

Loose Leaves

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2003



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Source Text:

Prepared from the print edition published by George Robinson and Company
Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane n.d. 95pp.

All quotation marks are retained as data.

First Published: 1910

824.91A *Australian Etext Collections at essays criticism 1910-1939*

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George Robinson and Company
n.d.

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To V.C.M.

...lo suo cuore è stato
Con sì fermata fede,
Ch' a voi servir lo pronta ogni pensiero:
Tosto fu vostro, e mai non s' è smagato.

Loose Leaves

A Pipe and a Book

A good book, and a pipe of good tobacco — and some would add (but these be of the straitest sect of the Epicureans) a glass of good wine — what more shall a wise man desire? The attitude of the studious smoker, an attitude of sedate acquiescence in the order of things as they are, of serene disregard for what most men count signally desirable, of detached interest in the spectacle of life, is surely that of Wisdom herself.

The Spirit of the Pipe is a subtle and impalpable essence, defying exact definition. To say that tobacco stimulates attention is, as an analysis of its action, an outrageous begging of the question. I would rather say that it creates a silence round your thought. There, in a word, is the heart of its mystery and the secret of its charm. To be without a pipe in your jowl is to be the prey of a thousand petty distractions. The unsolved problem — of the differential calculus, or the butcher's bill — is knocking at the door, and will be heard. Religion and patriotism, honour and duty and love, each is blowing its importunate bugle-call to the conscience. You must reform the world; or you must reform your neighbour; or, at the very least, you must dine. And so, poor soul, you are harried hither and thither, and have no rest. But put a pipe between your lips, and lo! at a whiff you pass to where, beyond these voices, there is peace. The world, with its clamant impertinences, dislimns and disappears. Your little loves and your little hatreds are as though they had never been. Honour and duty may go hang for you; like Gallio, the wise, you care for none of these things. A solemn stillness descends upon the universe of your thought. ...

Now it is that a great writer may make his most direct and moving appeal to the heart. His sentences seem to fall upon the silence with a peculiar resonance. Not an inflexion of his voice, not the most delicate nuance of humour or of pathos, escapes your attention, so surprisingly alive to hints and suggestions has it suddenly become. This is the merit and distinction of the pipe; it sets your attention free from irrelevant side issues.

The pipe, I said — and say. Cigars are well enough in their way, but there is in a good cigar something too opulent, too grandiose, for the study; and a bad cigar is the deuce. The habitual cigar-smoker rarely has much traffic with letters. The knowledge that you have a costly Havana between your lips is more sustaining than the consciousness of genius.

You become a superb personage; you tread the common earth with an Olympian air, for all the world like one of Ouida's heroes. But with silence and solitude for room-mates, the pipe is more to be desired. There is about it an austere simplicity, which better befits the student than the pomp and circumstance of a cigar.

"A pipe," says George Meredith, "is pleasant dreams at command." I do not like the description, for it depresses tobacco to the level of haschisch and opium. But Meredith makes noble amends when he says, elsewhere, that "a pipe is the concrete form of philosophy"; and again, "a pipe is the alternative of a friar's frock for an escape from women." I love to read, in Judge Maning's *Old New Zealand*, how the dying Maori, when he feels the pangs of approaching dissolution, has a pipe placed in his mouth by the pious hands of his relatives, and so dies literally in the act of smoking. What death-bed utterance could be so moving as this silent tribute of devotion to that which has been the chief consolation of life?

Having got your pipe, you have next to choose your book; for I am to warn you that not every book is worthy of such a handmaiden.

The elder names of our literature are those which cling the closest to the smoker's affections. There is in these writers a serene and contemplative turn of wisdom which suits better with the humour of the weed than the hurry and brilliancy of the moderns. Theirs, not ours, are the "slow, wise books," as Tennyson, himself a prince of smokers, delighted to call them. We are all excessively clever, of course, but we cannot write in the leisurely fashion of the eighteenth century; we have lost the trick of it. As smoking is essentially the diversion of the sane man, so the smoker demands a radiant sanity in his authors. They must have wit, and if humour be added thereto, so much the better. They must have knowledge and common-sense, dignity and reticence, geniality and grace of manner. Above all, they must have sincerity, and be able to speak with the ease and candour of familiar colloquy. To name but a few prominent examples: Lamb is a smoker's writer; so, assuredly, is Hazlitt; Montaigne tastes the sweeter for the shadow of a pipe across his page; Pantagruel and Falstaff are congenial spirits — not Hamlet nor Lear. In fiction, there are d'Artagnan, Tom Jones, the brothers Shandy, and a hundred more. With a long evening before me, I would as soon take down my Boswell as any other.

As for women writers, there is in them a principle so radically at odds with the weed that the whole sex, from Sappho to George Eliot, is forbidden the warm precincts of the cheerful *clay*. For them a cup of tea, stirred gently with a spoon, as you read, is the proper thing. There are sublime altitudes, too, to which the pipe does not aspire. To read Milton with a pipe in your mouth were perilously like smoking in church. When Dante enters — drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe. Indeed, I fear that poetry, as a whole, is beyond the smoker's mark. He is more at his ease on the

broad and beaten way of prose. Perhaps we should except Horace, Præd, and the satiric parts of Byron. Let it not be thought, however, that the smoker's choice of literature is unduly straitened. He has really a vast field before him. It needs but that the book be good, with the right kind of goodness, and that the leaf be of an approved strain of excellence. Let these two good things come together, and, if the smoker himself be sound at heart, and the occasion propitious, you may look for a fortunate result of the encounter. The book will be read more wisely, more deliberately, with a larger tolerance and a more intimate appreciation, than if the pipe were absent. And the pipe, which has been soiled by all ignoble use, will rise to its true stature as friend and aider of the intellect. Smoking will, in these circumstances, be a form of spiritual activity.

A Question of Method

The two little volumes of verse by which Mr. John Masefield has, with unusual suddenness, won himself a place apart among contemporary singers, contain much which must delight every lover of poetry.

A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels,
I am tired of brick and stone, and rumbling waggon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

About such verse as that I cannot conceive how there should be two opinions. It is not supreme poetry, but there is no mistaking the genuineness of the inspiration. There may very well be two opinions, however, about those other ballads in which Mr. Masefield definitely essays to be the poet of such as do business in great waters. It is these that send us once more to our obstinate questionings as to the comparative value of realism and idealism in poetry.

It is odd that the sailor-man should have so long remained unhonoured and unsung, even by the poets of a seafaring race. On poetry from Æschylus to Mr. Kipling the fascination of the sea has been a potent influence; but of the sea as a portion of the loveliness of nature, not as the home of a vast confraternity of men. Even the ship has scarcely entered into poetry at all — or only at the disastrous close of her career, as in the great shipwreck scene in *Pericles*, and the other, only less great, in *Don Juan*. From the coracle to the three-decker, from the galleys of Cleopatra to the caravels of Columbus, from the beaked trireme of the Romans to the armoured cruiser of to-day, the art of ship-building has a history that deserves to be sung in epic strains. And the falsehood of Macaulay's dictum about poetry and civilisation is shown by this fact among others, that those who live closest to nature, who are in daily contact and conflict with the vast elemental forces of nature, the forces of wind and water, have attracted no poet of high rank to be their spokesman. The sailor-man remains

A brother hedged with alien speech,
And lacking all interpreter.

In Palgrave's well-known *Golden Treasury* you will find a charming

nautical ballad, whose charm seems to be quite compatible with, if, indeed, it does not spring from, its incredible absurdity. Its name is *Black-eyed Susan*, and its author John Gay: —

All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd,
The streamers waving in the wind,
When black-eyed Susan came aboard.
'O! where shall I my true-love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true
If my sweet William sails among the crew.'

