised are here to be caught at. So that no book is so rich for the student as Herodotus, so suggestive in every field. Moreover, the style of Herodotus



exactly fits the vast range of his task and the twofold aspect of his mind, at once childlike artist and inquisitive philosopher. His sudden disconcerting queries, his strange silences, his faith that half dissolves into scepticism and his scepticism that almost crystallises into faith make him the most admirably truthful of historians. No one has better understood that, as Renan said, it is in a nuance that truth lies. To the narrow-minded and prosaic Greeks of his own time and to their successors in all later ages, Herodotus has been the Father of Lies, just as his successor, Pythias—the Herodotus, as we know to-day, of Northern Europe—wrongfully became the originator of romantic novels of adventure. The spirit of Herodotus brooded over the elemental, the volcanic, the mysterious, the hazardous; human nature holds all these, in their vastness and in their smallness, so that to the degree in which we love human nature we must needs love Herodotus.

If I were in doubt as to the fascination of Herodotus I should only have to read in Thucydides. One is not called upon to question the great qualities of Thucydides, his psychological insight, his analytic grip of political life, for he is a modern and among the first of

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moderns. But after one has lived in the great world of Herodotus, to adjust oneself to the little world of Thucydides is not easy. Here, one feels, is the spirit of the people for whom Herodotus with his wide-ranging survey of life was simply a liar, here we are in the familiar world of high-sounding rhetoric, yet a world of concentrated and almost passionate parochialism. The virtue of Thucydides lies in his intense and penetrating vision of the political squabbles of this petty world.

With Herodotus we are lifted above provincialism into the sphere of eternity. He wrote the only first-hand history of the world that will ever be written. And he was of the heroic Greek lineage, a man of the Ionian Sea—of the tribe of Ulysses, the forerunner not only of Pythias of Marseilles but of that Posidonius whose lost *Travels* we English, as we read the vivid little fragments that alone survive, must ever regret.

*January 16.*—Some one has brought me a spray of mimosa. I inhale its peculiar odour, not a specially delightful odour, which suggests honey and bruised leaves and, underneath, a fibrous stringiness, yet to me it brings an en-



larging thrill which is endlessly delicious. At once I am transported across the gulf of forty years. I see again the Australian springtime when these gracious, drooping, golden wattles are sprinkled over the vast expanse of solitary, undulating bush in the bright sunlight. I am among them once more at the threshold of the world, still with swelling hope and tremulous fear before the yet unopened door of Life. All the wistful, penetrating, exhilarant fragrance of youth is in this spray of mimosa.

*February 13.*—The beauty of sunrise always comes to me as a new revelation, after however weary and anxious a night, and the dawn of day as the miraculous creation of a world I never saw before. In part it may be because the sunrise is less familiar to me than the sunset, and its beauty, here over the sea, much more exquisite, and therefore much more inspiring.

That is not all of it. Nor yet that we may reflect our own morning freshness on to the one scene, our own evening weariness on to the other. The one is really and naturally an inspiration, and the symbol of it, just as the other is an expiration, and the natural symbol of all expiring light and life into approaching

darkness or death. The slow unveiling of the beauty of a naked and sleeping world by the increasing mighty strength of a hidden sun which at last heaves itself above the horizon to pour the vitalising glow of its beams into our blood, must needs bring a massive exhilaration of body and spirit we can scarcely else experience.

It is this same feeling on another plane which moves us with a perpetual joy as the days grow long, and chills us with a grey dread as the days grow short. These two movements are the annual diastole and systole of our earthly sphere, the World-Heart made on the pattern of the little human heart.

*March 21.—In coelo quies.* I used to be taken as a boy to the ancient church at Merton where the Irish vicar, unknown to fame but the most genuinely eloquent of preachers, would pour forth the extravagant flood of a simple and unrestrained emotion that never toppled over into absurdity, and his beautiful and flexible voice would breathe forth the evening prayers as though they were a new song that had never been uttered before, and from the pulpit rise with thunder that filled the



twilight church and then sink to a whisper, while the Anglo-Saxon villagers sat in stolidly devout indifference, so that out of all his congregation perhaps only one truly heard, and he a little boy whose eyes would be fascinated by the old helmet suspended over the reading desk or wandering on the wall near him to the marble tablet set up by the widow of Captain Cook, or become fixed on the row in the nave vaulting of painted escutcheons, on one of which, above all, for some reason the motto appealed to him : *In coelo quies.*

*In coelo quies.* He knew what the words meant, but he could not know that they constitute a strange Christian motto and hold a significance deeper than any special religious faith, the last aspiration of men for whom life has been a battle, and the earth a scene of turmoil without and agitation within, as in the end life and the earth are for all of us, so that in this profound ejaculation they summed up the Vision of Rest, the Heaven which for Monk and Agnostic remains the same : *In coelo quies.*

*In coelo quies.* Again and again through the troubled course of life on earth, when the heart is torn by its own pain, or the pain of the hearts it loves, or the pain of the whole world, I see

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that escutcheon aloft, and the benediction of that old saying softly falls : *In coelo quies.*

*March 30.*—A woman has shown me a crude and unpleasant letter written to her by a man I had (with perhaps too much forgetfulness of psycho-analytic doctrine) imagined to be refined, and he has defended himself with the plea that “to the pure all things are pure.” It is perhaps not an uncommon experience.

“To the pure all things are pure.” It may be the truth. But I sometimes wish St. Paul had stated that hazardous truth in another form and declared that to the impure all things are impure.

The sea receives much filth into its broad bosom, and beneath the vital action of sun and wind and a pervading antiseptic salinity, it is all transmuted into use and beauty and the invigorating breath of ozone. But some narrow and enclosed minds are not so much like the sea as like the sewer. I object to the sewer pretending to a virtue which is the prerogative of those minds only which are like the sea.

*May 21.*—This is the first day of the new



“Summer Time,” a bright and hot morning when every one may well rejoice at an excuse for getting up an hour earlier. Yet only the pressure of war has induced us to adopt that excuse so simple, merely to put one’s watch an hour ahead. Too simple it seems to the more misoneistic among us, who grumble and protest, whose consciences revolt against this arbitrary, artificial, untruthful, dishonest, immoral interference with the Course of Nature. In the House of Lords, the solid bulwark of our misoneism, for good or for evil, it has been pointed out that of twins born in the early hours of this morning the second may become the first-born, and where would the sacred rights of primogeniture be then? The sheep-like majority of less stout-hearted opponents has followed more meekly the line of least resistance.

Let us hope it may be a helpful demonstration to them of the fact that Life is built up on Conventions and Illusions. Even Time, we see, comes within the category. We had but to say Let there be light! and there was light. It may, however, have been as well that the minority so stoutly opposed that exercise of creative will, for we should not be too easily conscious of our Conventions and our Illusions. We must always accept them solemnly, as the

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Confucian accepts solemnly his beautiful and profound conception of the Moral World as based on Ceremony and Music.

*June 21.*—It is good to leave behind all the passionate and pathetic problems of war to find refuge for a few days in Saffron Walden. The north-western and most remote corner of Essex which Saffron Walden dominates is now outside the great main tracks, and an insignificant branch line serves all its railway needs. But it is yet the capital town of a district which from the earliest historic and even pre-historic times has been found desirable among the forests and marshes which covered the region around, and many successive populations—Britons and Romans and Saxons and Normans—have left their mark here and helped to build up this ancient and interesting town. So it is that Saffron Walden stands like a little metropolis, full of archaeology and history and beauty, which is cherished with a local patriotism nowadays rare to find in English towns.

The special note of Walden is well struck in its Museum, which stands in the grounds between its splendid church and the mound



associated with the last fragments of its Castle. In this fascinating place—surely the best Museum to be found in any small English town—we have spent hours of enjoyment each day. Here we have discussed the problems aroused by the Saxon skeletons and their ornaments, have learnt better to understand flint instruments, have delighted in the East Anglian's art in wood as compared with the florid vigour of the Flemish panels also placed here ; we have become more intimate with our ancestors through seeing the wall decorations they lived with ; we have gazed at the charming frieze of the house where Gabriel Harvey spent his obscure old age, at the gauntlet which Mary of Scots gave to the Master of Fotheringay on the day she died, at the waistcoat of William Pitt. When at last the versatile and accomplished Curator, who has given to his unknown visitors so much of his precious time (for he is occupied in making the Museum, what it should be, a living educative centre), accompanies us to the door on the hour of closing, " You were speaking of Flemish art," he remarks ; " if you stand by the wall here you will hear the guns in Flanders." We stood silent, and in a moment or two, when we had learnt how to direct our attention, we heard—or, rather, we

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felt—the repeated thuds of those death-dealing guns one hundred and fifty miles away.

So it is that we are swiftly brought back again from the glad problems of the past to the sad problems of the present. And inevitably one thinks of the days to come when these “battles long ago” will have taken their serene little place in the Museum, among the other “old forgotten far-off things.”

*June 22.*—As we walk through the long village street of Great Chesterford—famous as an important military post which has yielded interesting vestiges of Roman occupation—I note that a little old inn at the farther end is kept by one Walter Whitman. It is a little startling to see that familiar name in so unfamiliar an environment. I recall that the Emersons (as Dr. Emerson, the historian of the family, has in recent years found reason to conclude) came from Saffron Walden, four miles away, and on enquiring we find that the Whitmans have long been settled here, the inn itself having been built by a Whitman, who in an unusual but Whitmanian spirit has left a “Song of Himself” on the front wall in the large bold letters, “R. I. W. 1792.” Was he



related to the Joseph Whitman, Walt's earliest-known ancestor, who came from England some century and a half earlier and is found settled in New England by 1655? Ralph Waldo Emerson was the first to recognise with hearty generosity the genius of Walt Whitman, and it would be pleasant to think that when his ancestor Thomas Emerson left England in 1635 he was accompanied by his friend and neighbour, Joseph Whitman.<sup>1</sup>

*June 29.*—I have been to the funeral of an aged friend at a crematorium in South London. It was conducted according to the rites of the English Church by the chaplain attached to the cemetery, and I was interested to see how those rites would be adapted to the special requirements of a funeral by cremation, which I have never witnessed before.

The wreath-burdened coffin was set down near folding doors, and the cheerful hearty parson mounted a rostrum and in a full round voice, without once moving from his post,

<sup>1</sup> The vicar was subsequently kind enough to look the matter up in the Registers of the Parish, and found that the name Whitman first appears in 1749; so that Joseph Whitman can scarcely have come from Great Chesterford, though he may possibly have belonged to the district, for in the early seventeenth century, I have ascertained, there were Whitmans in Hertfordshire as well as in Norfolk.

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went straight through the whole Office, but with one highly important change : he omitted the address "Forasmuch" appointed at the graveside when the coffin is lowered into the earth. As the swift vocal stream equably flowed—but apparently at no fixed point in the stream—a black-robed verger appeared and quietly pushed the coffin through the folding doors which opened and then closed behind him, so imperceptibly that the principal mourners never even saw this part of the service. Then, when the Benediction was reached, the chaplain, having performed his duty,—a gramophone might have done as much,—skeltered out of the chapel and the mourners were free to disperse.

No doubt the world will continue to subsist, rites or no rites. Yet as long as rites are carried out—and that will be very long—they should at least be fitting and beautiful rites. Whether a man makes it his business to lay bricks or to say prayers, there is a right way and a wrong way. It is best that he should exercise his finest skill and intelligence in discovering the right way. This man to-day has been faced by the problem of adapting a rite which was beautifully fitted to burial by inhumation to burial by fire, and all that he



can think to do is to throw away exactly that portion of the rite which is the core of the whole Office.

The priest is indeed here for nothing else but to bid, with all the authority of his sacred function, a solemn and auspicious Farewell to the Dead at the moment of entering the grave, that Charon's boat which is to carry him to a far and unknown shore. At this moment, when about to pass for ever from human eyes and human fellowship, the dead brother or sister was directly addressed for the last time by the priest, who stooped to cast earth three times on the Departed. It is true that the original rite has been modified, so that the priest's Address is now made to the bystanders who also are now left to cast in the earth. These are changes in the rite that ought never to have been made, for they seriously impair its dramatic beauty and its symbolic significance. But to omit the Address altogether, and to let fall every symbolic act, is to eviscerate the rite.

Why should it be forgotten that fire and flame, as the Church has always known, are at least as fit for symbolic ends as earth? The priest has but to say when he reaches the Address: "We therefore commit his body to the Fire, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," with one

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hand placed on the coffin as he accompanies it through the folding doors to the furnace and then returns to the mourners to complete the Office, uttering as he reappears the words next following: "I heard a voice from Heaven." Thus, with the slightest and most obvious change, the Anglican order for the Burial of the Dead could be adapted to the Cremation of the Dead with a heightening rather than an impairment of its fitting beauty. It is difficult to believe that a Church with any vital energy could so disregard what it holds to be the chief business of a Church, the Ordering of Rites.

*July 8.*—"We saw the Germans coming up from the exits of a dug-out and tearing off down the trench. Our platoon commander got into the trench and picked the Huns off as they came out. He had a mouth of the dug-out on either side of him. A Hun would rush out of No. 1 exit—over he went. Then one from No. 2 and over he went. Our officer was as cool as a cucumber; he simply turned from right to left and fired as if he was in a Shooting Saloon." It is the platoon sergeant telling a journalist for to-day's paper of the recent British assault at Montauban.



Here they are at work, all the purifying and regenerating virtues of war, over which Hegel and Moltke and Treitschke grew rapturous, in actual operation at last. Those distinguished Germans might regret they had not foreseen that, as on this occasion, such grand virtues might sometimes be monopolised by an enemy. My own regret is that the Englishman had not been permitted to acquire them in what the sergeant evidently thought the most fitting place, the Shooting Saloon.

*July 9.* — Amid all the un-English Reactionary measures which flourish in the war-fevered England of to-day, however apt they may be to arouse one's indignation or one's contempt, I cannot sometimes help feeling a certain mischievous pleasure.

I observe how, after our English voluntary system has triumphantly created great armies, Welshmen and Irishmen and Scotchmen, with a few violently patriotic "Englishmen" bearing mysteriously barbarous and unfamiliar names, rush on to the scene to gather in the handful of more or less incompetent men yet left as an anti-climax to enforce the lesson of English voluntaryism. Every compulsionist is

a coward (for that is why he is a compulsioneer, he cannot believe in the freedom of courage), and it is just as well that he should show himself so, meanly and pettily, pursuing the Englishmen of freer and sturdier spirit, pioneers of our civilisation who will be lashed into a nobler spirit of freedom by this spectre of compulsion. I observe, too, how nowadays Folly, which had lurked so long in its gloomy official caverns in Whitehall or elsewhere, stalks abroad unabashed, to exhibit its insolent face in the unlikeliest places, so that henceforth we may know it for what it is.

It is a fine sowing time, the Devil scattering tares that look like wheat, while wheat also is scattered that looks like tares. And I smile as I seem to hear the Mills of God already grinding.

*October 14.*—"As though the emerald should say, 'Whatever happens I must be emerald.' " From of old that saying of Marcus Aurelius has been in my thoughts, and now, as the tide of life recedes and I am left more and more alone, it has sunk deeper than ever and even becomes endeared.

One may ask : Why cherish the virtue of a



mere stone, as it were a pebble cast up on the shore ? The virtue of vitality lies in response, in a perpetual internal adjustment to external changes. The virtue of the emerald is for living things death.

Yet, on the other hand, all the progress of life towards its highest forms is by increased stability and greater fixity. It is the lower forms of life which yield to a touch and adapt themselves to every wind of influence. All high life is associated with increased inhibition by the higher centres over the irritable autonomic system. It is the lower human beings in whom response is so easy and so swift.

So like the magnet that is held towards the north, I am fixed in continuous vital tension towards my Polar Star. "As though the emerald should say : 'Whatever happens I must be emerald.' "

*November 12.*—I see that an able publicist, of Pacifist tendency, writes to the papers to protest against the establishment of any international organisation to ensure peace. He is an advocate of international peace, but the idea that there should be any organised force to ensure peace revolts him.

But is he proposing to abolish the local policeman? I feel complacently sure of my own moral rectitude. I feel convinced that when I walk along my street I shall not assault my neighbour or pick his pocket. But I do not object that a policeman should be strolling along the footpath, for, however conscious of my own moral rectitude, I am not conscious of my neighbour's. In fact I have serious suspicions about him. Therefore I view with satisfaction the presence of that policeman, who need not concern himself with my doings, but is, I trust, keeping an eye on my neighbour.

Now my relation to my neighbour may be extended and generalised to all the people in my street. It may be pushed further to include all the people in my parish, still further to apply to the whole city, beyond that to the county, to the whole country, to the continent to which my country is adjacent, and finally to the whole world.