She has boarded the ship, you observe, without taking the trouble to ascertain whether it was her sweet William's ship or not. But the long arm of coincidence — or is it true love's infallible instinct? — has guided her aright. Her William is at that very moment “high upon the yard;” at the sound of her well-known voice “he sighed,” as well he might, and dropped to the deck (“the cord slides swiftly through his glowing hands”). The lovers proceed to greet one another with a delightful disregard for publicity: —

The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet,

And William, addressing the lady as “pretty Susan” and as “lovely Sue,” goes on to deliver himself of some quite irreproachable sentiments, in the language employed, as Gay doubtless believed, by sailor men all the world over: —

If to fair India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright;
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory so white.

Moreover,

Though battle call me from thy arms
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;
Though cannons roar, yet safe from harms
William shall to his Dear return

And the ballad ends with the refreshing line: —

'Adieu!' she cries, and waved her lily hand.

Tell me, ye jovial idealists, tell me true — does this sort of thing frequently happen in the King's navy? And are these the terms in which the average British tar habitually addresses his dear? It has been

suspected, I know, that Gay wrote in the spirit of some very similar ballads by Mr. Gilbert; but I do not believe it. Sweet William is no figure of burlesque; he is meant as the serious presentment, if you please, of the romantic nautical hero; and this is the point to which idealism may carry us. I have taken, it is true, an extreme instance. Dibdin certainly never invites us to such a preposterous Arcady of the sea; but even Dibdin nowhere approaches the world of reality. Sweet William becomes Poor Jack, or Tom Bowling, and we hear no more of “Afric's spicy gales;” but Dibdin's mariner is still a sentimental creature, the tear is perpetually glittering in his eye, “his form is of the manliest beauty,” and his vocabulary is such as a bishop might becomingly use in his pastorals.

Now read Mr. Masefield's brief elegy — called not “Sweet William,” but simply “Bill” — and think what dire work Gay or Dibdin would have made of it: —

He lay dead on the cluttered deck, and stared at the cold skies,
With never a friend to mourn fer him, nor a hand to close his eyes.
'Bill, he's dead,' was all they said; 'he's dead, 'n' there he lies.'

... ..

When the rising moon was a copper disc, and the sea like a strip of steel,
We sank him down to the swaying weeds, ten fathom below the keel.
'It's rough about Bill,' the fo'c's'le said. We'll have to stand 'is wheel.'

Or read, in the *Salt-water Ballads*, the poem founded on the old sea myth that bodies buried at night will float till dawn, because the soul is afraid of the dark: —

'N all the night, till the grey o' the dawn, the dead 'un has to swim
With a blue 'n' beastly will-o'-the-wisp a-burnin' over him,
With a herring, maybe, a-scoffin' a toe, or a shark a-chewin' a limb.

'N' all the night the shiverin' corp it has to swim the sea,
With its shudderin' soul inside the throat (where a soul's no right to be),
Till the sky's grey 'n' the dawn's clear, 'n' then the sperrit's free.

... ..

I'd fairly hate for him to swim in a blue 'n' beastly light,
With his shudderin' soul inside of him a-feelin' the fishes bite,
So over he goes at noon, say I, 'n' he shall sleep to-night.

Take, finally, from Mr. Masefield's second volume, an equally gruesome ballad of an old blind buccaneer (one thinks of old Pew in Stevenson's romance), who fiddles tunes under the gallows where his comrades hang: —

Fiddlin' under the gallows, I mumbles tunes an' words
To the danglin', janglin' bones an' rags that once was lads I knew,
(An' I think they likes to hear), an' it scares away the birds
From the men who go where the wind blows, and went where the wind
blew.

It is, happily, quite unnecessary to call attention to the excellences of such verse as this, to its fine restraint, its suggestive reticence, the subtlety of its rhythms, its vividness, its freshness, the individuality of its note. But it seems to me rather instructive to set quotations like these besides quotations from Gay's ballad. I could illustrate the difference of method very much more clearly by transcribing a verse or two from certain other ballads in Mr. Masefield's volumes — verses altogether too unpleasant for quotation — in which the poet stands forth as a realist, frank, uncompromising, and brutal. I might have set these verses beside some of Dibdin's on a similar subject, and the reader who has not seen the ballads in question may accept my assurance that the contrast would have been startling.

Mr. Masefield's technical accomplishment is far ahead of either Gay's or Dibdin's, and he probably supposes himself leagues nearer to reality than either. Gay may stand for the representative of extreme idealism; an unconscious attitude, you note: the colloquial "Sue" he no doubt took for a fine realistic touch; but the shepherds and shepherdesses of Watteau are not more remote than the egregious William from the world of actuality. Think, once more, what Gay would have done with the subject of Mr. Masefield's "Bill," quoted above. He would probably have done something like this: —

A radiant drop adorns each eye,
And steals adown each manly cheek;
Like whisp'ring zephyrs still they sigh,
And thus, in pensive tones, they speak:
'O, William! bravest, loveliest of our crew!
How can we bear thy lifeless corse to view.'

Mr. Masefield's mariners make a briefer comment: —

'It's rough about Bill,' the fo'c's'le said.

Now, that, we feel sure, is precisely what the fo'c's'le did say; that, not Gay's, is the form in which nautical emotion gets itself uttered. Moreover, sailors are addicted, it seems, to the use of strange oaths. Accordingly, we find Mr. Masefield's sailors, not using a profane word here and there, but trailing clouds of blasphemy. It is an uncompromising application of Wordsworth's theory, that poetry ought to employ the

language of real life. The author exhausts the bright lexicon of profanity in the endeavour to give us a conscientious transcript from the actual; he presents us with what the French call the bleeding slice of life. At first sight it looks like a clear advance in truthfulness; but is it a real advance? It is a question between the apparent inaccuracy of idealism and the apparent accuracy of realism. It is just possible that even Dibdin's pictures, with all their preposterous sentimentalism, are nearer to the real thing than Mr. Masefield's, with all their photographic exactitude. But the difference can only be stated here. To discuss it, one would have to go back to the first principles of poetry — a long and doubtful journey.

A New Thelema

Eureka! In other words, I have been searching, these many years, for a formula; and I think I have got it. You know, of course, the irritating people who beguile their leisure by pointing out the decay of genius in our time — the absence from contemporary literature of “the touch of greatness” — the immeasurable superiority of the writers of long ago — the fact that all our novelists are little men and all our poets immoderately minor — and so on. It is all quite true, no doubt; but it is all prodigiously vague and misty; people dimly feel that something is wrong somewhere, but no one hitherto has been able to say precisely what the weakness is; still less has anyone been able to suggest a remedy. While others have been wasting their time on futile lamentation, I — *moi qui vous parle* — have been up and doing. And no silly affectation of modesty shall deter me from hailing myself, with enthusiasm, as the person who has found out what is the matter with contemporary literature.

Genius is probably pretty evenly distributed over human history. At all events, there is assuredly no lack of it at the present time. But the fact is that contemporary men of genius are suffering, one and all, from nervous breakdown; and this is due to the tremendous strain of keeping up a continuous pose, of maintaining an attitude. The literature of to-day is a literature of self-consciousness; that is my formula; ponder it well, and you will see that it explains all the facts. The man of letters is compelled to be a poseur — which does not in the least imply insincerity; his pose may be thoroughly expressive of what he sometimes means. He strikes a certain attitude; his public associates him with that attitude, and insists on his maintaining it for the rest of his life. Mr. Bernard Shaw began as the sworn foe to romance and sentimentalism, as the apostle of the cold-drawn fact; week in, week out, come rain, come shine, he must keep up that attitude, and go on, without a moment's relaxation, indomitably anti-romantic and anti-sentimental. Mr. Kipling struck an attitude as a violent and virile person, and he has to be as virile and violent to-day as he was twenty years ago. Mr. Chesterton began his career by making paradoxes; his public insists on his pouring out an unending stream of paradoxes. Mr. A. C. Benson has to be mild and lamblike even when he feels, with Walt Whitman, a burning desire to taste the savage taste of blood; Mr. Owen Seaman has to be neat and humorous even when he suspects that

the sky is falling; Mr. W. B. Yeats has to be remote and mystical even when he has a cold in his head. Everyone is acutely conscious of the light in which his public regards him; everyone writes books in front of a mirror. Can you wonder that the incessant strain has been too much for the delicate organisation of the man of genius? or that contemporary literature exhibits unmistakable symptoms of exhaustion?

Dante, when he had written the most exquisite romance of love that exists in any language, went on to compose a highly abstract treatise on the relations of church and state. Shakespeare, when he had written an overwhelming tragedy, went on to write a roaring farce. Milton, when he had written "Lycidas," went on to write violent pamphlets in favour of freedom of divorce. Pope, when he was tired of being a satirist, became, in the "Essay on Man," a moral philosopher. Ruskin, when he was tired of being an art critic, became a political economist. So it was, you will find, with every great writer in all great ages. A constant change of attitude brought refreshment to their spirits and strength to their works. None of them was pledged to an attitude. To your writer of to-day, his pose is his all in all; it is indispensable to his success. It is to him what his orchid is to Mr. Chamberlain, what his eye-glass is to Mr. Reid, what his collar was to Gladstone, what his axe was to the man of the stone age: —

It neatly split the marrowbones
He loved to suck so well;
It quickly soothed the children when
They wanted to rebel.

It seemed to serve for everything,
As near as we can guess;
And when the tribe had company
It served for evening dress.

The cause of the malady being discovered, the cure is almost obvious. Let a new and benevolent Gargantua found a new Abbey of Thelema. Let an American millionaire build a city of refuge for men and women of genius, to which they may retire for a month in each year, and where they may enjoy the Natural Reaction. This would, I am persuaded, have a revolutionary effect on literature. No one would be allowed to enter the city gates except after pledging himself to eternal secrecy as to what goes on inside. In that way all these gifted people would be enabled to be fearlessly and unaffectedly themselves; and they would go back to their attitudinising, at the end of the holiday, with enormously renewed vigour. As the city is not yet built, there can be no breach of confidence in disclosing what the eye of phantasy sees within its walls.

In Thelema, at the moment of our entrance, Professor Haeckel is

conducting a religious revival. His methods are condemned, by flippant people, as over-emotional. Mr. A. C. Benson, in particular, has at every meeting shown his disapproval in a most boisterous and turbulent manner. Today he created such a disturbance that it was necessary to eject him, this task being performed, with perhaps unnecessary violence, by Count Tolstoy, who threatened to reduce Mr. Benson to a crimson pulp if he resisted. Professor Haeckel is ably seconded by Mr. Bernard Shaw, who discourses on "The Claims of the Heart," and is full of heartrending anecdotes. At one point he almost breaks down, and is observed to brush away the tears from his large blue eyes with the back of his hand. Mr. Shaw is famous throughout Thelema as the author of an exquisite poem, "For Baby's Sake."

In Thelema the poets enjoy themselves thoroughly. Mr. Kipling is the lion of drawingrooms, where he sings songs of his own composition. One of his best efforts ends thus: —

Only a faded rosebud, dear,
A pensive smile and a bitter tear,
Only a dream of the long ago,
Of the dear dead days when I loved you so!

Mr. Kipling, who looks every inch a curate, is singing this as you enter the crowded drawingroom of that exclusive society leader, Mrs. Maxim Gorky. Mr. W. B. Yeats — a robustious, horsey person in a loud check suit — does not join in the tumultuous applause. "Sentimental cackler!" he growls. "That's not the sort of poetry that pays; and what don't pay isn't worth writing. Give me the rowdy musichall song, with a good catchy chorus every time! Look at the posters in the streets — you'll see 'em all over the shop — 'Yeats's Yells are All the Rage.' Give me a swinging rhyme and a healthy imperialistic sentiment, and you can 'ave the faded rosebuds!" And he marches out of the room, and you can hear his strident voice, as he puts on his coat in the hall, shouting his latest song —

We like a bit of a shindy;
We rather enjoy a fuss;
When the enemy comes,
With 'is flags and 'is drums,
'E'd better — look — out — for — Us!

As you wander round the room you cannot but be sensible of the general air of happiness. Even the two shyest, most shrinking persons in the room, Mr. Hall Caine and Miss Corelli, are intensely happy, as they sit unobtrusively in a corner praising one another's works. Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. W. T. Stead are silent, and seem to enjoy being silent;

while Mr. Chesterton obviously enjoys telling them in a mournful voice, that “death is inevitable, and no more to be warded off by the emperor in his purple than by the beggar in his rags; but experience teaches us that many other calamities are avoidable, being the result of ignorance or negligence.” Mr. Chesterton is famous for saying things of this kind. Anywhere else than in Thelema he would be killed for it.

So life goes on in this new city of genius; everyone busy, and everyone busy in his own fashion; everyone, therefore, happy. Mr. Henry James edits a comic paper for the little ones, and splits his infinitives as cheerfully as Mr. H. G. Wells splits hairs in his new treatise on the Greek Irregular Verb. Mr. W. W. Jacobs is busy with his commentary on Jeremiah, and Mr. George Moore is busy preparing an expurgated edition of the works of Sir W. Robertson Nicoll. Mr. Sidney Lee refers to Shakespeare — when he refers to him at all — as an intolerable old bore; and Mr. Edmund Gosse has been understood to say that the same remark applies to all writers, living and dead, except himself and Mr. Nat Gould. Mr. J. M. Barrie devotes himself whole-heartedly to research on the subject of “the status of the washer-woman in the Byzantine Empire.”

I have only to add, that an Australian Parliamentarian, with whom I have discussed this project, is on fire with the idea of a Thelema for politicians. He says the half-witted appearance so noticeable among politicians is, in many cases, merely a pose. There is a widespread feeling among electors that intellect in a politician is not in harmony with the principle of representative government; hence the wily politician is prone to assume an imbecility which he does not really possess. I give this statement for what it is worth. For my part, I have often thought it must require a high degree of intelligence to look as unintelligent as — well, as some of our politicians contrive to look.

Waiting for an Earthquake

It was at Florence, that radiant city of statues and pictures and deathless memories, that I spent my Christmas Day; wandering about the crowded streets, watching the processions, looking on at an impressive service in the Duomo. ... This, however, I was assured, was not the great Italian festival; to see the holiday spirit in all its glory I must wait till New Year's Day. But, because the wind which sweeps from the Apennines down the beautiful Val d'Arno has a tooth much more keen than man's ingratitude, I took one last, lingering, shivering look at the flower-town from the hillside of Fiesole, and thereafter fled incontinently to Naples, which I had always understood (from the poets) to be the abode of sunshine and laughter. Here, if anywhere, I thought, would one be able to see the holiday spirit in action. The Neapolitan, with his joyous southern temperament, would hold festival as festival ought to be held. And — not least important — one would be able to find a sunny spot from which to view the proceedings.

One must sternly repress that tendency to hasty generalisation which is the most notable vice of the globe-trotter. But I may, perhaps, in passing, confess myself profoundly sceptical in the matter of the joyous southern temperament. The Neapolitan probably lives to-day, as he lived a century ago, when Goethe watched him, a light-hearted, careless sort of life, but he is not joyous. He is passionate, he is reckless, he is lazy; but of real joyousness his looks, at all events, give no assurance. The countenance to which one grows accustomed in Naples is of a gloomy and lowering cast; the Florentine, by comparison, is rollickingly cheerful. I, for one, should certainly have carried away from Naples the liveliest detestation of the city and all her folk, if I had not been privileged to see her celebrating New Year's Day — celebrating it as she has never celebrated it before in all the years of her stormy history; if I had not seen the city — and all Italy with her — rising greatly to a great occasion.