We are all agreed as to the principle and method which should be adopted to keep the peace between me and my neighbour, and that it should be extended to the whole group of my neighbours. But why are there people so dense as not to see that there is no limit to that extension? Whether we are dealing with



a group of two people or of two hundred million people, we are alike dealing with individuals, moved by the same interests and the same passions. The only difference is that the larger groups are still more potent for evil because here the devastating facts of crowd-psychology come into play. Whatever fancy names you give to the larger groups, there is nothing sacrosanct about them ; they remain groups of individuals. If you can dispense with the policeman for your small group of individuals, well and good, I am delighted to hear it. If you cannot dare to dispense with the policing of the small groups, still less can you dare to do it for those larger and infinitely more dangerous groups which call themselves nations.

But : *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes ?* Always remember to see to it that those guardians are themselves guarded.

November 30.—I hear that Sir Hiram Maxim is dead. That news recalls to mind my only personal impression of the man to whom we owe the deadliest of all the deadly machines which are now destroying the populations of Europe.

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It was more than thirty years ago and we stood around Maxim as he explained the mechanism of his gun and demonstrated its marvellous qualities. I still see the mild and childlike air, so often marking the man of inventive genius, the modest yet well-satisfied smile, with which he deftly and affectionately manipulated his beautiful toy. As we looked on, one of us asked reflectively : " But will not this make war very terrible ? " " No ! " replied Maxim confidently. " It will make war impossible ! "

So it is the dreamers, the children of genius, who for thousands of years have been whispering into the ears of Mankind that insidious delusion : *Si vis pacem para bellum*. Even the brilliant inventor who in the dawn of the Metal Age first elongated the useful dagger-like knife into the dangerous sword was doubtless confident that he had made war impossible.

*December 8.*—As I lay this morning, traversing with aching head a worn path of anxious thought, there suddenly flashed before my mind, out of all apparent connection with my thoughts, the momentary vision of a landscape which can scarcely ever have appeared



in memory since I last saw it forty years ago : a rough and deserted log-hut, of no beauty or interest or any slightest personal association, among scattered trees in the Bush some twenty miles from Carcoar, on the other side of the world. It never attracted my interested attention when I sometimes passed it, always with a book in my hand, I never paused to examine it, there was no reason why it should ever again recur to memory after my twelve months' stay in that neighbourhood ended. And now, by some inexplicable chance, the swift plough-share of consciousness for one brief moment throws up to the surface of the brain this trivial and minute relic of the far past.

What infinite riches in a small room ! What innumerable forgotten visions of the world stored away among the convolutions of a few ounces of watery tissue ! My days are spent with the past. And into the never-ending procession of significant memories there enters this vain image—holding, or not, some latent associated symbolism—out of the depths of a reservoir that can never be measured or exhausted.

*January 21, 1917.*—One seeks painfully to

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gather together such shreds of benefit as may be found by searching among the wreck of war. There seems to be one such thread, helpful for life and for literature, in an increased courage to face facts and an increased daring to express them. The official war films of the front present to the Cinema public, in at all events some degree of naked reality, pictures which it would have been impossible to present before. That is characteristic of a general change of attitude. People are not ashamed to think about all sorts of things they never acknowledged they thought about before, and they say all sorts of things which before they were much too prudish to say, or to allow any one else to say.

This is on the credit side of the War account. Not that the coarseness of vulgarity is a gain in literature or in life. On the contrary, it is a deadly loss from which we have long been suffering. For it sadly happens that base minds have the power of smearing with their own filth the words which stand for lovely things. By their action literature and life become degraded for us all. It needs sensitive, supple, and pure minds to preserve the words which stand for sacred things, and to carry forward that widening and deepening of human



experience in which the life of literature consists. But it also needs minds that are strong and daring. Let us be thankful if the War is helping men—it is perhaps the only way in which it can help literature—to a little more courage.

*February 26.*—For several mornings in succession I have been awakened just before dawn by a mouse gnawing on the farther side of the wainscot. In the deep silence the crunching of his incisors fills the air, and mighty jaws seem to be tearing away what sound like huge splinters. As I lie in a half-dreaming state listening to his tormenting activities, imagination involuntarily suggests to me gratifying pictures of the tortures which ought to be inflicted upon him.

Yet I sometimes wonder what may be the psychic state of my mouse who seeks so persistently and so fruitlessly to penetrate the mystery of his universe at that particular point. Surely his fellows must shake their heads and seek to persuade him, at all events by their own sagacious practical example, that probably nothing is there but Infinite Wood. And all the time there lurks in my mouse's

mind the germ of the intuition that things are not what they seem ; that Something lies behind phenomena.

So I grow reconciled with my tormenting mouse, for I reflect that he is inaugurating that metaphysical attitude of mind which after long aeons becomes consciously and deliberately embodied in the philosophy of a Kant.

*March 24.*—I recall, many years ago, in the train from Paris to Calais, an awkward elderly obviously distressed Englishman, with a French newspaper in his hand though he evidently knew no French. At length, without a word, he thrust the paper into the hands of two young Frenchmen sitting near him and pointed to a paragraph. They read it gravely and handed it back as sympathetically as their ignorance of English permitted. I gathered from their remarks that an English jockey had been killed on a French racecourse. This was evidently his father, summoned to Paris, and now returning after the funeral. There was something so pathetic, so childlike, in the grief that thus blindly craved for sympathy, the little picture has always remained clearly printed on my memory.



I think now that, however socially repressed, that represents the natural human instinct. When the ache of grief is at the heart, well-bred friends avoid with care anything that might touch on the subject of grief. They dread lest they might open a scarcely healed wound or, as they may quaintly put it, recall painful memories, and we also are too well-bred to obtrude our sorrow. But we are all children at heart, and the vision of my drab, awkward, grief-stricken, childish, old fellow-passenger now comes back to my mind.

*April 8—Easter Sunday.*—When the first breath of spring is felt in the air, always there comes into my blood the impulse to pack my bag, to start for afar, to wander in some new and beautiful land, among some strange and attractive folk, to celebrate the Easter resurrectional festival of the earth's new life which may well be the oldest of human religious rites. For three years the gates of the outer world have been closed to me. Three years ago, to-day, I stood beneath the rich loveliness of the windows of Rheims and could scarcely leave them, drawn to that now veiled shrine of beauty, for the first and last time, by what

premonition of tragedy. For the whole world has been revolutionised since, left naked and poorer, as I, too, have been left. Now as I listen dreamingly to music there seems to arise once more within me some impulse from the past, the old call of the palmer's scrip, the old desire of the pilgrim's staff. But when I turn and consider, I know that it is not the old call nor the old desire. I seem to be conscious of some vaster pilgrimage that I can but dimly discern. "When thou wast young," I seem to hear, "thou girded thyself and walked whither thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old!"

*May 20.*—"She corrupted him from beyond the grave." Those words of Flaubert's concerning Charles Bovary have always seemed to me to reveal a profound insight, and now they come back to me afresh. Not indeed that they are to be accepted only in their narrow meaning. That Emma Bovary was a destructive rather than a constructive element at work on her weak husband was merely an accident of his nature and of hers. The more fundamental fact is the power, the heightened power, which those whom we love possess when they are dead. It is a power which is increased rather



than diminished by the length of time we have known them. During that time an infinite number of new delicate fibres have grown in the brain, of new associational anastomoses with old fibres, of nuclei of latent explosive energy. We felt them during the life of the person who determined their growths, now and again, pleasurable or painfully, but on the whole scarcely consciously at all. But the irrevocable fact of death at once causes an acute activity in their vast and complex organism. All the fibres that for the most part lay latent or functioned automatically become throbbingly sensitive, and awake to tortured consciousness at a touch. And these touches are unceasing. At every moment there is some circumstance in the outer life, some impulse in the inner life, that strikes one of these nerves, evoking a prolonged vibration which absorbs all the being. We realise that we are caught in a net, from which there is no escape, for it is a net which is made of the substance of all our experience and woven with the fibres of all our brain. Now that net has come to life and is drawn around us and is pressing us with a subtle but irresistible force, corrupting us from beyond the grave, or exalting us into the finest shapes our nature may take.

May 26.—After long years I lie once more on the daisied grass by the lake in this delicately made corner of Man's earth. Against a background of blue sky, and the mingled songs of birds, and green repose, and radiant blossoming, at this loveliest moment of the year, I see, under the trees afar, the little groups as of Watteau's *Fêtes Champêtres*, but can scarcely see their modern sandwiches and thermos flasks, nor hear their Cockney chatter. Once more I have inhaled, so far as one may in this northern clime, the fragrance of the magnolias, the fragrance that haunted me forty years ago on the other side of the world, and brooded over the cloudy violet fields of bluebells, and revelled in the flaming splendour of the azaleas, insolent in their Chinese perversity, as though their rare leaves were flowers, and their profuse flowers mere leaves.

Yet all the time my thoughts have been less with the flowers than with women I once wandered and lingered with here among them, dear women who felt the beauty of the world with a keen inexpressible ecstasy, the birth-right, maybe, of those who are fated to leave it too soon. All around are spots endeared to me for ever because burdened with the memory of some playful mood, some daring gesture,



some hour of sweet or serious converse. Whether they are happier who are at rest, I ask myself, or I who wander and linger here alone, yet not alone, since the memory of their rapture remains to sharpen my sad joy.

*June 2.—*

The West winds for awhile delay ;  
The dark boughs shiver overhead ;  
Let no light daffodil betray  
Us to forgetfulness of our dead.

The anthropocentric fallacy seems still strong at the heart of our poetasters (one need not use the name in any offensive sense), and I never cease to resent it. If we are to insist that Nature must reserve her supreme sympathy for Man—Man who of all creatures has most outrageously violated her!—surely we may rather imagine her as seeking to console his sorrow by beauty than as desiring to heighten his bitterness by rigour.

But what is Man anyhow that Nature should be mindful of him ? There has not in fact been even coincidence to flatter the fallacy this year, for the belated spring has broken out at last in an incomparable efflorescence of splendour. Let us be glad ! It were no comfort for Nature to

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turn all a plumed hearse for my grief. Let me rather drink of all the heavenly joy that she can give and learn, if I can, to merge personal loss in that impersonal flame of glory which for ever burns up the pains and dross of life, of all life and not alone of our human life. Even our poetasters themselves, whom the agony of the time has called into being, belie their own faith, and the fragments of song they shed abroad, their brilliant half-formed flowers, are mere faint symbols of Nature, a new incarnation of her purificatory process.

*June 7.*—Life seems to me now mostly a dream. It is a common saying and I use it in the common way, for the men who have said it forgot that in dreaming life seems anything but a dream and we agonise and argue against some oppressing fate that in our waking moments we might approach with more fortitude. Life to-day seems to me a dream that, as is not the case in dreams, I know to be a dream.

The world is warm and lovely on this half-forsaken Kentish coast. The old houses charm one with their reminiscent Flemish gables, the hawthorn blooms in vigorous luxuriance as if



to comfort us a little for the laburnums that fade and fall; this eastern sea, that is always dull let the sun shine as it will, is lit up here and there by luggers with rich red-brown sails that rejoice my soul, and over it hang always, as once for Rossetti at Birchington not far away, the heavy mists in the offing, "aweary with all their wings"; everything here has its own beauty, a deep inner human beauty, so unlike the aerial beauty of my extinguished Paradise of the West.

Gay dragon-fly aeroplanes swiftly hum across the sky, flashing silver in the sun. And now and again, perhaps towards evening, the siren hoots its warning along the coast and incandescent gleams send their signal from the sea, and soon swiftly breaks out the roar of anti-aircraft guns against invisible raiders, and however anti-militant one may be, a wave of exhilaration surges up within at the possibly impending danger, the certain clash of death close at hand.

Yet, more often here, my eyes seem to swim and dream in tears. For me, too, as for so many others, two worlds seem dead, an outer world across the Channel that I shared with my fellows and an inner that my own heart held. In these two lines of coast an old circle

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oneself in the exhilaration of that loveliness one had to be voluntarily blind to elements of tawdry vulgarity and glare.

To-night once more after many years I came along the Embankment between eleven and midnight. It was a perfect night, with soft and lucent air and a large moon that silvered the rippling water. For the first time I saw all the loveliness complete which before I had by an effort partly to divine. Every vulgar note, every glaring tone, had altogether gone. Everywhere harmony, everything standing nobly in the deep perspective of its own proper light, with an enthralling power of calm and solemn beauty. Here Nature and Man have clasped hands in a dream of ecstasy. I can recall no such magnificent vision anywhere in the world. To think that we owe it to the agony of the world !

*October 20.*—The moonlight nights in London during the last four days, with the subdued artificial light giving full value to the light of Nature, have been of rare beauty. They have recalled to me, as nearly as London nights can, the moonlight night which always remains in memory as the loveliest I ever knew in England, the night on the slope at Hindhead when

Tennyson lay dying close by at Haslemere. But there is a difference which a while ago we could scarcely even have conceived. The serene October moonlight at Haslemere was a fitting background to a poet's departure from the scene of life. But this London October moonlight is the surprising *décor de théâtre* of a different play never before produced. Just now it is performed by night, and even in this short run it has already fallen into a smooth methodical order, creditable, no doubt, to all concerned. The preparations begin at six. It is then that notices are sent along the streets, and the large cars and vans begin to draw up in front of the Police Station opposite to which I live. A little later a sheep-like flock of people begin to hurry into the Station, which seems able to swallow down an incredible number into its cellars, in this theatre functioning as the Pit. Meanwhile the preparations continue to be carried on, quite calmly but with all promptness. An inspector whistles, calls out a man's name and the name is passed along; immediately a car drives up to the gates and departs on its mission. Then a dozen or two special constables leap swiftly up into a van provided with benches for the present purpose and are whirled away; in a few minutes the



van has returned and another dozen or two specials leap up with the like swiftness and are in their turn carried away. The streets are now clearing, with the stimulus of sharp injunctions from the police. By eight o'clock I begin to hear, far away, scarcely distinguishable, the gentle throbbing of guns. It slowly draws nearer. One sees now their lightning flashes. Then they are joined by guns which must be close by. There is now a confused din, rising and falling, of guns which seem to be of the most various kind and calibre. At times a rocket may be seen in the sky, but otherwise there is little to observe. The streets are now completely clear and silent. There is only that dominating confused din of the guns, and if amid it there is any explosion of falling bombs it is hard to distinguish. There is, however, an ambulance in action. One feels disinclined now to read or to write. I lie down on my couch, and under the hypnotic action of the gun-fire I fall into an almost unconscious and dreamlike state, though remaining perfectly awake. Then I become aware of men talking below in the otherwise deserted street, and on rising and going to the window I see a little group of specials and a man—it is not clear in the gloom whether he, too, is one of

them—is holding forth dogmatically on the science of air-raiding ; he has made a special study of the raids ; he declares with conviction that he has discovered the exact path followed by the invaders, which he proceeds to describe, for he knows it, “ every bloody inch of it.” I scarcely gather that his hearers are meekly convinced of his superior knowledge, but they refrain from discussing the matter and the little group disperses. Then another group of performers enters the scene to play its appointed part, and I hear, beautiful, sustained in the air, the musical whirr as of a huge tuning-fork. Somehow it reminds me of the Prelude to *Lohengrin* and the angelic choir bearing the Holy Grail. In a few minutes this supernal music has died away. The heavenly choir having scattered the benediction of their Grail over the Great City are bearing it back to their own Paradise.

That was the climax of the whole play. In a little while the guns, which had already receded into the distance, suddenly stop. The performance is over. The Pit across the road discharges its vast audience. The old everlasting stream is once more flowing and bubbling along the streets, with gay laughter and rippling exhilarated speech.



*Christmas Day.*—The great recurring Festivals of the Year, each one more than the last, like the tolling of a bell, remind me how I am nearer than ever before to the last stroke of midnight, the final rhythmic flutter of the swallow's wing. Often recurs to memory the saying of the pagan Anglo-Saxon chief that we know no more of our life than that it is like the flight of a swallow which enters the hall at one end and passes out at the other. Only to me—who love the open air, and to see the world from a height, and to dream—it is not quite so that I picture my swallow's flight. Rather I seem to be taking my course from unknown mists to unknown mists over the clear lake in the valley below upon which all the shows of life are mirrored. When I set out the lake all lay before me and my dreams were ever of the life I seemed to see mirrored ahead. But now there is little to see before me, and all my dreams, beautiful or sad, are no longer of the future but of the past, that is receding into the mist now fast swallowing the whole scene.

*January 8, 1918.*—I notice a tendency among some of the younger painters and artists of to-day to become aggressive on behalf of

Art. Militarism is in the air and they will fight for their cause. They write to me of the New Crusade they wish to initiate, and of the battle they are about to wage on behalf of Art against Science, which they imagine to be the Enemy.