It was on Tuesday — the last Tuesday of the old year — that the Neapolitan newspapers brought to our breakfast tables the startling tidings of an immense, an unparalleled disaster in the south: “Messina e Reggio completamente distrutte!” And at first, because Neapolitan journalism has a yellowish tinge, we were not much startled — we were cool and supercilious. There had been an earthquake, of course — a bad earthquake; but the “complete destruction” of those lovely cities of the

Strait would turn out an extravagant hyperbole, and the thousands of killed and injured would presently dwindle to hundreds. So one finished one's coffee and roll, and discussed earthquakes in the abstract.

But, after breakfast, one strolled into the city, and hung about the Piazza del Municipio and other places of public resort; and as the news came trickling through, each announcement of more staggering import than the last, it gradually became clear that the journalists had erred for once on the side of under-statement; the thousands, instead of dwindling, swelled to tens of thousands. A glance at the evening papers, when they appeared, shattered our incredulity and our equanimity once for all. Here, at our very doors, brute nature had struck a deadlier blow than any that human history held record of. The Lisbon earthquake — which destroyed, along with other and more solid structures, Voltaire's belief in a personal deity — was a small affair compared with this. So far as mere loss of life was concerned, this was Austerlitz and Waterloo rolled into one. I wonder if you, in Australia, have realised — or if, by the time this appears, you will have forgotten — the stupendous magnitude of the disaster? ...

No one who was in Naples on New Year's Day is likely to forget it. Those who, like myself, had come expecting to see crowds and processions, had enough of both to last a lifetime. Every street and piazza and corso was full of people; and the processions — of ambulances — went on from morning to night. All day long the great open space in front of the Municipio was one densely packed throng of men and women; and all day long, through narrow lanes in this silent throng, motor cars threaded their way to the various public buildings which had been turned into hospitals. And on each car, lying lengthwise on the backs of the seats, was a stretcher, with its piteous burden. The head was generally uncovered, but it was impossible to tell, so ghastly white was the face, and so immobile, whether the victim still lived, or whether the voyage from Messina had put an end to his sufferings. ...Wherever it was possible to move, amid this vast awe-stricken concourse, went men with collecting boxes. They stood at every street corner, they boarded every tram: and wherever they went you heard a continual clink of coin. ...In the less crowded streets you met at every turn an open wagon, with the driver calling in the voice of one crying his wares, "Calabria! Sicilia!" And into that wagon came, hurtling from third and fourth and fifth story windows, blankets, mattresses, pillows, clothing of every description. When the wagon was full it was driven straight down to the port, where all the shipping of Italy seemed to be gathered.

The scene at the port was indeed memorable; so many things were being done, and all, apparently, with such swiftness, such order, so little confusion. The embarkation of troops, the landing of the refugees, and of the injured and the dead, the loading of foodstuffs and clothing — it

seemed to me a miracle of organisation, of organised pity. A day or two later, one began to hear rumours of ludicrous bungling and confusion; but remember that the bolt had fallen from a clear sky, and that the organising had had to be done in a day. ...For my part, I had always loved and admired the Italian people; but I had thought of it, in my stupid ignorance, as a decadent people. It is not a decadent people; it is still the Italy of Cavour and Mazzini, the Italy which provided Europe with the most heroic spectacle of the nineteenth century. Even the casual tourist could not but be conscious of the holy flame of pity that burned so bright and clear throughout the land during that dark week. Surely New Year's Day has never been celebrated in a more religious spirit than on this occasion, when all ecclesiastical pomp and pageantry were laid aside.

And meanwhile Naples, when she had time to think about herself, was frightened, as well she might be. The position was really very disquieting. The earthquake in Calabria a few years ago had been followed — at an interval of a few days, a friendly tobacconist assured me — by an earthquake in Naples; three hundred people had been killed in the market-place, and a church outside the city had fallen down and killed six hundred of those who had taken sanctuary within. Vesuvius had been active, and the streets had been knee-deep in ashes. Here, now, was a much greater earthquake in Calabria; what more likely than that it would be followed by a correspondingly great earthquake in Naples? This was the kind of vague, uncomfortable talk one heard about the streets for a day or so; then, suddenly, it was announced that in every Neapolitan church prayers were being offered up for the safety of the city. Services all day long and all night long, in the cathedral and the three hundred churches of Naples. (The number of churches was given me by a garrulous tram conductor; I cannot vouch for its accuracy; I have never owned a Baedeker.) I trust it will not seem blasphemous to say that the news of these intercessory services had a most disquieting effect on visitors to the city. It seemed to bring the danger nearer, to give it definiteness and reality. Life began to wear a precarious look. The city acquired, for the uneasy imagination, the air of a card castle; and as you walked along the narrow streets or looked down upon Naples from the heights of San Martino, the vision of those tall buildings, toppling with hideous ruin and combustion down, began to get upon your nerves. The room one lodged in was floored with marble. (It is one of the beauties of Naples that for a few francs a day you can live in a palazzo, with marble floors and broad marble staircases, and imagine yourself a Renaissance prince.) It was impossible not to reflect that the room above you, and the room above that, were also floored with marble; and the image of those huge slabs of stone coming hurtling down upon you was not a lulling night thought. Still — whether it was faith or fatalism, or the sea air — one slept soundly.

All the same, waiting for an earthquake is a trying, a nerve-racking business, and it was no wonder that the Rome-ward-bound trains were packed every day. “Vede Napoli e poi muori,” the old, familiar saying, had acquired, in these tremulous days, a rather sinister significance. ... For my part, it was with unmixed relief that I descried, coming grandly round the headland of Posilipo, the liner which was to bear me to Australia. They that go down to the sea in ships, I reflected, have much the better time of it. There may be a monsoon or so lying in wait for us in the Indian Ocean, but it is pleasanter to be tossed about in a ship, which is built for that purpose, than in a palazzo, which is not. And so I cheerfully stepped on board, rejoicing to feel myself on aqua firma once more.

February, 1909.

An Australian in London

Not without qualms of conscience can one enlist in the great army of garrulous globe-trotters. You know the type, of course; you must often have met the traveller who, on the strength of a brush with a railway porter and a misunderstanding with a cabman, is prepared to deliver a lecture on the characteristics of a foreign nation. A fellow-passenger of mine on a recent voyage — a professional sociologist and a man of exceptional intelligence — went ashore for a few hours at Colombo. When he came aboard again, I found he had acquired a new theory of Buddhism in the time it had taken me to acquire a new hat; but that was only the tenth part of what he had picked up. Before we were well outside the breakwater, he was joyously at work on a series of articles for a Dutch newspaper on “British Misgovernment in Ceylon.” Six crowded hours of observation and inquiry at Port Said provided him with materials for a breezy discourse, of which I forget the drift; but I remember that Disraeli, the Suez Canal Company, Moses, and Lord Cromer were referred to, all in terms of severe disapprobation. As soon as we had left Egypt behind us, he produced an Italian grammar and sat down to master it, as he intended to stay a fortnight in Italy and make thorough investigations. When he stepped ashore at Naples he was perfectly able, so far as one could judge, to assure solicitous Neapolitans that he felt very well, and also to inquire of the Italian nation whether it had seen the hat of his brother John. And now, in his home in Holland, he is probably correcting the proofsheets of an octavo volume entitled “The Truth About Italy.” This is no caricature, but a veracious portrait of a man in whom the typical vices of the globe-trotter are somewhat accentuated. For all globe-trotters are addicted to hasty generalisation. If you object that this statement is itself a hasty generalisation, one can only reply that the disease is evidently infectious.

But even the most inveterate generaliser — even the American tourist — will hesitate before attempting to “size up” London. Even my Dutch friend showed an unwonted diffidence when asked for a theory of London. London eludes and baffles and defies. The literature of London is enormous, but the soul of her, the innermost essence, is a thing that always breaks through language and escapes. Perhaps the right thing was most nearly said of her by the Mexican visitor, I have somewhere read of, who, after a drive round some of the outer suburbs, broke a long,

astonished silence with the exclamation, “No es una ciudad; es un mundo!” And whoever attempts the impossible feat of describing London, will find that it is indeed a world, and no mere city, that he has set out to describe. And a world full of contradictions, so that you have no sooner made a general statement about it than you see the necessity of revising that statement.

The essential contradictoriness of the place begins with its physical aspect. Is London a beautiful city? That depends on what you mean by “beauty,” and still more on what you mean by “London.” Get up in the morning — your first morning in London! — go down to the Embankment, and walk slowly to Westminster Bridge; go half-way across the bridge, and there stand, looking up and down the river; and be assured that, whatever else you may remember or forget, this is an experience that you will never forget. The Abbey, seen through a faint bluish haze, an almost spiritual atmosphere which is the perfect medium through which to view its austere glories — what sight has any city in the world to offer that will compare with this? You cannot say, of course, how much is purely sensuous appeal and how much is historic association — here, if anywhere, one feels, is the home of the spirit of England's mighty past — but, no matter of what elements it be compounded, the beauty of the scene is undeniable and overpowering. ...But now, climb to the top of one of the County Council's grand new tram-cars and ride down through Lambeth as far as Tooting; and ask yourself whether it is possible that any other city in the world can show anything so hideous, and so bleak and depressing in its hideousness. ...Go back to Westminster, and walk from the Abbey to St. Paul's. The Strand is still, in all probability, the most beautiful street in the world. Your modern architect is doing his best to spoil it; he has lost the sense of true urban beauty, and suffers from an ideal of Parisian plate-glass magnificence. A score or so of buildings like the offices of the Victorian Government will suffice to change the character of the Strand; but glory and loveliness have not yet passed away from the ancient street. And to step out of roaring, choking Fleet Street — which has a wonderful charm of its own — into the quiet precincts of the Temple is to understand something of the spell that London has cast upon so many lords of the pen and of the brush. But the London of Henley's inspired *Voluntaries* is, after all, but a village in extent; and all round this beautiful and ancient village lies the great city — a miracle of sheer hideousness. To the eastward lie vast regions, of which if you have seen a fragment you have seen the whole; one dire monotony of squalor and meanness. No less depressing are the huge deserts of dingy respectability, the dull, grey terraces, mile on desolate mile with scarce a touch of diversity; and the boundless wilderness of red brick villas, the abodes of complacent middle-class comfort. ...From an expedition into this inferno of

monotony you go back to the Strand, or to one of the West End parks, and realise anew that London is the most beautiful city in the world. But you realise also that beautiful London is small in extent, while hideous London is vast, and, worse still, is growing every day. Every day the monstrous creature pushes a red or a grey tentacle a little farther out into the country-side.

So much for the body of this adorable and detestable city; how of its spirit? Where are we to find the soul of London, that we may sum it up in a formula? Begin this work of psychical research in the Abbey. Every Australian visitor quickly finds his way thither, and if he be worthy of his descent he will experience

In the hush of the dread high altar,
When the Abbey makes us We,

an emotion which it would be sacrilege to attempt to describe. This, one feels, is a fit dwelling for the soul, not of London only, but of England, a great nation, the mother of nations and the mother of heroes. Not in the outer world of futile bustle and clamour, but in this place of dim lights and a silence broken only by the heavenly voices of the choristers, abides the serene and steadfast spirit which has made England great. ...In a glow of optimism you pass out into the workaday world — the world of ruthless commerce and feverish pleasure-seeking and shrieking motor-cars and shrieking half-penny newspapers; and you see that a spirit is abroad entirely and essentially alien to the spirit that built the Abbey. And you wonder whether it will not be better to search for the soul of London in that roaring whirlpool of traffic which swirls and surges round the Bank of England.

The management of London traffic is a miracle, almost fit to be set beside that main miracle of modern history, the government of India. One of the most exhilarating sights in the world is

The constable, with lifted hand,
Conducting the orchestral Strand.

Let that policeman stand for a symbol of the governing power of England. But in Hyde Park, on Sunday morning, one may be permitted to wonder whether yonder preposterously-dressed young man, leading up and down by a string a preposterously-shaven poodle, may not stand with equal propriety for the symbol of a nation falling into decay. The longer you stay in London the more difficult you find it to decide whether England is a nation mewing its mighty youth, or a nation degenerate and decadent.

The most painful of all London contrasts is one so obvious that to mention it savours of extreme platitude. I mean the contrast between,

say, a Piccadilly restaurant and an eating-house in West Ham; in other words, between the incredible and cynical waste of wealth at one end of the social scale and the incredible poverty and misery at the other. I was standing one afternoon in a shop in Regent Street, when a sudden sound of cheering brought me to the door. It was a day of yellow fog — not the worst kind of London fog, but bad enough to merit Hawthorne's description, "The ghost of mud — the spiritualised medium of departed mud." Through this I dimly perceived the reason of the cheering. A procession of the Paddington unemployed had met and was passing a procession of the Lambeth unemployed, and these dolorous regiments were giving one another a hoarse salute as they passed. Of course, the procession of unemployed is a frequent sight in London; but in Regent Street the spectacle was especially piquant. On the pavement, the crowds of well-to-do people, out in search of superfluous things — in Regent Street they sell nothing but superfluities; in the middle of the street, tramping like dispirited spectres through the fog, those poor battered products of our commercial civilisation. It was as if a terrible page of Dante were being read aloud to a fashionable and frivolous audience. In the contemptuous or indifferent faces of the shoppers one saw, as clear as it could be made, the apathy of London in face of the problem which she must solve or perish — a problem which every day grows more insistent, more acute; for it is a fact that unemployment in London is steadily on the increase.

No other city in the world could show the visitor such an assemblage as came together one night in December, at the invitation of the British Academy, to celebrate the tercentenary of Milton. From veterans like Holman Hunt and Frederic Harrison to the youngest member of the family of Fame, the whole London world of art and letters seemed to be there. The scene was brilliant and exhilarating, and, though one could not help wondering what Milton would have thought of the dresses, and what the wearers of the dresses really thought of Milton, still one came away feeling that one had seen the fine flower of our civilisation. ... The way back to my hotel lay along the Embankment, and there I saw another of those sights which no other city can provide — the hundreds of homeless men and women, huddled on the iron seats, who are condemned to spend their nights there the long winter through, and with small hope in their hearts of ever finding a better resting-place till a merciful death comes and puts an end to their long dull agony. And Milton's own description of London sang in my ears with a note of overwhelming irony — "Behold, now, this vast city; a city of refuge; the mansion-house of liberty. ..."

Statistics of pauperism give no idea of the extent of London's misery. It is not only, or perhaps chiefly, in the slums that one must look for wretchedness. The life of the average Londoner — the man you meet in the omnibus and the underground tube — has about in a deadly

monotony and dullness corresponding with precision to the deadly dullness and monotony of the terraces. There are millions of men — men of every trade and profession — who manage to make both ends meet, but who carry on their faces the legible signs of that hopeless, pitiless, endless struggle for no one knows what, which is the real life of London.