Yet Militarism, as even these same people admit, has to-day been once more proved a failure in Life. Is it necessary even to argue that it must be a failure in Art? You may thrust Art fiercely down the throats of children at the point of a spiritual sword, but spiritual sword and spiritual food will alike be rejected by those tender stomachs. The last state of Art thus championed would be worse than the first.

No doubt Art is neglected, as also Science is neglected, for they are twins, born under the same star. No doubt, also, the artist is neglected, even most neglected when most original, when most himself. But if he thinks of himself and his own neglect he ceases to be an artist, and becomes a tradesman, an excellent thing to become, no doubt, but certainly a different thing. For the artist is a lover, as the man of science is a lover, and is even prepared to say with Goethe's lover, "If I love thee, what is that to thee?"



The great artist, like the great lover, demands, moreover, a certain solitude for the exercise of his vocation. He flings by the way-side, as he goes, the lovely things he has made, as he that casteth his bread on the waters. But the artist's creations, unlike Nature's flowers which fade and are trampled because they are renewed every year, can never fade, nor may the trampling of any feet destroy them utterly. They will be found after many days, like that jewel a queen dropped from the castle walls, even after many centuries, to be treasured of men thenceforth for ever.

*January 14.*—It has come to me of late that of those unknown vivid and flaming personalities that are here and there born into the world—village Hampdens, mute inglorious Miltons, women who have never found expression in art or in life—there are perhaps none that are wholly lost.

Millions are born and live and die like the leaves in a forest; they fade and fall and crumble away, even in the memories of those who knew and loved them best. But a few have existed here and there who lived so originally or so fervently that their fellows

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who knew them, or divined their secret, marked and could never forget. So these never faded and fell and crumbled in human memories like the others but entered the human tradition, and live for evermore, in however transformed a shape, in myth and folklore and religion, subtly inspiring influences of which the originating persons have been in name forgotten, and yet they live on for ever in the life of the world tiny indistinguishable rays in the great flame of life.

So at all events I love to think it is, when I remember how I have been inspired or helped by the secretly burning originality of some unknown person.

*February 9.*—In one of my books I had occasion to mention the case, communicated to me, of a woman in Italy, who preferred to perish in the flames when the house was on fire, rather than shock her modesty by coming out of it without her clothes. So far as it has been within my power I have always sought to place bombs beneath the world in which that woman lived, so that it might altogether go up in flames. To-day I read of a troopship torpedoed in the Mediterranean and almost



immediately sunk within sight of land. A nurse was still on deck. She proceeded to strip, saying to the men about her, "Excuse me, boys, I must save the Tommies." She swam around and saved a dozen of them. That woman belongs to my world. Now and again I have come across the like, sweet and feminine and daring women who have done things as brave as that, and even much braver because more complexly difficult, and always I feel my heart swinging like a censer before them, going up in a perpetual fragrance of love and adoration.

I dream of a world in which the spirits of women are flames stronger than fire, a world in which modesty has become courage and yet remains modesty, a world in which women are as unlike men as ever they were in the world I sought to destroy, a world in which women shine with a loveliness of self-revelation as enchanting as ever the old legends told, and yet a world which would immeasurably transcend the old world in the self-sacrificing passion of human service. I have dreamed of that world ever since I began to dream at all.

*February 10.*—The more I listen to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony the more vividly

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it presents itself to me as the most subtly complete embodiment he ever attained of his own personal conception of life as sublimated self-assertion. At the outset of the first movement, "Fate knocks at the door," said Beethoven himself. But the door was not immediately opened. We hear the challenge of Life to the yet reluctant soul, not yet feeling the energy to assert itself in the world. So far the gospel of assertion is preached from outside to the self which accepts it indeed but has not yet acquired the will-power to embody it and live it. That explains perfectly the beautiful slow movement. That movement sets forth the message of impersonal joy and self-sacrifice which is the gospel of all the Children of Heaven in music from Bach to Franck. But to Beethoven, who is not of the Gods but the Titans, it sounds infinitely sad; it seems mere renunciation and resignation, for it is the death of the truculent self, and comes as it were a seductive temptation to his weakness to abandon that faith in the triumph of the self which is Beethoven's Credo. And he succeeds slowly in shaking off the temptation. He wins his way to the gospel which had challenged him at the outset. Now at last he gains the strength to embody it, to take



it up into his blood and spirit, so that henceforth it is affirmed to the end with ever more triumphant energy, the most complete and magnificent affirmation of ruthless self-assertion that has been heard in music, and the supreme expression of Beethoven's own personality.

The interpretation may seem astray and fantastic. It is how I hear the Symphony in C Minor. And it corresponds to all that we know of Beethoven, who, let us never forget, was even more than Milton, "of the Devil's party without knowing it."

*February 17.*—Grieg's Pianoforte Concerto I would call the Marriage Concerto, not so much because he wrote it at the time of his marriage, but because that seems to me its subject. It is, no doubt, scarcely a profound work, but a tone of golden beauty is maintained throughout, it is always pleasant to listen to, and now I find in it this concealed meaning.

The first movement is all love, the representation of the lover's joyous emotion at the prospect of union, and it culminates in a description of the act of union. I scarcely

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know—others, doubtless, may be wiser—how the sexual embrace could be more beautifully and precisely rendered in music. The *Adagio* presents the next stage, in which the lovers, now united, face together the problems of love and life and realise their meaning; there is no sadness in this movement, only sweetness and a sense of gravity, the hesitating contemplation of the unknown course in front. In both these movements the attitude may be regarded as subjective; in the final movement it becomes more objective. The task of life is seen and accepted, to be carried on with joy and ever-increasing vigour, fortified by the sense of union in love. It is this sense of union in love for the sake of work which seems to inspire the whole Concerto with a beautiful unity.

*February 24.*—There seems to me a certain parallelism and a certain contrast between Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony—a nobler work than the better-known Sixth too heavily laden with unclarified emotion. I am not concerned with any questions of technique outside my



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Beethoven, by rebellion against the seduction of beauty; he can only attain to equanimity and strength by accepting the consolation of beauty. It is all of profound psychological interest. We see, too, incidentally, how in his next Symphony,—which I should be inclined to call the Homosexual Tragedy,—where Tchaikovsky was faced by the same challenge as Beethoven, and was forced to meet it in the same way, the end was bound to be, not the blare of triumphant conquest, but the deep groan of utter despair. Here, however, the finale attains the full expression of Tchaikovsky's gospel, in which beauty leads on to harmonious energy, and the initial challenge of Life is accepted, transmuted from the minor to the major mode, merged into triumph and gladness.

It is not clear how far a composer realises what he is showing of himself. Possibly if he realised he would hesitate. But it is easier in music than in any other art to elude the confession of self-revelation. Whether or not he knows—and I suspect he often knows—the emotional logic of personal temperament is deeper than all the subterfuges of art and can never be eluded.



*April 12.*—It is one of the first days of Spring, and I sit once more in the Old Garden where I hear no faintest echo of the obscene rumbling of the London streets which are yet so little away. Here the only movement I am conscious of is that of the trees shooting forth their first sprays of bright green, and of the tulips expanding the radiant beauty of their flaming globes, and the only sound I hear is the blackbird's song—the liquid softly gurgling notes that seem to well up spontaneously from an infinite Joy, an infinite Peace, at the Heart of Nature, and to bring a message not from some remote Heaven of the Sky or the Future but the Heaven that is Here, beneath our feet, even beneath the exquisite texture of our own skins, the Joy, the Peace, at the heart of the mystery which is Man. For Man alone can hear the Revelation that lies in the blackbird's song.

These years have gone by, I scarcely know how, and the heart has often been crushed and heavy, life has seemed to recede into the dimness behind, and one's eyes have been fixed on the End that crowns all. Yet on the first days of Spring, and this Spring more than those of the late years that passed over us, soft air and sunshine lap me around and I indeed see

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again the solemn gaiety of the tulip and hear the message in the blackbird's low and serenely joyous notes, my heart is young again, and the blood of the world is in my veins, and a woman's soul is beautiful, and her lips are sweet.

*May 2.*—I remember reading years ago, in I know not what sacred book of India, of a prophet of olden time who wandered about the country, like Jesus, accompanied by his disciples. Early one morning they were aroused by the muezzin from a neighbouring minaret calling to prayer. "The Voice of God!" exclaimed a zealous disciple awaking the slumberers. It chanced that from one of them as he roused himself from sleep there broke as it were the sound of wind. "And that also is the Voice of God," said the Teacher. Then the disciples turned and rebuked the Master, for it seemed to them that he spoke blasphemy. But he replied: "The one sound and the other are but vibrations of the air. Both alike are the Voice of God."

I have thought since of that profound utterance, so rich with symbolic meaning, of the wise old Moslem Teacher of India. Men hear the Voice of God from the lofty towers



where the muezzin stands. But as the mystic vision pierces deeper into the mystery of the world, it is seen that the Divine is more truly manifested in the falsely so-called humble human things; the winds and the waters of the world are all passed through the human form and cannot be less admirable for their association with that exquisite mechanism. So it is, we see, that to the Mystic the Human becomes Divine, and the voice of winds and streams, here as elsewhere, is the Voice of God.

*May 6.*—Yesterday, here in London, the sky was dark. The rain dropped continuously, one's spirit was dismal. To-day the air has been washed clean, the sky is bright, the trees burst into fresh green. Here, as I sit in the Old Garden, the flowers flash with warm radiance beneath the sun, and I hear the deepest wisdom of the world slowly, quietly, melodiously voiced in the throat of the black-bird. I understand. I see the World as Beauty.

To see the World as Beauty is the whole End of Living. I cannot say it is the aim of living. Because the greatest ends are never the result of aiming; they are infinite and

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our aims can only be finite. We can never go beyond the duty of Saul, the Son of Kish, who went forth to seek his father's asses and found a Kingdom. It is only so that the Kingdom of Beauty is won. There is that element of truth in the contention of Bergson, no intellectual striving will bring us to the heart of things, we can only lay ourselves open to the influences of the world, and the living intuition will be born in its own due time.

Beauty is the end of living, not Truth. When I was a youth, by painful struggle, by deliberate courage, by intellectual effort, I won my way to what seemed to be Truth. It was not the end of living. It brought me no joy. Rather, it brought despair; the universe seemed empty and ugly. Yet in seeking the Asses of Truth I had been following the right road.

One day, by no conscious effort of my own, by some inspiration from without, by some expiration from within, I saw that empty and ugly Universe as Beauty, and was joined to it in an embrace of the spirit. The joy of that Beauty has been with me ever since and will remain with me till I die. All my life has been the successive quiet realisations in the small



things of the world of that primary realisation in the greatest thing of the world. I know that no striving can help us to attain it, but, in so far as we attain, the end of living is reached and the cup of joy runs over.

So I know at such a moment as this, to-day, as I sit here, alone, in the warm sunshine, while the flowers flame into colour and the birds gurgle their lazy broken message of wisdom, however my life may be shadowed by care, and my heart laden with memories, the essential problems are solved.

*May 11.*—The Old Testament has come into fashion again, as of old it came into fashion among the Covenanters, and much impresses our rampant fire-eaters, not least, it would seem, those of Ulster. It is an excellent collection of books; one is glad that under any pretext it should come into fashion. But let us not forget the wisest, the most human, the most eternally modern book in that collection. It is always pleasant to remember that in the earliest of my own publications I expressed the esteem in which I held, and have continued to hold, the book of *Ecclesiastes*.

That book is not indeed the only book in

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the Old Testament which mankind should for ever hold in reverence and diligently read. There is *The Song of Songs*. Of that book, too, it is pleasant for me to remember that at the age of eighteen, I made for my own satisfaction an English translation of Renan's dramatic version. It is a beautiful poem of the loveliness of Man and Woman. Lately, indeed, I heard it described as "charming but rather thick in places." I should myself prefer to say that it is the most superb of all inspired statements of the Adoration of the Body.

But there is a still more profound wisdom in the book of *Ecclesiastes*. It is indeed a pensive book ; not pessimistic, rather there is an exquisite balance of optimism and pessimism, the sense that we need both, and both in full measure, when we would adequately grasp the whole of life. The early blood-thirstiness of the ancient Hebrew has altogether fallen away, and his tribal monotheistic ferocity has been mellowed into the widest human tenderness, and his passion for financial operations has not yet been born. In the absence of all these characteristically Hebrew absorptions, the world seems to the seer a little empty, the abode of "vanity." Yet there



was one great Hebrew trait still left to him, the most precious of all, a sunny humanitarian universalism. Throughout his languid and short course through that little book, his hands drop golden honey, his low and deep voice, never raised, always gentle and always clear, utters sweet and wise and serene words that will remain true as long as men survive who know what words mean.

There is no better book in the Old Testament than the book of *Ecclesiastes*, and if I had the ordering of the matter I would be inclined to insert it also in the New, even three times over, after the Gospels and after the Epistles and after the Book of the Revelation, as a perpetually recurring refrain.

*May 17.*—In the degree in which I have been privileged to know the intimate secrets of hearts, I ever more realise how great a part is played in the lives of men and women by some little concealed germ of abnormality.

For the most part they are occupied in the task of stifling and crushing those germs, treating them like weeds in their gardens, which may indeed be stifled and crushed but will always spring up again unless they are

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uprooted, and these plants can never be uprooted because they are planted deeply down, entwined with the texture of the organism.

So these people are engaged in a perpetual contest, a struggle of themselves against themselves, an everlasting effort to ensure that what they consider the higher self shall hold in check the lower self. Thereby they often attain strength of character. They are fortified for living. It can scarcely be said they are sweetened or enriched.

There is another and better way, even though more difficult and more perilous. Instead of trying to suppress the weeds that can never be killed, they may be cultivated into useful or beautiful flowers. The impulse that is selfish or perverse or harmful may in the end be so transmuted as to bring forth fruits meet for service or for science or for art, no longer a poison for him in whose heart they grow and for those who surround him, but a precious herb for the healing of the nations. Thus in place of hard and loveless struggle and the perpetual production of a barren and virtuous soil, there is the prospect of harmony in fruitfulness, a life that has been enriched and sweetened by what had else been its bane.



For it is impossible to conceive any impulse in a human heart which cannot be transformed into Truth or into Beauty or into Love.

*May 19.*—"You have never seen him!" It was the confident reply of a sculptor, four years ago, to a wife who had come to his studio to view the clay model of a bust of her husband and felt a little disappointment on finding it rather unlike her own vision of the original, "You have never seen him!"

That remark, so characteristic of the artist temper, occurs to me now as I read Croce's *Aesthetic*, and at the same time I am reminded of another remark, this time made by a Cornishman who used to come to do odd jobs. He possessed more than a due share of that gift of "divine laziness" which Quiller-Couch claims for the people of his Duchy, and we would often find him spending long periods in the contemplation of his work instead of doing it. One day when thus discovered and reproached he exclaimed: "There's some men can do more by half an hour's watching a job than others in a whole day's work!" He can scarcely have been aware that Leonardo da Vinci also, when similarly reproached by the

Prior of Delle Grazie for spending his time opposite his "Last Supper" and doing nothing, had replied in almost the same words: "Men of lofty genius when they are doing the least work are most active." It was a profound observation, and we were so delighted that from that day forth we nicknamed him the Artist.

Vision and the expression of his vision are the artist's concern. It is not by work but by vision, by concentrated intense vision, such vision as is an intuition of the underlying truth, that he performs the first and chief part of his task. All intuition, as Croce puts it, is expression, and the artist, the man of genius differs from the rest (as Bergson has specially insisted) by the fact that while for most of us intuition is shallow and limited, a mere affixing of general labels, or at the most index numbers, for the man of genius it is deeper and wider, a realised expression of a vision which for the rest of the world remains unseen. The retort of Turner to the lady who complained before his pictures that she had never seen such effects in Nature, remains just: "Don't you wish you could, Madam?" In other words the artist who is a man of genius possesses not only a greater power of



expression, but primarily a power of deeper and wider intuition.

So it comes about, I now think, that when the bright-eyed eager sculptor moulded his vision of a tortured and anxious soul, brooding in a contemplative sadness that was scarcely visible to the critical observer, his intuition may have rightly forecasted.

*June 1.*—In a newspaper to-day I see an interview by one of our best journalists with a colonial general who is directing an important subsidiary department of the war. He is a man of forty, a senior wrangler of his colonial university, who has given his life to business. He is described as a man of master mind, a man of imagination as well as of cheerful exuberant energy. And this is the refrain of his remarks, rendered with much picturesque vividness: "The war is good for us. Now we know there is something bigger in the world than money."

The temper of interviewers in their commerce with eminence evidently tends to optimism. But it would not be easy, one imagines, to find anything more likely to confirm even the most confirmed pessimist. For here is

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presented to us a man whom we are told to regard as the finest type produced by the modern world, and, it seems, nothing less than the ruin of that world is needed to teach such a man the mere Alphabet of Life.