Such contrasts are to be found, no doubt, in all great cities, but surely nowhere else have they the same vividness. Many people go to London for a holiday; but, unless you are entirely without heart or imagination, it is the worst place in the world for holiday-making; because, do what you will, you cannot in London shut out the note of human woe. Poverty and vice and misery form the black background to life, and the thought of it is apt to poison enjoyment and to give comfort an air of treachery.

Perhaps one could find the soul of London if one had time for the quest; perhaps she has not one, but many souls; perhaps she has no soul at all; I cannot say. A mere cursory glance is, of course, worth nothing at all. I record it for what it is worth.

January, 1909.

An Australian in Florence

To stay in Florence, be it but for a few short weeks — to wander about her narrow dusky streets, and to stare up at her great buildings, to stroll through her glorious churches and her world-famed galleries, to stand upon the most ancient of her bridges and watch the grey Arno gliding beneath you as Dante saw it glide — is to dwell for a season in a land of enchantment. This is one of those rich and vivid experiences which, if you are so unfortunate as not to be a poet, you need never hope to describe. Mere prose — especially such a prose as mine, which has never learned to soar — must utterly fail to convey any sense of the overwhelming beauty and charm of this incomparable city. The praise of Florence may be left to the poets; and, indeed, they have not neglected their duty. For Florence, mother of many poets, has inspired many more, and among them some of the greatest of our own race; it would be easy to fill many pages of this book with quotations, in her praise, from Coleridge and Landor and Shelley and Browning and a score beside. Search over the whole world, and you will not find another city, in ancient or modern times, that has been so often and so fervently and so worthily hymned. But even the most prosaic person — or, is it the inarticulate poet that dwells in the breast of the most prosaic? — must be conscious of her charm.

It is not mere physical loveliness. If it were possible to divest cities of their own past, of all historic associations, several Italian cities — Genoa probably, Naples almost certainly — would be held to surpass Florence in beauty. Beautiful she is, assuredly, as you see her from the hill slopes of Fiesole; or, nearer at hand, from an eminence in the Boboli gardens, at the back of Cosimo de' Medici's palace; surpassingly beautiful. But I hardly think her physical beauty alone would have given her a right to the title bestowed on her by Coleridge — “The brightest star of star-bright Italy.” No; as you look down on the little grey city, with her towers and domes and spires, you perceive that an essential element in her beauty is your own consciousness that she is Florence; you see her bathed in that faint haze which is the glamour of the past.

And that reminds me to warn the Australian who thinks of visiting Florence — and every Australian who visits Europe ought to reserve a week, at least, for this city — that some preparation for the visit is worth making. Nobody can possibly appreciate Florence properly who knows

nothing about her past. It will not do just to read *Romola* and Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, and then to go conscientiously from sight to sight, with a guide-book in your hand. So equipped, you will utterly miss the essential thing — the spirit of the place. The spirit of Florence is the spirit of Dante — and you must have read the *Divine Comedy*, in Cary's translation if you like. You must know something of Florentine history — not, of course, the details of those endless petty wars between republican Guelph and aristocratic Ghibelin, nor of the later factious quarrels of Whites and Blacks, but the main outlines of that turbulent time. You must know what the Renaissance in Italy meant, who Lorenzo the Magnificent was, and what manner of men he gathered about him. You must know a little about the history of art; Vasari may suffice for this; and if you have studied Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography — one of the pleasantest books in the world — so much the better. This preparatory process ought to stretch over a period of, say, twenty years.

That may seem long, but remember that in the course of your preparation you will have made some acquaintances worth making. For during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, Italy produced a long succession of great men; and the greatest of all the Italians were Florentines. Dante and Michael Angelo — what other city can boast of two such sons? And think of the minor names — of the long line of painters, from Cimabue to Andrea del Sarto; of sculptors like Donatello, and architects like Giotto; of Machiavelli, the great, misunderstood patriot, the founder of modern political science; of Guicciardini, the father of modern history; of Savonarola, dreamer and man of action; of Lorenzo de' Medici, the princely patron of all humane arts and sciences; and many another. For three centuries this little city was torn incessantly by dissensions, but through it all the flame of spiritual life burned more steadily, and with brighter radiance, than anywhere else in Europe.

If you have so prepared yourself, then, when you step out of your hotel on your very first morning in Florence, you will find the streets peopled with ghosts of well-known and well-loved men and women; and every old building will have its meaning and its memories. Other cities breathe of a mightier and more momentous past, no doubt; but in other cities that past is somewhat remote and shadowy; a new city has been built upon the ruins of the old. But in Florence there are no ruins to be laboriously disinterred; the old, the great Florence is still there; the past is alive. This is the peculiar, the unique thing about Florence — this jostling of the present with the past. The Old Bridge is still lined with goldsmiths' shops, as it was in Dante's day; but they now sell cheap Parisian brooches and bangles. An electric tram whizzes across that other bridge where, according to a modern picture, Dante met Beatrice with her two companions. Men are lounging and smoking cigarettes at the door of the Palazzo Vecchio, the old Town Hall; and over that door you may still see

the inscription, put up in Savonarola's day, reminding you of how the Florentines, having exhausted all varieties of government, took Christ to be their King. There it is, the memorial of a mood; and when that mood was over, they burned Savonarola on this very spot.

Electric trams, too, run in several directions across the "history-haunted square" of the Cathedral. From the architectural point of view, I should fancy that square must be the most wonderful place in the world. (What a revelation it was to a person brought up in Australia, where architecture is as yet unknown!) The great Duomo itself, with its grand lines and its rich and many-coloured splendour; Giotto's Campanile, soaring skyward, a miracle of white grace and delicacy, a lyrical poem in stone; and the ancient Baptistery with those doors of bronze, of which the only right thing to say is the thing Michael Angelo said, that they are fit to be the doors of Paradise; is there any square in any city in the world where three such world-treasures are gathered together? And here again some knowledge of the past of the city is necessary to a full appreciation; for the very buildings of Florence are instinct with the spirit of her stormy history. Take, for instance, a typical Florentine palace, the Palazzo Strozzi. There it stands, rough-hewn, rectangular, simple and grim and stark; how loudly it speaks of the iron time when it was built, when Florence was the seat of perpetual civil war, and when her battles raged, not on the plain without the gates, but up and down these very streets. A man's city house had to be a fortress in those days; and this is a fortress, but one in which the architect, while meeting the necessity for strength and security, has also contrived to satisfy his desire for beauty. The old Town Hall, too, the ancient home of the liberties of the people, how marvellously it combines energy and strength with beauty and grace, and how expressive it thus is of the very soul of republican Florence! The past lives again in that tall stern tower that kept watch and ward over the city so many centuries ago; and as you gaze, you seem to hear the great bell ringing out its warning of the approach of an army of Ghibelin exiles, and calling the citizens to the defence of their hard-won liberties.

But you must not think of Florence as a mere museum of antiquities. It has a cheerful, bustling life of its own, and its people are the best-natured and the most polite imaginable. It has an active municipal too active, some people think; artists and antiquarians are never tired of railing at the philistinism of the authorities, who have destroyed many buildings of matchless interest. Let me confess that I am a philistine myself in this matter, and think the artists and antiquarians atrociously selfish people. It is a loss to civilisation that a city should become a mere place of memories, a city of the dead. My bedroom window looked out upon the Mercato Vecchio, the old market-place, the ancient centre of Florentine life. The authorities have swept the interesting slum away, and turned it into a splendid vulgar square, with a big flamboyant statue of

Victor Emanuel in the middle; and a high-flown inscription tells you that the place has been restored “from ancient squalor to a new life.” And, of course, the authorities have been stormed at for this act of vandalism; but for my part, having a nose, I was rather grateful to them. The last word, after all, is with the people who have to live and work and marry and bring up their children and die in the place; and it is better that some picturesque buildings should disappear than that these people should continue to live in squalor and filth. This problem is being felt in every old European city; and it is doubtless right that all who reverence the past should protest against acts of wanton vandalism, to which municipalities are always prone. But, in the end, the welfare of the present generation and of generations yet unborn must be the first consideration.

Yet the Florentines do reverence the past of their city; more so than any people I have ever heard of. Wherever there still stands a building mentioned by Dante, you will find on one corner of it a marble slab, with the appropriate lines from the *Commedia* inscribed on it. There is a commemorative tablet on every house where anyone of note has ever lived. Thus every young Florentine is constantly reminded of civic heroes dead and gone. And it is not Florentine heroes alone who are thus honoured. Walking one day along a very narrow street, on my way to the Pitti, I came suddenly on a big green-shuttered house which somehow seemed familiar, as if I had seen a picture of it somewhere. On the wall was the usual marble tablet, which informed me that “Here lived and wrote Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who with the heart of a woman combined the learning of a scholar and the soul of a poet, and who wrought of her verse a golden ring binding England and Italy. The grateful Florentines have placed this tablet to her memory.”

Yes, by all means go to Florence. Go there after you have sojourned in one of the great modern cities, in London or in Paris, with its hard exterior glitter, its din of material progress, its essential callousness and vulgarity, its never-ending chase of ignoble pleasures.

“O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delved gold, the wailers heap!”

What a refreshment for the spirit to escape from all that to this little city where at every turn you come upon some quiet reminder of the stature to which human nature has been capable of rising; this city which still stands, and will stand for centuries more, as a sign and symbol of the things that really matter!

A Talk with George Meredith

The train takes you in an hour or so from Charing Cross to Dorking; and half-an-hour's brisk walk will carry you from Dorking to the famous Burford Bridge Inn — if you know your way; but there is a bewildering complexity of lanes hereabouts, and a fallacious peasantry. Yet, if one has a little time to spare, it is a delightful experience to lose one's way in this neighbourhood, where every turning brings one a new vision of beauty; and especially in November, when the woods are one glory of reds and browns and yellows. "The most enchanting spot in England," Matthew Arnold called it; and he had wide knowledge and a sure eye. Two quotations were running in my head as I walked along the road. One was from a novel of Meredith's — I forget which — "the smell of an English lane under showers challenges Eden." The other was from Keats, from the opening passage of "Endymion," —

"Let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end."

And I remembered, with a start, that it was actually here, at Burford Bridge, that Keats's wish was fulfilled; it was here — and in November too! — that he finished the writing of "Endymion." Here it was, moreover, that Nelson (as I have read) spent his last night ashore. And here, at a stone's-throw from the Inn, is Flint Cottage, the home for many years of George Meredith, poet and novelist.

What it feels like to catch sight for the first time of that cottage — well known already from photographs — and of the little chalet in the garden, where so much imperishable work has been done; what it feels like to realise, with an effort, that the hand stretched out to you is the hand that penned *Love in the Valley*, and the penultimate chapter of *Richard Feverel*; this is a matter not to be spoken of to the unfit reader; while the fit reader knows without being told. There are reticences to be observed. And, not being a professional interviewer, I shall spare you the usual description of Mr. Meredith's personal appearance, of his manner of speech, of the room he sat in, and so forth. But of the things he said, some, at least, may be of general interest; and I do not think it will be accounted a breach of good manners if I attempt to recall and to transcribe them.

Mr. Meredith's first questions related to Australian politics, and to his friend, Mr. Deakin. As the English newspapers give but meagre accounts of Australian doings, I was more than usually ignorant of the state of affairs, and was able to give him but little information. Next he asked about our wines; and on the subject of wine, as became the creator of Dr. Middleton and the eulogist of Old Veuve, he spoke wisely and well. Thence, by an easy transition, we passed to buckwheat cakes and maple sugar, of which he spoke with enthusiasm, adding that he had never visited America. I asked if he had ever thought of visiting Australia, and he said that when he had been young enough to travel he had never been able to afford it; and he gave me an account of his early struggles, when his books were ignored, and he had had to turn his hand to everything — reporting, editing, leader-writing, reading for publishers, and what not. “Nobody would read my books then,” he said, “and from what I know of my dear countrymen, I don't think they would ever have been persuaded to look at them, if the Americans had not led the way.” He went on to tell the story of his sudden popularity in America; how certain American critics had “discovered” his work, and how a certain publisher had brought out a complete American edition of his novels. That publisher had had the decency to give him a royalty. He had never called American publishers pirates; he had often been asked to join in that cry, but he never would. They were hard-headed business men, and had behaved generously in paying him something at a time when no law required them to pay anything at all.

He asked about Australian literature. He thought we had some promising young men, but he was not enraptured with what he had seen of our verse. We seemed overfond of the glorification of sport, of horses, and of our own vernacular. We were trying to force the Muse along a path she could never tread. “Try to get your young men to know their English classics — to read their Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and Wordsworth. Not, of course, to imitate these; but to be well grounded in the greatest literary traditions.” It seemed to strike him as an afterthought that his inclusion of Pope required defending. “Pope is our great master of the rapier-thrust. He had as little imagination as any man that ever lived; but he had great wit, and enormous industry, and he polished and polished. Some of his couplets will last with the language. That's a great thing to have done, and a great quality — incisiveness. In that, he is our great model.” Mr. Meredith seemed interested in the account I gave him of a Melbourne poet, who does not write of horses, and who eschews the vernacular.

I forget by what transition the conversation turned to the present position of England. He thinks it not improbable, or at least not unimaginable, that in thirty years England will have lost her place as a first rate power. Germany, of course, is the enemy he fears.

Prussia had been ground beneath the heel of Napoleon; and had slowly and quietly equipped herself for revenge. She had hated France because she had mistaken the spirit of Napoleon for the spirit of France; whereas, in reality, the French were a pacific people. "Of course, they have their vivacities, their bursts of high spirits — caps over windmills at times — but they are an industrious and pacific people, and seek only the satisfaction of their just claims." Napoleon had cast a spell on them. He was a great landmark in history — "one of the very greatest of men, in that minor kind of greatness which takes no account of things not material, of ideas." He was great because he believed the word "impossible" might be erased from the dictionary; and he was absolutely ruthless and merciless in carrying out that idea.

In illustration of this Mr. Meredith told me a story of how Napoleon had halted at the edge of a ravine, and ordered a cavalry officer to take a battery on the opposite height. He was told it was impossible, and flew into a great rage at the word. He pointed with his finger at the battery, and shouted, "Enlevez-moi ça!" (Mr. Meredith rapped this out dramatically.) The battery was carried, and by cavalry — a thing unprecedented; but it cost all the officers and half the men of the attacking force. "That was Napoleon."

He added that he had tried, in a poem, to express the general effect of Napoleon on the French mind. "And yet," I said, "Carlyle says that prestige counts for nothing." "Yes, he does say so; and that is one of the childish surly things Carlyle sometimes said when something had disagreed with him."

But I was anxious to bring him back to England and Germany. "Do you see marks of decay in England?" I ventured. He sat up and spoke with more force than he had yet spoken. "I see abundant marks of apathy — of apathy, and of grievous lack of foresight, and of utter indifference to everything not material and concrete and to be weighed with the hand — an indifference which will assuredly have to be paid for." He went on to speak of the popular placid belief that England could never be invaded; Lord Roberts and Lord Wolseley had for years been hammering in vain on that stolid British complacency. And he proceeded to show me how an invasion was possible, and how, if it came, it would find England utterly unprepared. (A few days after this conversation Lord Roberts, in his great speech in the House of Lords, said the same thing; the same even to minute details, such as the time required for the landing of an invading force.)