*June. 7.*—It is a perpetual wonder and delight to watch how during the last twenty years the whole Pre-history of the world is being slowly revealed to us, with fresh marvels at every stage of the revelation. It is not long since the date of the world's creation was fixed at a few thousand years ago; now it extends to hundreds of millions, and even the age of Man himself is beginning to be thought of as running into millions. It is but thirty years ago that Virchow, the greatest authority of his time, could believe that the solitary Neanderthal skull of Palaeolithic man was merely a pathological specimen. Now Neanderthal Man is a genus with many species, a being with a skull sometimes as capacious as our own, and with pioneering and inventive powers as great as our own, while behind Neanderthal Man there are other more vaguely seen beings who were yet already Man. Then there was the Magdalenian Age, the climax



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world—which was in a better position to know—wiser when it placed the Golden Age in the past and not, as we, doubtless influenced by the pessimistic conceptions of Christianity, in the impossible future of another world, first in the skies and then on earth? So we should indeed be trailing great clouds of glory along with us instead of being engaged in the painful task of searching for them in an uncertain future. Indeed the whole cosmic conception would fall into a new and more satisfying harmony. As things now are, we are compelled to believe that the earth is slowly decaying towards a final catastrophe, while Man, its most conspicuous inhabitant, is slowly marching towards the height of ideal Perfection. It is a painful clash of absurdly contradictory conceptions, only, it would seem, to be resolved when we attain to the faith that Man and the Earth, after their long and agitated career, surely unique in the cosmos for fantastic charm, are at length declining together towards their sorely needed and infinite Rest.

Would not some such large and harmonising conception as this revolutionise and revitalise morals? Nothing has so intoxicated and maddened the men of the latest period of



world-history as that doctrine of Progress towards a great future which they were passionately striving to achieve. (We may see it even in the present war.) In the great Pacification of the tender bonds of a common Fate, in the dying down of contentions which have grown out of date, in the growth of a Toleration at length made possible, in a new vision of Fellowship and Joy among Comrades doomed in the same Great War, we attain to a morality which a genuinely realised faith in the Final Death of Man can perhaps alone render possible.

*June 15.*—This morning, walking along the street I dwell in, I came on a girl in the middle of the pavement, with her skirts well raised above her knees, pulling up and adjusting her stocking. As I approached she glanced up and then resumed her operation.

Posterity might regard this as a singularly insignificant incident which only an imbecile could mention. But Posterity cannot know that in the European world wherein I lived for more than half a century that little act was almost revolutionary. In the world I knew whenever a woman wanted to pull up her

stocking she retired into a dark corner, as though to commit a nuisance, or at least turned her shamefaced countenance closely to the wall. Moreover, this girl was clearly of the flourishing working-class, precisely the class that is most strictly observant of modest propriety.

But it so happens that in these years of war skirts have been contracting upwards as never before, so as to fall even in their normal range only a few inches below the knee. Evidently this revolutionary girl had made the great discovery that under these new conditions the traditional ceremony preluding the act of pulling up one's stocking had become an antiquated and absurd convention. There seemed no longer any reason remaining for being ashamed to perform the operation openly. So by virtue of that simple directness of vision she becomes a pioneer.

The process is symbolical of pioneering genius generally. All genius, Hinton used to argue, is merely Nature finding the simple way of doing a thing and letting fall the difficult complicated ways, or, as he would also insist, of learning to do virtuously what before could only have been done viciously. We see, also, more than that. All the exhortations



you could think of to reasonableness and true modesty would never have persuaded that girl to pull up her skirt in the middle of the pavement. She came upon it, not straightly but in a curve, by a sort of mathematical process, one set of changed conditions automatically leading on to another set of changed conditions. For that is ever how Nature subtly leads us ; it is a spiritual law, they said of old, that by indirection we find direction out.

*July 15.*—Last month the country was suffering from drought, and as of late the food question has been in all men's minds, a Duke had what was regarded as the brilliant inspiration to issue a Call to Prayer for Rain. It so happens that June is normally rather too dry a month and July rather too wet, whence the natural basis of the superstition concerning St. Swithin. So it has come about that the Prayer for Rain was only too successful and many curses have been called down on the unhappy Duke's head. As has so often happened before, the devout belief in the efficacy of prayer was not accompanied by equally devout belief in the lack of efficacy of the answers to prayer.

The value of Prayer is not to be called in question. It is a spiritual weapon of incomparable value both for offence and defence. The most varied among the great figures of history have borne witness to the value of Prayer, from Jesus to Casanova. Yet the devout believer who preserves his mental equilibrium must surely be much exercised concerning the right use of such a weapon. A skilful combination seems here required of two contradictory faiths. I recall that in my early years I prayed with much fervour. No doubt my prayers availed me much. Yet if the things I prayed for with most fervour had come to me I could have suffered no greater misfortune. We need the faith that our prayers will help us : we need also the faith that they require no answer. So that the devout man seems called upon to pray : " O Lord ! hear my prayer, but, O Lord, for God's sake don't grant it."

*July 19.*—We have walked from Felsted on a pilgrimage, long since projected, to the church of Little Dunmow. It is merely a fragment, enclosed to make a Church in the most awkward and ignorant manner, but it would have been



well worth a longer pilgrimage. For this fragment is really a Lady Chapel, the south aisle of a great chancel (after a manner I find to be rather common in this district) of a great and glorious church built in what must have been the most exquisite so-called Decorated manner of the fourteenth century. Two hours scarcely sufficed us to examine all that there was to see in this small fragment of the great Church of the Augustinian Canons who had a Priory here, though of Priory and church almost nothing more now remains visible above the surface, all cleared away and utilised by the practical and economical people of this land, and even the fragment that remains is much defaced and its soft stone melted away. Yet there is enough left to enable us to reconstruct its lovely outlines, and many details remain in a more than latent condition—the most elegant of piscinas, the great beautiful southern windows, the delicate carving of small animals in the panelled compartments beneath. This old church, moreover, is not only an exquisite fragment of English architecture, it is a shrine of English history, for Robert Fitzwalter who headed the Barons at Runnymede—"Father of English Liberty" he was termed in the days when the



sacred significance of Magna Charta was still undisputed—was lord of the Manor of Little Dunmow and lies somewhere buried beneath this pavement. Another Fitzwalter, one of his descendants probably of the fourteenth century, is here figured with his wife at full length in elaborate costumes, above their tomb, and these two figures, mutilated and worn, are yet of a singular beauty, not only in their decorative details but above all in the head of Fitzwalter. Likely enough there may be other realistic heads of English gentlemen of the fourteenth century equal in interest to this, but I cannot recall seeing them. That this impressive head is a realistic portrait and a fine work of art I can feel no doubt. A finely moulded face, of noble distinction and virile type, with lines of grave responsibility furrowed down the cheek, it bears—somehow to one's surprise—in the high character and delicate outline of the chin and in the beautiful lips, the marks of intellectual and even aesthetic refinement. Here we feel was not only emphatically a man, and a man of aristocratic breeding, but a man also of refinement and culture. When one recalls how, even three centuries later, the flattering and accomplished hand of Vandyck only makes clearer



the essential barbarism of the young English nobles he depicted, here in the remote fourteenth century is a man who would seem to belong to some lost civilisation of which no record remains,—if it were not for the genius of Chaucer,—and if his chain mail and his much be-ringed finger suggests the barbarian then his face shows that such barbarism was merely a fashion of disguise and that the art of living is in every age the same. On the column near his feet is one of the *graffitti*—discovered by loving antiquarian research in various parts of the church—which points perhaps to the same moral. For here we see scratched faintly in the stone in ancient hand—by what pagan-hearted canon of Dunmow?—the words: *Dum sumus in mundo vivamus corde jucundo*. And we turn to contemplate the ecclesiastical chair (thought to be of the thirteenth century) in the chancel, once used in the Priory, maybe, and surely fitted to enable some jocund Prior to expand his heart freely, for the seat is some thirty inches in breadth. One could not easily find a dead little church with more fascinating meanings to unravel than this. When we can pore over its mysteries no longer we leave with regret and stroll to Great Dunmow, to

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examine more perfunctorily a more spacious but not more interesting church of much the same date. As we approach it we note close by an old inn with the unusual sign of "The Angel and Harp," and as we enter the church we actually hear the sound of a harp and see in the else empty building the solitary figure of a girl in white in the chancel before her great brightly gilt harp. Some ten minutes later she covers her harp and quietly steals out of the church. She had evidently been rehearsing her solo part in a concert which is to take place in the church in the evening. Such is the extent of human imbecility (I have always found one can best observe it in oneself) that, until it was too late, neither of the rude masculine intruders had the presence of mind even so much as to think of the conventional compliment the circumstances seemed so obviously to suggest.

*August 22.*—The problem of the origin of the belief in immortality has often exercised my mind. I have seemed to see a factor of it (for the dream theory hardly seems by itself to suffice) in the growth of foresight. The Mousterian or the Aurignacian man, who first



in the world began to bury his dead, doubtless in the faith that they had a future which must be seen to—in the interests of the living who remained if not of the dead who had departed—had begun to be more aware than the men of earlier ages of the value of foresight in life. This foresight for the dead was a natural extension of the inevitable growth with culture of foresight for the living. At a much later period we see that the Egyptians, by their peculiar position in relation to the yearly movements of the great river on which their existence depended, were compelled beyond all peoples to exercise a concentrated and elaborate foresight, and they beyond all others were the people who carried the ritual of the dead and the faith in immortality to the ultimate summit.

Of late years it has come to me that the faith in the persistence of the soul may have among its factors not only the growth of human foresight, but the growth also of after-sight, that aftersight which is the result of the emotional fixation of affection. As human power of love grew more intense, and the objects of it ever more deeply impressed on the mind—it might be hazardous to assert that the process developed before the Neo-

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lithic period when home-life in our sense first became possible—the aftersight of beloved dead persons must tend to leave on memory an imprint that is indestructible. At the point when this stage was reached in human development the sense of immortality—the immortality of the beloved which necessarily involved that of all—became inevitable. It was indeed a subjective sense, independent of intellectual beliefs or Palaeolithic magic traditions, and might even exist side by side with total disbelief in its objective reality. For it is strictly a sense, a sense as convincing as our sense of the sun traversing the sky, which, as we know, until only yesterday produced conviction so intense that its denial seemed a heresy worthy of death. The innumerable impressions produced by the loved one's personality on the sensitive organism, the concentration of feelings and ideas, desires and fears, pleasures and pains, develop a Being within us strong and living enough to survive when the object from which they radiated and on to which they have been reflected, has turned to dust. Such a person may be closer to us and more alive than the people we see and hear and touch every day. The whole process is symbolised with delicate psychological truth in the charm-



ing Gospel story in legendary form of the resurrection of Jesus in the minds of the disciples who loved him, however the beauty of it has been marred by the crude Western realists who could not apprehend its spiritual meaning. We create by love an immortal being whom nothing can destroy until we, too, are turned to dust.

*August 28.*—"I hate books of emotion and sentiment. I never read them. But I love books of hard facts." So writes a woman friend who is distinguished in imaginative literature.

Nowadays—though my friend is not younger than I am—that seems to me a youthful attitude. It is the child who is always wanting facts and perpetually desiring to know. Right that it should be so; it is a very necessary thirst, this thirst for facts, like the thirst for milk of the infant at the breast.

As one grows older one's attitude towards facts changes. One begins to see through them. So far from being hard they now seem remarkably soft, even when one thinks one has, with much trouble, succeeded at last in finding them. The most baldly statistical

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facts are shifting every moment, and they are the most relatively solid of all facts; even when it seems not so, they are still susceptible of endlessly different interpretations. You can stick your fist through them at any point.

The only hard facts, one learns to see as one gets older, are the facts of feeling. Emotion and sentiment are, after all, incomparably more solid than any statistics. So that when one wanders back in memory through the field of life one has traversed, as I have, in diligent search of hard facts, one comes back bearing in one's arms a Sheaf of Feelings. They after all are the only facts hard enough to endure as long as life itself endures.

*September 8.*—I who am an exile from Cornwall, banished to the chilly fogs of London, and able to understand what Ovid once wrote from Pontus, have been spending three days by the sea. All day long I have been lying on the cliff or the sands at work, while from time to time my eyes rested on the friendly vision of a dear woman, not too far away, playing with her child. The sun and the air, mixed with that radiant vision, enter into my blood, pour-



ing a new vigour into my veins and a new inspiration into my thoughts.

Inspiration! For it is only here that I inspire, that I really breathe, in the warm and pure air of the sea, which is the food of body and soul, the symbol of love, and the enrapturing wine of the world.

The pious devotees of Faith have clung to the conception of Inspiration and they made it meaningless or even ridiculous. Yet the most fantastic vagaries of Religion, when we can penetrate to the roots of them, are based firmly on the solid foundations of Nature. The breath of God may help us to realise the intoxicating breath of the sea.

*September 27.*—Beethoven so often irritates, alienates, even disgusts me, yet I never escape him. I brood with fascinated absorption over the problems he arouses. I delight in his incomparable mastery of his material. I am stirred by some of his music more deeply than by any other music, more ravished when it is lovely than by any other loveliness. The *Allegretto* of this Seventh Symphony, which I have heard so often with fear and wonder and hear again to-night, seems to me one of the miracles

of music. It takes the usual place of the slow movement, as we note with surprise, for in form it is a light cheerful dance movement. As such, I find some people pleasantly accept it. It is not so for me, nor could it have been so meant by Beethoven, who else would never have placed it where it stands. To me the miracle of it is that here so little is made to mean so much, and the trivial becomes adequate to express the awesome. There is indeed no music that gives me so profound a feeling of apprehensive awe, of humble reverence before the deepest facts of life; I think of all the things that have most shaken the foundations of my life, and there is none to which this *Allegretto*, which sounds to some so light and cheerful, seems aught but the most fitting accompaniment I could conceive.

It is the technique of the supreme artist in Beethoven which—amid all that is clumsy and coarse and violent in his work—comes upon us again and again with endless delight. One realises it, for instance, so clearly in the familiar third Leonore Overture. There we feel—and it is exactly the same feeling we have of a sculptor like Rodin with his clay—the superb artist's delight in his technique, patiently and continuously working at his medium so as to mould



it with subtle fingers to his will, so as to wring from the material at every point the utmost of its expressive beauty.

Beethoven's development was slow. He was long in attaining his mastery of art and of loveliness. It is true that if he had died at the age Schubert died he could never have been placed in the same high rank as Schubert. In the Symphonies especially I seem to trace his evolution, and I am always finding some new evidence of this. To-night it occurs to me how clearly the third, the fifth, the seventh, and the ninth mark the great spiritual stages of that advance. The third, the *Eroica*, seems to bring to an end his first stage, the objective stage in which his eyes had been fixed on the external rather than on the internal world. He had written it to the glory of Napoleon : now he was disillusioned about Napoleon, and he felt that the *Eroica* was, in a way, a *fiasco*. Henceforth he would not attempt to honour other people. He would button up his coat and assert himself. And there is the Fifth Symphony, the apotheosis of ruthless self-assertion. But, after all, he began to realise, there are others. I feel the sense of brotherhood in the superb finale of the Seventh Symphony. There is still struggle and conflict. But against the distant

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background of warfare it is the march, no longer of a solitary aggressive individual, but of a band of brethren we seem to hear. In the Ninth, the Hymn to Joy, all conflict and warfare have fallen away. Here is something greater even than a band of brethren fighting against receding foes. It is the march of all Humanity in gracious harmony which we are in presence of at last. It has indeed been a struggle for Beethoven of all people to reach that conception, and nothing is left for us at the spectacle but reverence.

*October 10.*—When I come to wander now and then in these old towns and villages of Suffolk and the neighbouring East Anglian regions, my eyes always dwell with a peculiar satisfaction on their houses. It is not that I am impressed by their extraordinary beauty or originality or daring or skill. I am generally interested in the art of building, I delight everywhere in real houses—when I can find them. And I can think of houses I have seen in many countries which seemed to me more remarkable and memorable. These East Anglian houses are often lovely and harmonious, but on me the main impression they make is that they



are homely. That is to say that they seem to sound notes I have heard many times before, and thus soothe me with rest and peace.

I am tempted to wonder how far that may be due to an innumerable band of forefathers who actually conceived, designed, planned in detail, and often maybe with their own hands raised and constructed the likes of these houses and sometimes it may have been the very houses I gaze at with so much satisfaction. Our eyes become adapted to joy among the things they have dwelt on after long use. But I have never lived in this region, never came to it till I was approaching middle age. So it is that the opposite alternative presents itself to me, and I imagine that these things are pleasing to me because I inherit the special nervous system of those who first made them on the model of their deep-seated instincts.

*October 14.*—It is always pleasant to walk through the Park to Santon Downham, and as we walked thither last week (even wondering in these days of fruit dearth whether there were any blackberries) I saw flashing before my inner vision as the stimulating aim of our expedition the little low relief, deep in its

rough frame, set in the wall over the entrance to the south porch of that small attractive little church—attractive at least on the outside for it is always locked, possibly because there is nothing of interest inside—which with two or three small houses makes up Santon Downham. It is to me always the church of that delightful beast, lion or whatever he may be, with his splendid tail that seems to pierce his body in its great curves and flame out above him into a large fleur-de-lys.

Now as I sit talking with a friend in the gallery of Archaic Greek sculpture at the British Museum, my eye chances to fall on a stone low relief which in size and shape and tone, in its whole air, is clearly in the same tradition as the slab in the south porch of Downham, though it came from Lycia in Asia Minor and belongs to the archaic Greek period of the seventh century B.C. Here, indeed, there are two figures, one a beast—they call it a lion—nearly related to the Downham beast, but with it seems to contend a naked man, and the compressed energy of his realistic form was doubtless beyond the other sculptor whose strength lay in decoratively conventionalised beasts. Now I seem to know that the slab of Santon Downham, however comparatively late



in the tradition, belongs in type to a long-lived class of framed and pictured stones that began in the Eastern Mediterranean in the dawn of Greek art and continued on to the latest Byzantine times. But by what chance that delightful fragment of the East reached this remote corner of the Western world, what Crusader or pilgrim of fine or fantastic taste among these much-travelled East Anglians found it in Cyprus or elsewhere and brought it here to aid in the building of his own local church, that I may never know, nor is it any matter.

*November 10.*—This Sunday morning, as I passed the stable which is not far from my dwelling, I saw chalked on the door of it in capital letters the one word "Eternity." It is a rough and ill-fitting door and the ordinary stable of a commercial firm, but any background will serve him who seeks to set up the fundamental truth of the world. I cannot guess what he was like, but I am drawn to him by a bond of sympathy. It is not likely we should agree on the species of Eternity. Yet I, too, have made it my business in the world to chalk up "Eternity" in my best capital

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letters on such rough and ill-fitting doors as I have been able to find for the purpose, not indeed the stables inhabited by respectable Houyhnhnms, but rather those which I sometimes suspected to belong to Yahoos.

To-day perhaps seemed to my friend a day specially fit for meditation on that word. For to-day news has arrived of the abdication of the Kaiser, which we imagine to mean the passing away of a whole epoch, and to-day we expect every hour to hear of the coming of Peace. Wars and Dynasties, they have come and gone for millenniums in this fussy and tortured world, careful and troubled about many things, a world where so few have time to think of the Divine Beauty which lies beyond and beneath. So I reflected afresh, as I listened this afternoon to the poignant melodies of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, still almost as much a revelation as it was nearly forty years ago, and between whiles the vision came to me of that stable door where my brother, whose heart must surely be fixed where alone true joys are to be found, had carefully set in chalked capitals for my good cheer and encouragement that great word "Eternity."



*November 25.*—The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is stated in the newspapers, declared yesterday that “the one thing which had aroused his indignation during the war was that it had been within the power of any foreign country to put a stop to the ringing of English church bells.” All we like sheep have gone astray. Some have been indignant over what they conceived to be the aim of a great military power to dominate Europe and the world, others have been indignant over the reckless destruction of beautiful monuments or that fruitless waste and mutilation of millions of young lives which Christianity has done nothing to stop, and yet others have been indignant over the imbecility and unworthiness of our Governments. But “one thing” has aroused the indignation of the ecclesiastical head of the English Church. English Church bells ceased to ring.

It is an exquisite illustration of the professional bias. The Church is theoretically the established mouthpiece of the nation’s deepest convictions on all the spiritual aspects of practical life as they arise. That it is so every Archbishop perpetually assures us. All the more delicious when the professional bias breaks through so firm a crust. The world

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may be devastated, and Man may be extended on the Cross. But his Passion and Crucifixion are nothing in comparison with the suspension of a trifling concomitant of ritual by which no living creature was a penny the worse.

Yet for me it is impossible not to sympathise with that delightfully absurd attitude. I have in old days often been annoyed by the sound of church bells breaking in violently on my own mood with their cheerful and irritating irresponsibility. During the war some latent germ of inherited emotion from remote ecclesiastical ancestors has asserted itself, and I have missed such of those bells as were beautiful. Now that I hear again every quarter of the hour the soft and simple chime of bells from a distant tower I find them soothing if also sad. They sound with a sweet and melancholy ache, as out of a world in which I once lived with those I loved, in which I shall never live again.

*December 26.*—(This Impression was received in sleep and was set down in the early morning on awaking.)

Christianity began in a Star, seen in the East, may be a falling star, and the nucleus of Christianity is a little swirl of vapour, of a



weight that was almost nothing. Yet around that insubstantial nucleus has gathered such a crystallisation of ecstasy and terror and torment that, for all we know, the illimitable universe may not have the like to show.

So there is nothing miraculous about it? But if this is not a miracle what then is a miracle?

*January 18, 1919.*—If one is a patriot, it seems to me, he must glory in any manifestation of magnanimity or justice in his own people and feel a corresponding shame at the absence of such manifestations. Four years ago, when what seemed a wave of high disinterested emotion swept over England, even though it involved war, I felt a certain conscious pride, perhaps for the first time, in the fact, which before I had accepted as a matter of course, that I was English. But pride comes before a fall and I have repented since. The crest of that high wave has been swiftly shown to have behind it a remarkably deep pit.

I on whose brain is impressed for ever the superb procession of deep blue South Atlantic waves, as solid to view as the marble of earth, splashed with foam as delicate as the fleecy

clouds of the sky, with their uplifted crests and the vast curves of their deep troughs, I ought to be the last to forget that law of Nature.

*January 20.*—I have often wished that some disciple of Jesus had proved a Boswell. To be able to catch the precise definite outline of that figure as it impressed itself on the eyes, to know how this man met the ordinary routine of daily life, what he said in casual intercourse, the tones of his voice, and all those little mannerisms of conduct which reveal so much—how nearer we should be brought to that unique person, and what devastation so scandalous a Fifth Gospel would have wrought beforehand in the ranks of the orthodox! Still one knows they would save themselves by declaring that it was a blasphemous forgery.

I still wish for a Boswell of Jesus, but I realise now more than ever what a supreme work of art we already possess in the Gospels. That is not to say that the history of Jesus is a myth. The theory is scarcely credible. To suppose that the religion of Jesus differed from all the other religions which came into the world about that time—the religion of Con-



fucius, the religion of Buddha, the religion of Mahomet—by crystallising round a figure of the imagination, would be to confer on it a supreme distinction one would hesitate to recognise. Religion, like love in Stendhal's famous analogy, must always crystallise round some twig of the tree of life. Apart from such aprioristic considerations, Binet-Sanglé—though the orthodox refuse to recognise his existence and the unorthodox cross the road to pass him by on the other side—seems to have placed Jesus on a pedestal of solid pathological human reality from which it will be hard to tear him down.

There was a real Jesus, impossible as it will ever be even for the concentrated vision of a Binet-Sanglé to discern all his features. Yet around that concealed human person it is really the Imagination of Man which has built up the lovely crystal figure we see. An innumerable company of men, who had a few of them seen Jesus and most of them only heard of him, aided in this task. Each threw into it his highest inspiration, his deepest insight, with the sublime faith—based on that deep human impulse, seen even in our dreams, to exteriorise our own feelings—that this divine moment of his own soul could only be the

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truthful expression of a Saviour and liberator of Man.

It was the peculiar virtue of the personality of Jesus that all these inspirations and insights could adhere to it and drew together into a congruous whole. At the same time a reversed process was evidently in movement. All the facts of the hero's life, actual or alleged, and all his sayings, real or apocryphal, were sifted and filtered through the human imagination, so purged that not a single trivial, ignoble, or even ordinary crude unpleasing statement has come down to us. At once by putting in and by taking out, with 'an art like that of the painter and the sculptor in one, under some rare combination of favouring conditions, the human imagination, out of the deepest impulses of the human heart, has unconsciously wrought this figure of Jesus, purified of dross and all gold, tragic in its sublimity and tremulously tender in its loving-kindness. So that now when I open and turn over with reverent joy the leaves of the Gospels, I feel that here is enshrined the highest achievement of Man the Artist, a creation to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken away.



*January 25.*—Now that the war is giving place to the "Peace" we are permitted to see what it is, not only, for our own humiliation, on its spiritual side, but also on its physical side, as a state of exhaustion, hunger, and death for the greater part of the European world. In Russia and Germany and Austria, and so many other smaller countries, the nations are being slowly, or quickly, starved, robbed of beauty and vigour and vitality, sapped at the racial roots by unchecked diseases, in large numbers actually killed. Here in England, save for a few harmless privations, we have suffered not at all.

This moment, which would have been golden for a nation with any Utopian impulse of generosity, or of justice, or of humanity, is chosen by our Food Controller to fling out a vast extra amount of food for the consumption of his English public. It is astonishing—or surely, at least, it should be astonishing—to find that every one accepts this policy with equanimity and even with joy. No one says: The nation has been equally rationed with much reduced food-stuffs and all have done well; now apply that method to Europe, which needs it so sorely. No one says: How can I accept more than I have been proved to need

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when others are perishing for lack of what I unnecessarily take? Not one sees, not one apparently has the imagination to see, the sallow, lean, hungry faces of innumerable men and women and children, the infants who waste and die, the well-bred folk who hunt greedily in the garbage. We stolidly sit and grind our massive British jaws before superfluous piles of food which our warehouses and cold storage can scarcely hold, while our Patriotic Press exults and calls for more.

Human beings suffer from a defect of imagination, and I suppose the defect is incurable. One notes that the Swiss alone, themselves far worse off than we are in England, have sacrificed their own needs to send food into Austria, not because they are nobler than we are or more imaginative, but because they are next door to the people who starve, they can see them. We are separated; the salt estranging sea cuts us off from Europe, and cuts us off from human sympathy.

I see no mechanism to provide the human species with imagination. A greater degree of international intercourse, as well as the use of an auxiliary common language, would help to dispense with the need for imagination.



But Man is a gregarious animal, the creature of his small flock, inimical, at best indifferent, to all other flocks. If Nature needs a truly sympathetic international animal, Nature must wipe out Man and produce another species.

*March 16.*—It is reported that the Channel Tunnel between France and England is likely at last to be made. The English Government and the English military authorities, which hitherto have regarded such a scheme as a terrible menace to England's insularity, have just begun, it seems, to realise that had the Channel Tunnel been in existence when the Great War broke out that war would have been brought to a much speedier end, not to mention that a vast amount of human death and pain would have been avoided, as well as an incalculable cost in money saved. This tardy decision seems to be received with much enthusiasm.

Many years ago, when the scheme was first brought forward, I, too, felt full of youthful enthusiasm for the Channel Tunnel. It seemed to me to have both a symbolical and a practical value in bringing England nearer

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to that beloved land of France, then so often viewed with suspicion or contempt, which I regarded as the great pioneer of civilisation in the modern world. I poured scorn on the petty and miserable fears which relegated that scheme to an indefinite future.

But now ! The Great War in which the Tunnel might have rendered such service is over, and for the moment, France, only too well seconded by England, is the Pioneer, not of Civilisation but of the Reaction against Civilisation. I recognise still that the Tunnel must be made, and that it is well that it should be made. But as for enthusiasm—that I am content to leave to a generation more likely than I am to find pleasure in constructing a perennial monument to what a prominent American terms the Exquisite Stupidity of the British.

*May 12.*—A scholarly diplomatist, known also to a select circle as the most learned of Casanovists, mentioned to me yesterday that he possesses a book, written by a physician in 1848, entitled *De Morbo Democratico*, in which Democracy is considered as a kind of insanity, and technically discussed



in relation to etiology, diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment.

“Are they mad?” asked a brilliant intellectual woman lately in bewilderment concerning those bargains of the “Big Three” at the Peace Conference—with the parties chiefly concerned in the bargain left out!—which seem to be doing more for the destruction of the world’s peace than ever the war accomplished.

We smile at the conception of the medically minded author of *De Morbo Democratico* in the year of Revolution. Yet to-day one may ask whether he was not after all inspired beyond the men of his own time and of ours, when he divined that politics, after all, is nothing but a species of insanity; of which, it may be added, the Democratic form—though that form hardly seems to me easy to diagnose—may not necessarily be the most virulent.

Politics began, as the name indicates, with the overgrown agglomeration of population in cities. It is where wars in any organised form also began. They alike cover but a small section of the vast history of Mankind. They seem to have emerged out of an easier and more harmonious social life. Is it not reasonable to assume that when their course is run, they

will merge into it again?—*Eia, fratres, pergamus.*

*May 14.*—At this most exquisite moment of the year—as also it came about last May—I find myself in the Bridge End Garden. The sky is clear, the sun is warm yet not hot, for the year is young and light breezes lap me round. The great trees are yet scarce covered by the soft divine green leaves that swell and open every day before my eyes, while behind me, I know, the apple and cherry trees are masses of white and pink tinged bloom, and the lilacs have sprung into bloom even since we came to this corner of Essex scarce more than a day ago. From just outside the Garden the beautiful bells of the Church sprinkle over me at intervals little golden showers of their leisurely notes, and within the Garden more birds than I know are rapturously pouring out their various songs. Once more, with the young Spring of the old Earth, my heart, too, is young, and I drink of the cup of Life's ecstasy, gazing down awhile at the book before me of Ruben Dario's *Prosas Profanas*, the meet companion for such a moment and such a mood. I read how on such a day as this the poet's



soul looked out from the window of his  
"Reino Interior."

Oh fragrant día! Oh sublime día!  
Se diría que el mundo está en flor; se diría  
Que el corazón sagrado de la tierra se mueve  
Con un ritmo de dicha; luz brota, gracia llueve.  
Yo soy la prisionera que sonríe y que canta!

Still a prisoner, even in ecstasy. One drinks of the cup of ecstasy, but it is sometimes also, sometimes even at the same moment, the cup of anguish. For ecstasy and anguish are the life-blood of the world. They are the Sacrament, of Truth or of Beauty or of Love, in which the two elements are mingled. It is because one has drunk deep, if but once only, of that mingled cup that at last, and only at last, one becomes the Master of Life and the Master of Death, unable in the end even to see them apart, or to find any blemish in the face of either. So, unmoved in spirit, we can depart from Life to Death, satisfied and serene, swathed in the benediction of "the Peace of God which passeth all understanding," as in old days they called it.

May 21.—A friend showed me yesterday the rarely seen but often mentioned obscene *Sonnetti Lussuriosi* of Aretino, written to

accompany the yet more noted *Figuræ Veneris*, now lost save in bad copies, of Julio Romano, once accounted the first painter of his time. They seemed to me to be dull, and monotonous in their dulness, unworthy not merely of the high reputation of Aretino, *mezz' huomò et mezzo Dio*, but of the really sapid and vigorous pen of the scandalous friend of the noble Titian.

It may seem the correct and conventional thing to say when the question is of obscenity. Yet there need be no objection to obscenity as obscenity. It has its proper place in art as in life. The greatest writers have used it, Aristophanes, Dante, Chaucer, Rabelais, Sterne, even Shakespeare and even Goethe have sometimes been obscene. So also have the greatest painters, even Rembrandt, and the greatest sculptors down to Rodin. Nor must we, as some would have us, regard the obscenity of these great spirits as a stain to be pardoned and effaced; it is in the texture of their minds and their works, and that is why we must always resist any would-be "expurgation." To deny the obscene is not merely to fetter the freedom of art and to reject the richness of Nature, it is to pervert our vision of the world and to poison the springs of life.

But the expression of obscenity alone can



only be a satisfaction, and then but momentary, to the crudest and most childish mind. Obscenity only attains its true and full value when it is the means of attaining a deeper reality and a newer beauty. That is how the great masters have used it, and therein is their justification. Those who object to obscenity and yet have not realised this—even when they are so-called artists who wish to proclaim their own refined superiority yet thereby merely “write themselves down” in the Shakespearian sense—have no right to lay their sacrilegious hands on the obscene.

I am indifferent to the obscenity of Aretino because I fail to see in it any insight into life or any unfamiliar beauty. It impresses me no more than the achievement of small boys who chalk up solemn naked words in capital letters on street walls and then run away; and it seems to me a manifestation of like nature.

*May 24.*—Walking along the street early this Saturday morning, I noted a well-dressed man with rings on finger, daintily hearth-stoning his front doorstep. I heard years ago of a high Government official who was

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wont to do this, but I have not before come across a man of this sort of social class thus occupied, and I viewed the spectacle with satisfaction. It is a spectacle that enters into my vision of life. I would contemplate with equal pleasure a peer of the realm, even if a little too gingerly, scrubbing the entrance to his own palace and a scullerymaid, even if a little too vigorously, playing Debussy on a grand piano.

It is merely an application of a great truth that applies to all the essential functions of living. In this as we call it menial sphere, it has indeed long been clear; even Jesus perceived it. I have no need to feel ashamed if to sweep my floor "as by God's laws" gives me a delicate pleasure. But in some fields of living the application is less explicit. It might seem so shocking, even so disgusting, to those weaker brethren who are not artists in living. Yet there should be no greater joy, if we would come nearer to the attitude of God, than when, amid the functions of life, we put down the mighty from their seat and exalt those of low degree. This statement, let us remember, is presented as that of a village maiden who had recently received an erotic initiation, of which she has left the precise



nature for ever hidden in the vague splendour of that *Magnificat*.

*May 26.*—"Saved!" That word in large capitals stands alone at the head of the newspapers this morning. The whole world is so much in need of salvation lately that a throb of hope might well instinctively seize the heart at the mere sight of that reassuring exclamation. But it merely means that a daring but foolhardy airman, who attempted without sufficient precautions to cross the Atlantic and naturally fell into the sea, had been rescued alive. A large part of the newspapers is occupied with the description of the delirious joy of the British public on this event, and nearly half a column is needed to describe how the airman's wife thankfully went to church. All the agony of the world, the slow starvation of millions of mankind crushed to despair, is forgotten, if it had ever been known.

I have long held that the gradual course of zoological evolution is towards the type of the child, which is also the type of Genius. In actual practice, we have perhaps to recognise, this progress means less the prevalence of

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writhing movement that only the self-mastery of art controls, and one scarcely knows whether it is across the belly of the instrument between her thighs or across her own entrails that the bow is drawn to evoke the slow deep music of these singing tones.

She is gone. And now she comes on again, and she smiles and bows, and before the prolonged storm of hands that clap, at last she slightly raises both her arms outwards as though she would let fall from her the applause of the public before a revelation in which it has no concern.

Then the dull street and the memory of a glimpse of Heaven withdrawn.

*June 3.*—On the estate of Mr. Balfour in East Lothian the discovery has lately been made in a pit, some two feet deep by two feet in diameter, of a hoard of broken silver vessels belonging to the fourth century. Some of the fragments were chased with designs which recalled in delicate beauty the work of the Renaissance, and some revealed sacred Christian emblems, while among them were casually mixed a few Roman coins and some rough Saxon ornaments.

It is surmised that this hoard represented the plunder made by some barbarian Saxon pirates from the Frisian coast, pioneers in the Anglo-Saxon seizure of Britain, who had taken up their abode here, and here concealed the loot they had borne off from some monastery in Gaul, intending to melt it down, but frustrated by some sudden mischance, it may be the swift vengeance of the people they had injured. Even in those days our forefathers found the fruits of victory hard to gather.

We still live in the same world. To-day, sixteen centuries later, Mr. Balfour, who has in due course succeeded to the same East Lothian seat, is organising a plundering excursion to Gaul, with certain others in the band—Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Wilson, Orlando, and the rest—not this time to loot merely a monastery but the whole world.

History, it seems, like Nature, delights in a perpetual slight novelty. Here we see, not merely an immense magnification of a process which is essentially the same, but an impartial transformation of the labels. We call the plunderers Christians now, we call the plundered barbarians, and we realise the importance of that ancient natural device of mimicry, which we call by the unnecessarily hideous



name of camouflage, and we paint, over all, the beautiful figures of Justice and Democracy and Righteousness.

Be of good cheer. It is only externals that change. The world is essentially the same, the world out of which we proceed, into which we pass again—as in my first circus at Antwerp where once with childish joy I viewed the endlessly emerging procession of whooping horsemen who galloped round and out at one side to reappear on the other side, the endlessly emerging procession which was yet always the same.

*July 5.* — An admirable journalist, Mr. Harold Begbie, describes the Derby, the so-called "Victory Derby." He tells how happily he set out, and how a mood of depression and melancholy slowly crept over him until his dominant feeling was pity, and even the comedians seemed to him tragic. This dark and dreary "Victory Derby"—he cautiously refrains from directly suggesting that it was symbolic of our "Victory"—seemed to him sombre and touched by menace.

I have never been to the Derby and I am well content that it should reflect for the

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benefit of the thoughtless some faint image of the world to-day. But at the same time I know that there was nothing novel in the sight that met Mr. Begbie's perhaps unfamiliar eyes. For though I have never been to the Derby I was a boy at school on the high road from London to Epsom and was wont to watch all day—for we were always given a holiday for such an occasion—the crowds, from lords to costers, that drove to and from the Derby. As long as I live I can never forget the people in that long melancholy procession of varied vehicles. Those pale, weary, draggled figures, their pathetically vulgar jokes, their hollow spasmodic gaiety, sadder than sorrow, that depressed Mr. Begbie yesterday, were just the same nearly half a century ago.

They are not merely symbols of our joy in Victory, they are still more significant of our national temperament. For all our boasted practicality, we are idealists always, and indeed that practicality is an outcome of our idealism, always pitched too high for any satisfaction that the world can yield, yet always impelled to seek it with ever more feverish energy. We have not the aptitude of the French to become artists in life and accept all its eventualities with good humour.



We have not the aptitude of the Spanish to be children in life and to appreciate simply all its little things. We are so high strung that there is nothing left for us but religion and the variegated preachers who form that spectacle, unique in the world, we see at the Marble Arch.

*July 14.*—I have been reading a fragment of *Interim* by Miss Dorothy Richardson whose impressionistic novels arouse the enthusiasm of many lovers of fine literature. Certainly it is delightful to read. There is such a beautiful surface to this writing, so smooth and yet so rich. I pass my hand over the texture of it with a delicious as it seems physical sensation. And one feels that there is here throughout so exquisite a sensibility to the inner world and the outer world. Every sensation, every emotion, every thought, that passes over the heroine, no matter how subtle or how trivial, the whole stream of consciousness, is noted with such precise discrimination, I feel as though the writer had brought to her task a new instrument of a high power—a microscope that reveals fresh details, a micrometer that cuts more finely, a thermometer

that registers slighter variations. Other writers may reveal but it is by different methods, Conrad, for instance, by a splendid felicity of metaphor and simile, a poet's art, as also in a different way is the art of Hardy. But Dorothy Richardson is not a poet. She is an artist, certainly, but an artist who has something of the scientific attitude, and her observation is marked by a delicate precision which is nearer to science than to poetry. We feel that the surface of Miriam's soul is being explored before us in every little intimate fold and flock, by an investigator who is tender indeed yet ruthlessly exact. It is very fascinating.

Yet, I am inclined to ask myself, is it also very interesting? I can read a few pages of it with a rare enjoyment. But is there anything in it to draw me on through a thousand or more pages? I crawl with satisfaction over this beautiful surface, and I am quite ready to believe that it is not merely surface but in real connection with a depth beneath. Yet that depth is not revealed to me by the artist. I have to divine it, even to create it, by my own efforts.

What diminishes my interest in work that is yet so fine, is my feeling that the artist is



not in complete control of that work. She seems to have set out to tell us everything, to involve her whole art in the completeness of this record of one woman's soul spread out through half a dozen volumes. We know how Miriam reacted to every plate of food and every drink set before her at dinner; we know how she felt all over her body when she sat in an uncomfortable chair; we know exactly how the streets of London appeared to her sensitively discerning vision; we know what her blouse seemed like to her, and her night-dress. Yet we discover that whole vast tracts of consciousness, at least equal in importance to these, and sometimes of far greater importance, are shut out from our view. Miss Richardson has at every point submitted her scheme to an inner censorship made in the image of the conventional public. We see that she always has an eye on the Circulating Librarian, and as soon as she begins to detect the trace of a frown on his face she has changed her course. We are told in the most minute detail all that had happened at breakfast, and after breakfast we are told how Miriam went upstairs, and how she passed the little lavatory door, but we are not told why she passed that little door just when we might have expected her to enter

in. So of greater and more significant events in personal life, which yet must needs be bound up inextricably with the intimate and the trivial. In Miriam's bedroom, minutely and precisely as so many unimportant little details are set down, we only become the more conscious of the things that are not set down. In that room, we realise, Miss Richardson has been faced by the essential facts of Miriam's physical and spiritual life, and she has failed to meet the challenge. She set out to present before us Miriam complete, and yet the things that matter are left a blank which the minuteness of the record itself serves to emphasise.

Now the realisation of such a blank might be impertinent, or in bad taste, before novelists who had not undertaken to set before us all the intimate details of life. We have no sense of failure before Fielding or Flaubert or Tolstoy. Their art involved the exclusion of all details that were not significant, though they never asked the world what details they might be allowed to count significant. But Dorothy Richardson's method is different. It is a comprehensive method of recording even the faintest fluctuations on the stream of consciousness. It is more like the method of the Goncourts (and a little like the method



of Proust), more subtle and more veracious than the method of the Goncourts. But the Goncourts were not afraid to set the essential things down. They never came humbly to the world, or even the police, to ask what they might be allowed to set down, they preferred prosecution to that (remember *La Fille Elise*), and so their art, even though it may be in some respects inferior, is nearer to great and original art, which is always fearless.

No doubt it would be unpleasant to meet the condescending disapproval (which everything great and real must meet) of the superior person. One may be told that Dorothy Richardson perhaps bears in mind James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* appears alongside *Interim* in the same *Little Review*; he has written down what he desired to write down but only with the result that it is "expurgated" before it reaches the public. It would, they say, be impossible. But if one deliberately chooses a method which leads straight to the Police Court and then oneself stops short because the road seems impossible, one admits that one's whole art is impossible. And for the great artist there is nothing impossible. He knows that if he cannot live up to the implications of his art then either his art is wrong, or he is. Here I

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find a new and exquisite instrument for art has been created, but it is guided by the hand of Mrs. Grundy.

That seems to be the reason why my admiration for Dorothy Richardson's art is so considerable and my interest in it so small.

*July 19.*—To-day is a Day of Joy to celebrate the coming of "Peace." It seems to be thought that we should all be well content to celebrate anything whatsoever that is able to masquerade under that name. But that any one who remembers the beginning of the war, and the cause of it, can find anything in the present "end" of it to rejoice over is a wholesome reminder that we must never take the world too seriously.

"Every country has the criminals it deserves," said Lacassagne profoundly. And if a few ancient and doddering persons have survived out of a past that some thought dead, to mould the present, it must doubtless be added that every country has the rulers it deserves. They urged on their people five years ago to what they called "a war to end war" (much as though, a keen-witted woman has said, they had urged them on to acquire



syphilis, as "a disease to end disease"), and already their military leaders, feeling that that cliché was perhaps a little silly even for human consumption, are bringing forward others still more familiar about "a war like all wars," and the "lessons that will be useful for the next war." and the dishonour of "shaking hands with a blood-stained tyranny" (not of the Tsardom, oh no!), and now that the War to end War is so triumphantly concluded we are all bidden to rejoice over the Peace to end Peace. Great is the power of words. Give us this day our daily catchword, the public prays, and our Governments are in that kind of rationing indeed experts. Bread and circuses they gave the Roman public, they give the British the Newspaper Press, and it seems to be equally satisfying at a smaller cost. So it is that the faith in Progress is justified.

It has seemed to me that I could not more fittingly celebrate this great occasion than by lying down quietly at home and re-reading the account of Gulliver's visit to the Houyhnhnms. Swift has been roughly used during two centuries. On the one hand he has been regarded as a cynic who degraded human nature. On the other hand—with that contradictoriness which is certainly of the essence of human

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nature—he has been regarded as the accomplished author of a book for children. We all read *Gulliver's Travels* in childhood, with never a word of introduction or explanation. That Swift was one of the supreme masters of English, the deepest and most sensitive of moralists, the most far-sighted of philosophers—that we are left to find out for ourselves, or to discover in the writings of foreigners, as of the Italian critic Papini, often so severe in his estimates of literary persons, yet ready to recognise in *Gulliver's Travels* a book unique among the world's greatest books, with a profundity of wisdom beneath the surface of it which for every generation is new.

So what book could I more profitably take down from my shelf to-day? Yet I note that however truthfully Swift describes them, he never mentions that the moment when the world was stretched on the rack of a torture they could themselves have unwound if they would, was the moment the Yahoos were wont to celebrate a Festival of Joy.

*July 20.*—I sometimes like to make clear to myself what are the great sentences in English that appeal to me most. As to Raleigh's in-



vocation of Death, as the most magnificent, I seldom vary. It may not be a perfect sentence, one touch more to its grandiosity and it might topple over into absurdity. But the most magnificent it still remains. The most beautiful to me is Temple's sentence on Life : " When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little, to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over." There is a cadence there to thrill along the nerves as in no other sentence I can recall. (One might find others perhaps in Saintsbury's *History of English Prose Rhythm*, a delightful book by an author with a wonderfully large and miscellaneous appetite for literature.) Is it strange, or is it not strange, I ask myself, that the two writers who thus summed up Death, and Life were not men of letters but a man of action, a man of affairs ? They never twice approached that height, though Temple, at all events, made other attempts to say the same thing, as when he wrote : " After all, life is but a trifle, that should be played with till we lose it, and then it is not worth regretting." As the greatest masters of sentences, however, others nearly followed—leaving aside our translators of the Bible, who were

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superb—and I would name first Bacon and Landor, again a man of affairs and a man who would, if he could, have been a man of action. Bacon, supreme in a concise weightiness which yet embraces both exaltation and depth, Landor, in artfully wrought variety of perfection. Sometimes I would add Browne and often Thoreau, and occasionally I hesitate over Emerson. For in Emerson the fine sentences tend to become a little monotonous, almost a routine, and with too oracular a gesture. We can scarcely appreciate the clarion of the cock as he deserves, for his song has little variation and we find it high-pitched; there is too much gesture of the lifted body, too much vibration of wings, in this ejaculation. A blackbird's song is more moving, for it has a continual slight novelty, and it arises with complete serenity.

*August 2.*—I read the remarks of a journalist that probably every writer loathes the sight of his pen. If that is so it seems an excellent reason why the reader also should soon come to loathe the work of that pen. It would surely be well for the world if every writer who loathes the sight of his pen should quickly take the next step and cease to use it. The



normal writer, one imagines, should neither loathe nor love the sight of his pen, so long as it performs its adjuvant functions wholesomely. He should as little loathe it as the ordinary person loathes the sight of a roll of toilet-paper, viewing it rather with a subconscious satisfaction as the suitable adjunct of his creative activities.

But for my part I would say a writer is unconscious of his pen. He feels merely as a bee might feel which is instinctively building an exquisitely planned architecture of cells and loading them as richly as it can with honey, thankful if he may even remotely approximate to the bee's success. For to me the writer's function is most adequately expressed, in Swift's words, as the production of the material for sweetness and light. "Whatever we have got has been by infinite labour and search, and ranging through every corner of Nature. Instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light." Nothing better was ever said about the writer's function. If I were ambitious, I would desire no finer epitaph than that it should be said of me, He has added a little to the sweetness of the world, and a little to its light. The two are indeed

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inseparable. Without a clear-eyed vision there can be no sweetness that is worth while, and without sweetness there can be no true revelation of light. Leonardo who was sweetest among men of art was at the same time the most clear-eyed among men of science.

*August 20.*—As I entered Folkestone Church this morning the question came into my mind for the first time why it is that churches by the sea are dark. I regard a church as a beautiful vessel for enclosing light, variously moulded and modulated by the artist's craft. I know that in the cold north the builder tends to fill the church to the brim with warm light and in the hot south to temper it cunningly with coolness and gloom. But athwart these tendencies there is the tendency, apart altogether from architectural style, from the English and French churches of the Channel down to far Barcelona, for the builders of churches by the sea to cherish obscurity.

Folkestone Church has a definite French touch in its massive, simple, harmonious construction, and the French signature is plain on the capitals of the columns. It is a church built on a height over the sea, and on the



opposite coast also the churchmen whose flock were fishermen loved to set up their churches as spiritual lighthouses. The large solid central tower seems to hold the church down in place on this windy height, and the east end that faces the gales of the sea is only pierced by three lancet windows and a small ovaloid window above. So this dark church is darkest in the choir, which reverses the order of light in a regular Gothic church, though when the clerestory windows of the choir were open this may not have been the case. These practical considerations of the need of resisting gales—which once actually carried away a great part of this church—seem adequate to account for the gloom of sea-coast churches.

Yet this characteristic is so widespread I seem to see more in it than this. It seems to answer to a real spiritual demand of the man who lives on the ever restless and hazardous sea. He needs for his hours of finest aspiration the sense of rest and security which no storms of the world can touch. These enclosures of sacred gloom are the visible embodiment of that ineffable peace. This, I think to-day, is the spiritual reason—beyond all practical reasons—why the seaman's perfect church is nearly everywhere a dark church.

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adays always regarded as a man to worship. But at least he placed the Church above Governments and he defied Kings. He seemed to fail, he was slain in his own cathedral by the agents of Government. But he became the idol of the English people, the most national saint that England has ever produced, and his tomb became the chief of English religious shrines, the only English shrine that was world-famous and the perpetual resort of pilgrims.

No Canterbury Tales will ever be written of the pilgrims to the shrine of Becket's present successor on the archiepiscopal throne. Yet he had a magnificent opportunity. If at the outset of war he had risen above patriotism and anti-patriotism to the supreme super-patriotic position of Christianity, if he had spoken not like Becket, in the name of Rome but in the name of the Lord's Prayer which millions still repeat, he would certainly have incurred the deadly enmity of the Government, and though he might scarcely have been found worthy to win the martyr's crown he would probably have been found unworthy to wear the archiepiscopal mitre. But he would have saved the Church, and his own name would never have been forgotten.

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It is merely a dream, I know, for the Church is now the plaything of antiquaries, and our Archbishop of Canterbury was the inventor of that formula, so religiously, morally, even casuistically unsound, of "regrettable necessities."

*October 29.*—I see in to-day's paper that Chaliapin, the great Russian actor and singer, is reported to be dead.

The image comes vividly back to me of the tall, dignified figure, more especially in the part of Boris Godonov, with that air of aloofness, of spiritual serenity, by which Russians so often recall the traditional Christ, the ease and simplicity of his acting and the impressive singing voice, the superb Russian bass, the deep rich voice which alone seems adequate to the expression of profound emotions of tender humanity.

Chaliapin I am inclined to place among the three stage figures I have seen who now in memory leave the deepest impression: Ristori, Salvini, Chaliapin—it was the order in which I saw them, perhaps the order in which I should rank them.

Ristori I should certainly place first, though



I only saw her once, on the stage in Sydney, as Pia de' Tolomei and the sleep-walking Lady Macbeth. She remains in my mind as the absolute type of the classic in dramatic art. That word "classic" suggests to some people the coldly artificial, the conventionally unreal. Ristori was at the farthest remove from that. She was the adorable revelation of what the classic really means: the attainment of the essential in dramatic art by the road of a simplicity and a naturalness from which all superfluity and extravagance have fallen away, so that every movement is under control and every gesture significant. In classic art such as this, simplicity is one with dignity, and the last utterance of poignant intensity is brought within reach. Salvini was very different. He was not classic. He carried human passion to the utmost limits of expression on the basis of robust physical force, and seemed to have an immense reservoir of emotion to feed his art. It was not his restraint that impressed one but the superb and never forced expansion of his energy. And finally there was Chaliapin, neither the classic perfection of art, nor the exuberant embodiment of romantic emotional energy, but with the seal on him of a serene and mysterious power that was aloof from the

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world. There are other great artists I have seen on the stage, figures instinct with fascination or with art, some of whom touched me more in their time. But these three remain.

*Christmas Day.*—Christmas is the season for childhood and youth. When we are young it is well we should gain its experiences, and lay away those memories which when we are old will bring tears into our eyes and into our hearts a crowd of tender haunting joys we can scarce know from pains, since we are glad because they once were ours and sad because they are ours no more. In the end, it may well be, our gladness swallows up our sadness, for memory is a part of living, and those beloved figures of the past who live in memory are with us for evermore, engrained into the throbbing fibres of our hearts, only to die when they cease to beat.

Yet one is always thankful to reach the end of every anniversary that is too richly burdened with memories. As I sit in the peaceful solitude of my room, never less alone than when alone, according to the old saying that Cicero recorded of Scipio, the couple who occupy the flat above begin playing on piano and violon-



cello with occasionally the accompaniment of the man's voice. He may not be a Pablo Casals and she may not be a Carreño, far from it, but the long succession of duets—to-night they seem resolved on an orgy of music which extends beyond midnight after I am asleep—is for one undesigned listener a continuous delight, the embodiment of delicious reverie, as that music often is which fails to concentrate absorbed attention on itself yet pleases us enough to play at will along the nerves and leave thought free. As I lie back in my chair, dreamily and happily, even though sometimes tears may seem not far away, I am borne along on a stream in which this endless flow of varied melody seems to accompany with willing abandonment the wayward flow of my own memories. I am on that ship with sails of silk and fine wrought tackle which Count Arnaldos, falcon on fist, once saw from the shore and heard the song of the mariner, so magically potent that the sea grew still and the birds alighted on the mast, the song that the Count vainly implored to be taught, for none could know the song who had not fared on the ship:

Yo no digo esta cancion  
Sino a quien conmigo va.

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I have fared on that ship and faced the storms. It seems to be moonlight now, the rippling waters sparkle, the soft breath of the music is all around me, in my ears and on my face. Dear Presences out of the past are in the air, wafted on by the waves of that melody, and their soft wings once again touch me tenderly with long echoes through the inner chambers of my heart. I feel that it is worth while to have lived since I carry within these lovely presences, loving and beloved, out of the past, separated by Life or by Death, yet always within, ready to drop once again the soft petals of their kisses on my lips, while my unknown friends upstairs exert the magic of their strings and wires.

*New Year's Day, 1920.*—Last night as I lay half asleep I chanced to hear the chime of midnight, and immediately there was the blast of many sirens, harsh, discordant, monotonous, not even so modulated as it is possible for that crude instrument to be,—the slow long curve of a distant ship's hoot across the water is not unpleasant,—announcing the coming of a New Year.

It must surely be a chastening thought to



the children of our generation that with all the vaunted triumphs of their civilisation they have yet lost so much that when they desire to express publicly the expansion of their hearts on entering a new solar cycle they have recourse, not to any solemn festival or gracious rite or lovely songs, but to the most painful and hellish noise of all the painful and hellish noises our modern industrial system has devised.

Even revelry, even religion, was surely better than this. And as I turned over again to sleep it was on the consoling thought that there are still a few people found in our day who welcome the New Year by dancing in gay costumes or kneeling in silent prayer.

*January 6.*—Life is not worth living, I read to-day in a thoughtful article in a thoughtful journal, unless it is continued beyond death. I have read that statement so often. It seems to be an idea passionately cherished by so many people. Life is nothing to them, they think, unless they are to live for ever. Everything else in the world is born and blossoms and grows lovely and fades and dies. They must go on for ever! To feel like that is to feel an alien in the world, to be divorced from

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Nature, to be to oneself a rigid and dead thing—for only such things persist, and even they undergo a constant subtle change—in a Universe that is in magnificent movement, for ever and for ever renewed in immortal youth, where there is in a deeper sense no Death because all Death is Life.

There must be strong reasons why that alien feeling is widespread among men. The result of tradition? No doubt, but of a tradition that goes far back in human history, even, it may be, in the history of earlier species of Man than ours. The Mousterian, who so carefully buried his dead, must have felt the same. It is a faith like the faith of those who believed that the sun travels round the earth, a faith so firm that no tortures were too precious to bestow on those who refused to share it.

Yet the faith in the fixity of the soul, like the faith in the fixity of the earth, will not work out even as an ideal conception. One may leave aside the question of it as a fact. As a fact we should be ready to accept it when it came, while still affirming, with the dying Thoreau: "One world at a time, if you please!" But as an ideal it is less easy to accept than these good people think. It is not merely that to live a full and rich life in



this wonderful world, among these fascinating beings, not even excluding human beings, and to fade away when—or better, before—one has exhausted all one's power of living, should surely be a fate splendid enough for the greatest. What has always come home to me is that with the dissolution of the body the reasons for desiring the non-dissolution of the soul fall away. If I am to begin a new life, let me begin it washed clean from all my defects and errors and failures in this life, freed from the disillusioning results of all my accumulated experiences, unburdened of all my sad and delicious memories. But so to begin a new life is to annihilate the old life. The new self would be a self that is not me: what has happened to me would mean nothing to it: what happens to it can mean nothing to me.

Then again, it seems to me, and surely to many, that the supreme reason for desiring to live beyond this life is to rejoin those whom here we loved. But what would be left of them when we met again? It is the human presence of the beloved, the human weakness, the human tenderness, that are entwined round our hearts, and it is these that we crave to see and to touch again. But if they are gone—

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scales on a neighbouring piano. It is not an accustomed sound to me nowadays, it belongs to the far past. In youth these scales were a frequent and fitting accompaniment to the routine of one's life, sometimes I used to do them myself, a dull monotonous exercise, it seemed. But it was the faint background to the dreams and aspiration of idealistic youth, just as in later working years the like monotonous musical sound, that is yet not music, of the waves on the shore, has been the background of my mental life, likewise to fall into a dreamlike past.

And now, just because they were an integral portion of that past these dull almost meaningless sounds, as they once seemed, have acquired a new significance. They have become a part of the life they were mixed with. They reappear as symbols of all that was young and tender and aspiring in the expanding soul of youth, and they reverberate along the corridors of the mind, in their old-time familiarity, with a new music that is not their own. So, for the first time, I hear these ancient scales with a personal meaning, and am touched almost to tears.

I suppose it is the privilege, or the burden, of years, that as one grows older all the world

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becomes ever more charged with emotion, all the fibres of one's being ever more manifoldly associated, all the nerves of one's senses more finely attuned to the vibrations that strike on them. So that in the end life would become at every moment a symphony almost too richly charged with meaning to be borne. But how amused I should once have been to know the day was to come when scales lay near to the source of tears !

*January 17.* — I went this morning to Burlington House to see the War Pictures. There were only a few straggling visitors, though among them I found Edward Carpenter. As in the old parable, when the divine call came they all with one consent began to make excuse. For though the Great War has ceased to be of interest as a Reality, it has only to few begun to be of interest as a Dream.

It was as a Dream that the war was presented at Burlington House. The older artists and the younger artists, each in his own individual way, have been occupied in weaving a Dream of Beauty. They have brushed away all the illusionary patriotic tunes of the Pied Pipers in every land, paid to



lure the finest young men to one another's slaughter. They have brushed away all the horror and sordidness and misery which radiated from the trenches round the world. They have brushed away all those by-products of the fight which once seemed its essentials, for they seem to know as little of Victory as of Defeat. They have transmuted the Great War into Beauty, brooding tenderly over the accidental loveliness of ravaged landscapes, making delicate patterns out of the twisted bodies of mutilated men, splashing the gay crimson flame of flowers and of blood against the grey pallor of torture and death. For the artist comes before us with all the callousness of God and all the redeeming energy of Nature, for ever intent to make Life out of Death and to render to us Beauty for Ashes.

When Rome was burning Nero fiddled. It is an ancient parable which remains for ever true, with a truth to which most of us are always blind. For the burning was soon forgotten, while the memory of the fiddling is immortal. Even from the first it has been so. Our European literature begins with Homer's story of a war. That war of the Greeks and the burning of Troy had so long passed out of memory that for thousands of years, until

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Troy was at length uncovered, few believed it had ever been ; but the fiddling of Homer has always been immortal. So it is again to-day ; the Great War is becoming a dim event in history ; but meanwhile our artists have fiddled.

*February 25.*—After long years I enter again a new place. To be on the real sea, to inhale its exhilarating air, to smell the tar of the ship, to pace the decks, to see the casual falling stars in a clear sky, is to go back once more to youth, even if one can only go back with all the burdens the years have left. And a fortnight on the sea has brought me to a new place.

I had often heard of Malta, but nearly always as an abstraction, a Euclidian point in the British geometrical system, a post to the governorship of which military commanders were conveniently banished and from which fleets were conveniently despatched : of the concrete and intimate Malta I knew and cared nothing. Alone there remained in memory the remarks which Coleridge made concerning his stay there in that attractive book of *Table Talk* I studied in youth.



Now Malta is a real place to me. I realise its southern, rocky, arid, treeless insularity, with the occasional touches of luxuriance. I dimly make out the features of a Maltese ethnic type, arising out of a primitive Mediterranean blend tinged by more specific elements, Arabic, Italian, Spanish, or what else, a vivacious, good-natured people it seems. I perceive the Maltese woman, dignified, often beautiful, sometimes superb in old age, robed always in simple unrelieved black, with the curious black crinoline faldetta to frame the head so delightfully, altogether a new and interesting variation on the Spanish type. Now I know, too, the strong mark of the Knights of Malta, still stamped impressively on the architecture of the Island, so massive, yet so daring, and so original in ornament (where else can one see such door-knockers?) from the Auberge of Castile downwards.

Yet it is not modern Malta, not even historic Malta, of which the memory will chiefly persist. The great revelation is to me prehistoric Malta. Here I seem to discern one of the summits of the Neolithic Age. In the great and superbly planned temples of that Age—especially perhaps Tar-Xien—lately excavated, one sees the image of a great

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civilisation, the reflection of high ideals, the embodiment of vast aspirations. Even those wonderful, large, finely made pots in the fascinating Museum of Valletta are in magnitude and perfection of quality beyond what one sees elsewhere. And the figures of women or goddesses with the immense emphasis on the procreative size of belly and thighs witness to the religious veneration of fertility and maternity. It seems to me that the most impressive of all the impressive things I have seen in Malta is the little Neolithic figurine of a woman who with delicate head and hands and expressive body, in a long flounced skirt, gracefully reclines on her elbow. The whole of a great period of the world's history, some ten thousand years, perhaps the most significant in the evolution of human civilisation, is summed up by that little figurine in a language we shall never decipher completely.

*February 26.*—To-day, with a cosmopolitan acquaintance of ship-board, I drove to Notabile, or Citta Vecchia, as it is now commonly called, the ancient capital of Malta. When we have passed San Antonio, the Governor's country residence, with its pleasant old orange



garden which I already know, we seem to be beyond the signs of English influence, and the architecture improves, with beautiful balconies to the houses and delicate plateresque porches to the churches. We pass a large, rambling peaceful building with loggias and colonnades which the driver points out as the "House of the Foolish Men"; in England we should call it a Lunatic Asylum, though I doubt if we have any that look so pleasant to live in.

Citta Vecchia—an inland city on a height, with mighty walls and moat, and bastions which command the country and Valletta and the surrounding seas—is the natural and securely seated capital of the island. That has always been seen; the Romans had a great city here, and up to recent times, they say, the marble remains of Roman buildings lay strewn about the streets and squares in incredible number. They are gone now, but Citta Vecchia is still a dead city. Scarcely a soul to be seen—only an occasional labourer, a few poor children, and but one visible shop, and that a wine-shop. We wandered among irregularly placed beautiful churches and private palaces, finding the architecture exquisite—my companion was an expert—and we revelled among those large, massive,

beautifully proportioned buildings, with their Gothic, Moorish, Venetian, Florentine echoes, and the singularly fine and varied harmony of their windows and doors.

Then we rambled outside the city walls and finally into the Hotel Pointe de Vue, as silent as Citta Vecchia itself, but a pretty girl welcomingly opens the door to us and a careful woman in spectacles brings us a pleasant lunch with a delightful bottle of Spanish wine in the large empty dining-room, where we linger long over our meal and the coffee and our cigarettes, to enter at last the carriage where our fat and beaming driver welcomes us as though we had not kept him waiting an hour beyond the stipulated time. So I promise him an extra eighteenpence for the delay, and he beams more genially than ever as he pats me on the back, and after an hour's quick drive downhill we are once more at the Marsa Harbour and on board the *Borodino*.—Tomorrow for the Piraeus !

*February 29.*—I have spent an hour wandering in the Old Cemetery just outside the ancient city gates on the highway to the Piraeus. It was all for me alone, the guardian was away,



and no stranger entered. What indeed is there, and on such a raw windy day, to draw here the practical Greek? I, too, perhaps will never come again.

A confused and tangled and profoundly destroyed place, rough and uneven of level, as clearly it must always have been, with many cypresses waving in the gale, and a few olean-  
ders, and mosses, and coltsfoot or other weeds. There are, too, irregular masses of varied and sometimes "cyclopean" wall, and there are deep shafts such as one finds on Cornish moors over disused mines. Only here and there can one discern pathways, lined by the closely piled memorials of the dead, hammered, broken off, worn away—primitive tombs made of slabs, gravestones of the kind we know, funerary urns in the classic convention, vigorous figures of animals, and, above all, the beautiful reliefs such as we see in Museums, still delicately fresh. The scenes presented are, as usual, various; there may even be scenes of mortal combat to honour, doubtless, some militant youth who died in battle. But the prevailing design is a variation of the eternal situation graven on the hearts of all who lose what they love. No artists in marble or in verse have ever set forth that situation so tenderly, so

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graciously, so simply, so essentially as the Greeks.

In the typical scene there are two figures, a man and a woman—husband and wife, one supposes,—or two women—often doubtless mother and daughter,—and one is seated in a chair and the other stands as if to depart, and they clasp each other's hands. It is not, in our sense, a handshake, a last farewell to the friend who is leaving for ever. It is much more a symbol of union, the expression of an intimate communion which continues to subsist even in separation. That is what the faces reveal. They are grave and sad and tender, always perfectly composed, and the eyes of each are fixed on the other with an aching love which is yet always restrained and always resigned. These were the scenes the Athenians of the classic age saw as they emerged from the great Dipylon on the once crowded Piraeus road.

That is why I, too, a northern barbarian in whom the same emotions stir, linger here alone, amid the oleander bushes and the waving cypresses from which the Greeks have fled.

*March 1.*—I have always wanted to see Greece, and all things, it seems, come at last,



even without any effort on one's own part,—though they usually come too late,—and so I was up by seven on the little *Borodino's* deck in the cold morning air to watch the distant misty land. Soon amid a confusion of curved hills and patches of buildings I discerned above the bank of mist the tiny Acropolis of Athens, violet-wreathed by a garland of smoke, wafted from the two black factory chimneys which are the objects that stand out most vividly from the opalescent scene as one draws near the Piraeus.

Now that I have lived in Athens several days, tramping the streets slowly and deliberately, as my way is in a foreign city until it grows for ever familiar, living in cafés and restaurants, I begin to feel at home. It is not difficult, even if the weather were not still as familiarly March-like as in London. Athens seems a little provincial Paris, rather perhaps one should say, a miniature Munich, with its neat tasteful little public buildings of soft clear tone. It is amiable and inoffensive, evidently self-complacent, completely indifferent to strangers, and it likes to indicate a continuity of relationship with the ancient classic city of the same name. There are other relationships that cannot be obliterated, there is the Slav

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and there is the Turk, to mention no others, but it is the classic continuity that Athens would emphasise. Even the chemist across the road finds it meet to name his shop The Pharmacy of Olympus.

*March 10.*—The goat has always symbolised Pagan antiquity to the Christian mind. The ancients themselves seem to have discerned this significance, since they loved to present Pan and their characteristic sylvan divinities—the Satyrs of Greece and the Fauns of Italy—with the attributes of the goat. For mediaeval men it was the goat that summed up all the qualities of antiquity and seemed the proper image of the Devil. In Cornwall, which is a northern land tinged by the south, with something indeed of the winter climate and the rocky soil of Attica, the goat flourishes as rarely elsewhere in the north, so that sometimes I have been startled by his beauty, that beauty with a certain strangeness, without which, as Bacon said, there is no excellent beauty, a beauty at once so virile and so shy, so emphatic and so remote, that it seemed to come to me out of the infinite past of the world.



To-day as I wandered along the Street of Athene, one of the most popular quarters of Athens, I came on the Market. I hastened to enter, for a city's Market embodies the most characteristic attitudes of the people's temperament, even its aesthetic temperament, and in Spain, indeed throughout Europe, sometimes in England, I have known such delightful Markets.

Even before I entered I caught a hideous glimpse of the outside stalls, nearly all of meat, from living sheep lying on the ground through all the disgusting processes of transformation, here revealed to the full extent of their horror, on towards the shapes that cause our mouths to water, and at the entrance the din of wildly shouting salesmen struck harshly on my ears. The paved floor is covered with slush, dripping from the copiously aspersed produce, a vague nauseous odour fills the place, on every side are carelessly flung goods, heaps of pigs' trotters, ugly little fish and slabs of dried fish, miscellaneous piles of vegetables, vast cauliflowers and unhealthy red radishes, all at random, with complete disregard of elegance or decency, so that even the carelessly piled artichokes droop and fade on their stalks and lose their native hieratic

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grace. There are few women, sellers and buyers are both mostly men. Everything is ugly, sordid, often sickening.

As I gladly emerge I notice, tethered in the corner of a portico, a goat. In this feverish Bedlam it alone is silent, motionless, resigned, yet still bearing a native dignity. The eyes are cast down, they seem closed ; the thoughts behind them, one imagines, are lost in memories of the far past embodied in this antique classic shape, a Pagan Christ amid the filthy rabble of brutal Christians.

*March 15.*—Close beside the large and sumptuous and commonplace Metropolitan Church of Athens, set at an acute angle to it and so minute it could easily be fitted into one of its corners, is the Small Metropolis or Church of the Panagia Gorgopiko, now two or three feet below the pavement of the city. There is never any guardian or official ministrant there, but the door is always open, and now and then a hurried young man or a stolid girl enters for a few moments and with some secret religious motive lights a taper and sticks it into the appointed brass stand. There are not many lighted tapers, for the crowd of



worshippers has now forsaken this little shrine and repairs to its great modern rival.

For my part I find it hard to forsake. I never pass near without slowly wandering around it and around, maybe for half an hour at a time. (It was when so engaged that, with a shock of surprise such as once overcame Robinson Crusoe, I encountered the only authentic tourist I have seen in Athens, guide-book in hand, and he took in my little shrine with a glance of two seconds and duly passed on his way.) It is not its architecture which renders it so fascinating, it is no lovely monument such as that of Galla Placidia at Ravenna. Merely a diminutive Byzantine Church, rather roughly constructed in the correct style of the ninth century, the earliest Byzantine building, it is said, standing on Greek soil, and far more primitive than the far earlier churches of Ravenna.

It is the material those first Christian builders of Athens used that makes this little church unique. Ten centuries ago Athens still held beautiful and scarcely ruined temples, while the ground must have been strewn with fragments of exquisite sculpture which none noted. But the builders of this little church noted them and carried some away to fit into



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the walls of their new church. They evidently thought them pretty, for they showed a certain barbaric taste in the positions they framed them into, placing highly wrought capitals into the angles, and a delicate frieze over the west door, taking care to carve one or two Greek crosses on it, and here and there at random they put a little funeral stele, but they were no slavish admirers of pagan antiquity, and one relief—it is certainly a specially pagan one—they set in the wall sideways without any constructional excuse. They felt more confidence, no doubt, in the merely decorative fragments of stone they put in at random, and especially, and not without justice, in the real Byzantine carvings, modern as they then were, and in their way excellent, and here we see a number of these fantastic beasts, so emphatically and absurdly and complacently following their own convention, and yet so instinct with realistic vital energy,—the combination of qualities which make *Alice in Wonderland* a Byzantine achievement,—and everywhere we see crosses to sanctify these dubious thefts: the plain equal-armed cross with its exaggeration, the Maltese cross (so obviously suggested by the ease with which the relief of a classic chariot-wheel can be converted into the



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lowest middle class, which seems the class most apt for this habit. All the time as they walk these men are nervously and automatically counting the beads backwards and forwards on the string. Sometimes a man will join his hands behind his back and waggle the beads at the place where some of our better-endowed fellow-creatures carry a tail, so that I am reminded of my own ancient desire to possess such an organ of expression for the emotions that are too subtle, or not subtle enough, for words.

It is a wonderful discovery, though not, it seems, of the Greeks, for I understand that it is an Arab custom. I know that if I live much longer in Athens I also shall not be happy until I have a string of amber beads. I know also exactly how I shall prefer to carry them. Already my fingers are feeling for the beads that are not there. And to-day as I wandered through the fascinating Old Bazaar, the most genuinely Oriental corner of Athens, a young dealer ran out of his box-like shop, eagerly asking what I would like, and pointed, as though he divined my desire, precisely to a beautiful string of amber beads, for which he demanded three hundred drachmas. But with seeming indifference I heroically repelled his advances and passed on.



*March 20.*—How familiar it all seems ! That is the first inner exclamation of a certain disappointment on coming into contact with Greek antiquity in Athens. One has been seeing it, reproduced or degraded, all one's life. One has already accepted all the traditional estimates, or remained indifferent when they clashed with one another. I suppose it is possible to come to Athens and go away in that faith, to die in it peacefully at last.

I have seen it all before ! Yet, as from time to time I leave the bright little city of Athens to grope patiently among all these shattered and scattered fragments, I begin to realise that it is not so. I have seen nothing of it before !

I began to realise this dimly, before I had been a week in Athens, while I sat long before the little ancient statuette which copies the huge elephantine statue of Athena Phidias made for the Parthenon, and developed the repulsion I felt for that heavy figure absurdly overladen with all the conventional attributes of the tutelary deity. It is one of the master's supreme achievements, and I had taken for granted the impressions of other people, impressions that were not mine, nor made for me, nor in any degree fitted for me,

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people doubtless too akin, Puritanic northern barbarians cloistered in colleges, who had bound me up in their own narrow traditions. Before the liberating Athena of Phidias I obscurely felt the fetters falling away.

Now, as the weeks go by, I begin to know more definitely what suits me. I am happier before the Erechtheion than the Parthenon; the broken fragments of the frieze of the Wingless Nike, only to be reconstructed by the creative imagination, but so playfully daring and with such accomplished ease, fascinate me even more than the gracious solemn conventions of Phidias; the little out-of-the-way museum on the Acropolis is a greater revelation than the famous National Museum, even though that holds the Eleusinian relief, which may well remain more deeply printed in memory than anything I have seen in Athens. I approach with joy the "triple-bodied demon" with his merry lustful eyes and his full cheeks and his three green beards, and the bodies which cease to be human in a huge coiled snake banded with green and red; the God Tritopatores, they call him, adored of young married women, bringing with him, even to the beginning of the seventh century B.C., the gay realistic vigour of the Minoan age not



yet refined away into the age-long pale procession of graceful conventions. I wander with untiring delight in the little rooms beyond to embrace with my eyes all these archaic women figures dug out of the Acropolis in recent years—who knows who these Korai were?—mutilated but so fresh, so intimately alive, with their red hair and their smiles more subtle and varied than Monna Lisa's, and all the delicate Ionian detail of their close-woven green undergarments and the stained embroidered hems of their robes. Here at last I am at home in Greece.

So it is that amid the wonderful confused distressing mass of ancient defaced fragments—often commonplace but sometimes exquisite—the soft clear dawn of Greece breaks slowly on my mind. It is better, far better, to cultivate one's own taste, however bad, than to affect the taste, however good, of other people. My values are revalued. I follow my own instincts, I see with my own eyes.

*March 21.*—This keen March Sunday morning, as I went for the last time up to the deserted Acropolis, once the sacred centre of the city's life, I noticed on the slope opposite

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the Areopagus hillock the rich dark crimson poppies blooming among the wild oats and barley in ear. In the afternoon, as the day grew softer, I sat under the trees in the Royal Palace Garden where birds sang, the kin of our English birds, and a pleasant home-feeling came over me as I recalled how I have felt the same thrill of Spring in many a beloved English haunt in May or early June. And at evening as I wandered among the cheerful, good-humoured Sunday crowd, mostly men as usual, filling the busy streets that lead into the Omonoia Square, I chanced to glance, as they never glance, to the twilight sky, and stood entranced to watch the exquisite vision of the new moon, a delicate little vessel of pale brilliancy floating on the soft sunset sky.

A singularly bare stony land, this land of Greece, scarred by earthquakes, devastated by men in war and in peace, scorched by the sun, its houses and its few rivers alike dyed by mud: it is on this background that the rare flashes of loveliness make so penetrating an appeal, alike to the northern visitor and the Greek, even the Greek of classic days. To read some of the old Greek poets one would think Greece must be a land of beauty where it is always spring. Yet the northerner has at



one point an advantage over the ancient Greek, for he is peculiarly sensitive to the delicious charm of atmosphere which to the ancient Greek was so familiar he could hardly see it, though in it lay the real beauty of Greece.

It is a delicate air this of Greece, at all events of Athens, with a luminous moisture in it, and yet a lovely transparency. Its effects are not crude; one may see more gorgeous sunsets elsewhere, even in Greece, yet I know not where else such a soft clear radiancy. This atmosphere of Greece brings me nearer to the ancient glory of its land than the swarming little city, or the rocky landscape, or even the melancholy desolation of its ruins.

*March 25.*—I sat at the Café placed pleasantly in the sea, round the lighthouse at the end of the pier which is also the wharf, at Patras, this city, else so sordid, which is set in a natural panorama so magnificent at sunset. An Italian ship with her burden of passengers was just unmooring to put out to sea, and a sad-faced Greek from a little table near me was waving his handkerchief to two friends, a man and a woman, who stood in

the stern, also waving, until gradually the ship grew dim in the distance. I was reminded, as I gazed, of a scene in my own life, now sad with the memory of things that can never return, and so was led on to think of the mental difference that must ever lie between the beginning of one's life and the end. I have often thought of that difference in regard to reading—the difference between eager swift receptive youth and slow richly burdened mature age—so that as the years go on the less one reads and the more one thinks.

Now I seem to see that that difference is but an indication of the whole difference in the mental and emotional processes of childhood and age. In childhood we have but few associations; there is nothing to clog the progress alike of thought and of feeling. The clean, fresh, smooth-bottomed ship cleaves swiftly the ocean of life. But years pass, and the whole surface has become covered, covered with the living things it has gathered in its progress through the sea, and movement becomes ever slower and slower.

So it is that now, whatever I do and wherever I am, even in this sordid Patras, every little incident, as I move through life, is full of meaning. I am weighted and held back by



memories. I move ever more slowly through an ocean no longer empty and cold and dull, but alive, alive with all the clinging joys and sorrows of my passage.

*March 30.*—I left my pleasant hotel, still reminiscent of Austria, over the sea at Trieste, early in the morning, for I was told that while the Orient Express, in which I had duly booked the first vacant place two days ahead, was just now the only reliable train passing through Italy, no one knew when it would arrive, so one must be in good time in case by some unexpected chance it should be punctual. I was there before seven and having placed my small baggage in the care of the ticket inspector at the exit to the trains, for I was warned against the insecurity of the Deposito, I spent the wait of four hours wandering round to observe the emigrating peasants who streamed in slowly with all their possessions in variegated ancient trunks and wrappings to settle down in the large station-hall until the uncertain period when their train might be ready; many indeed had evidently spent the night there, meek and patient, just like the crowd of Greek peasants, young and old, whom I

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had seen a few days ago arriving on the wharf at Patras, with their furniture and their household goods and their goats and their fowls, to camp for the night until the boat that was to bear them away arrived in the morning. It is what is happening all over Europe to-day with the re-making of the map, and the presence of new economic conditions.

I realised this more acutely after leaving Trieste. At first I noticed casually that all along the line there were ruins, silent, deserted, without a sign of inhabitants, and not a single house anywhere intact, it seemed the ancient remains of habitations of former days. So I thought they were. Then I quickly understood that these ruins, already more silent and more ravaged than Pompeii, were really a recent devastation, the outcome of the long death-struggle between Italy and Austria for Trieste. But Trieste itself had seemed so cheerful and reposeful, save for the strange quietude of its vast and magnificent docks and the procession of peasants to the railway station, that I was unprepared for the immense desolation of destruction I now passed through. The scene changed, after Mestre was left behind. I felt in this neighbourhood of Venice even more than ever before, that here I was in a



land of painters, a land of great colourists, made such by the inevitable circumstances of their life. Every common house was a picture, the splashes of colour on it, thrown there, it seemed, by an accomplished artist; at every curve of the route some rich and balanced composition appeared, fit as it stood to be transferred to canvas. All this ceased at Vicenza, and, even if I had not known it, I saw that here I had reached a real frontier. I was no longer in a painter's paradise, however pleasant the land; no great colourist could be born at Vicenza: it is rightly the home of Mantegna and Palladio. I passed Verona and Brescia and skirted the Lago di Garda into the great city of Milan. Then the scene began to be lost in gloom. Soon I was asleep in my little bunk, only to be awakened for a few moments by the Swiss official who investigated my baggage and claimed five francs of good Swiss money for the privilege of passing through his land. I saw no more, and was never even conscious of the Simplon Tunnel. I awoke in the charming familiar land of France, to reach Paris in the afternoon.

Never before have I flitted so swiftly across Europe, and the passing vision of the great expanse of varied land has been full of delicious

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memories of the past, blended with a touch of melancholy, for that past can never live again, and it seemed that I was being vouchsafed one last swallow's glimpse over a world that I was leaving for ever.

I do not complain. I am well content. And for two months I have been eagerly absorbing new sensations and gaining new insights into things I have desired to know for nearly half a century. I have basked in the sunshine, I have been inspirited and invigorated by lovely air, and since all our experiences, even to the end, must be blended with due incongruity, I find that while my baggage was in the care and under the eye of that genial Italian railway official my umbrella was carefully abstracted from the rug-strap.



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