"But," I said, "it seems certain that you will have conscription before long."

"Not conscription — national service. Yes, we may have that; and it may save us. I and others have been telling my countrymen for years that these periodical panics of theirs are simply an invitation. I wrote a poem

on this subject lately, and sent it to the papers; but my dear countrymen didn't like it." I reminded him that he had also sent it to Mr. Deakin, who had read some stanzas of it at a great public meeting, where it had been vigorously applauded. "But, of course, Japan," I added, "is our bugbear."

He said he thought our fears were groundless. In the first place, he thought Japan had an extraordinarily high sense of right and justice; in the second place, the Japanese would never fight against Australians with anything like the spirit and energy they had shown in the struggle with Russia. In that war they had been fighting for what they believed were their rights — and indeed for their very existence as a nation. "You have the idea of national service; and your men can ride and shoot already. Put them under proper discipline, and I will back Australians in defence of their country against any invading army the Japanese could send."

We spoke of cricket; and he said professionalism was speedily spoiling the game. He described the village-green cricket matches when he was young; when one village had its invincible bat, and another its irresistible bowler, and people came from all the neighbouring villages to see the match. "Just such a match, sir," I said, "as you have pictured in *Evan Harrington*." He seemed pleased. "So it is, so it is! I had forgotten all about that."

He recurred to our former theme, and seemed to think he had spoken too pessimistically, and might have given a wrong impression. "I believe," he concluded, "that the world progresses, not only in America and in your Australia, but here in England, too. It progresses in the sense of justice, of human rights. And how can you expect people to remain blind to the enormous waste of wealth, the excesses, the banquets, and what not? The working man has opened his eyes, and slowly and surely is coming to his own."

I tried to tell him (haltingly enough) of the honour in which his name was held in Australia, of our widening and deepening appreciation of his work; and so took my leave, and walked in the gathering twilight to Box Hill station, feeling that, even if for this alone I had crossed the seas — to have a glimpse of England at her autumnal loveliest, and to have speech for an hour with the greatest of her living sons — the voyage would have been well worth while.

March, 1909.

Unconscious Verse

Most readers, I suppose, of *Lorna Doone* — that is to say the great majority of those who read at all — must have observed that a good deal of that delightful book is written in distinct though rhymeless verse. Blackmore was probably himself vaguely conscious that his prose had a tendency to the rhythmic. But I do not believe he knew, or that very many of his readers have noted, how prone he was to write — not merely a phrase which might have been printed as a line of verse — but a whole passage which might have been printed as a stanza, or as a succession of stanzas. And as the use he makes of metrical arrangement throws some light on the essential difference between prose and poetry, I may be excused for dwelling on the point. I take Blackmore as the most notable instance on record of a man writing verse where he thought he was writing prose. You ask yourself why he did it. And before you can get any kind of answer to that question you must further ask when he did it. At what points in the progress of his story did he drop, unconsciously or sub-consciously, into verse?

The first example I have noticed is in chapter 29. In quoting this passage, I do not change a word, nor alter the punctuation at all; this is exactly as Blackmore wrote it, printed (as he might have printed it) in stanzaic form: —

“Then the golden harvest came,
Waving on the broad hill-side,
And nestling in the quiet nooks
Scooped from out the fringe of wood.

“A wealth of harvest such as never
Gladdened all our country-side
Since my father ceased to reap,
And his sickle hung to rust.”

You can hardly imagine that a man could have written in that way, especially when you notice the punctuation, in perfect unconsciousness of the fact that it was verse and not prose he was writing! In chapter 55 we get a passage of quite obvious blank verse: —

“And even now, in those sweet eyes, so deep

With loving kindness, and soft maiden dreamings,
There seemed to be a slight, unwilling, half-
Confessed withdrawal; overcome by love
And duty, yet a painful thing to see.

Again, in chapter 58 — in the memorable passage of the breaking of the “shameless stone” by John Ridd — this effective stanza occurs: —

“Then I swung me on high to the swing of the sledge,
As a thresher bends back to the rise of the flail,
And with all my power descending
Delivered the ponderous onset.”

If this be read with due accentuation, no one can fail to observe that it is not only metre, but an extraordinarily good metre — a metre wonderfully expressive of the action. In chapter 74 — that crowded, tragic chapter — there are several examples of what I take to have been Blackmore's favourite stanza: —

“With my vicious horse at a furious speed,
I came upon Black Barrow Down,
Directed by some shout of men,
Which seemed to me but a whisper.

The rhythm of the fourth line — the rhythm of “On a Cold and Frosty Morning” — constantly recurs; indeed, the whole stanza recurs on the very next page: —

“But only once the other man
Turned round and looked back again,
And then I was beside a rock,
With a reedy swamp behind me.”

Finally, from the very last paragraph of the book, take this, in a more quietly happy measure: —

“For change she makes a joke of this,
And plays with it, and laughs at it;
And then, when my slow nature marvels,
Back she comes to the earnest thing.”

Beside this last example, set any stanza from Tennyson's *Daisy*; for instance: —

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell

To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell,

Setting aside the rhyme, the two stanzas are identical in form — even to the “feminine ending” in the third line, and the dactyl cunningly enclosed in the fourth — with but one minute difference, which only a rather careful reader will have noticed.

Hundreds of other instances might be given from the same book — not to mention other books by the same author, who kept up the habit as long as he lived — were it worth while, and were I able to count on the continued patience of the reader on a point which he, no doubt, regards as trifling. But I hope he will not go on regarding it as a trifling point when he sees the possibilities of speculation it suggests.

Were Blackmore's frequent lapses into verse purely accidental? That is the crucial question. Unconscious they doubtless were, but I do not think they were accidental. It was not by accident, though it was, doubtless, quite unconsciously, that Cicero allowed hexameters to slip into his prose. We are not to suppose that the translators of the Bible were aware they were writing a hexameter when they wrote —

“Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?”

or when they wrote —

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?”

Nor were Dickens's famous passages of blank verse deliberately cast into that form. Ruskin had no deliberate intention of composing a jiggling verse when he wrote, in the preface to *Sesame and Lilies*, the paragraph beginning with the words —

“Therefore also — that they
Have Plato to read if they choose,
With lawns on which they may run,
And woods in which they may muse.”

Nor need we accuse Whewell of the deliberate intention to parody *In Memoriam*, or to write verse at all, when he penned the following famous statement of fact: —

“There is no force, however great,
Can stretch a cord, however fine,
Into a horizontal line
That shall be absolutely straight.”

This last example is probably unique in literature, because here the

writer, without the least idea of writing anything but the baldest prose, wrote an unmistakable stanza with rhymes considerably better than some that we could find in the collected works of Tennyson. In each of the cases cited, the curious result was brought about, unknown to the writer, by the operation of causes quite plain and simple when you come to look into the matter. The merest adumbration of the truth is, however, all that can be here attempted.

Nothing can be more detestable to anyone who has inherited or acquired a literary taste, and who has by sedulous reading learned to distinguish excellent work from mediocre, than what is termed "fine writing." Now, this is a term which is never applied except to prose, and if we come to look into it we find, always, that its defect springs from one cause — the attempt on the part of a prose-writer to look at the world from the point of view proper to a poet. Coleridge announced that poetry is not the proper antithesis of prose. but of science. The paradox is a valuable one, but must not be accepted too literally; for a neglect of the difference between poetry and prose is responsible for much of the "fine writing" which we have learned to abhor. The whole difference is in the point of view. When a verse-writer is perceived to have looked at his subject from an essentially prosaic point of view, we say at once that his story may be a good story, or that his ethical theory may be ingenious, of that his criticism of life — if we adopt that particular jargon — may be just; but that he ought to have written in prose. When, however, a prose-writer, in like manner, is perceived to have looked at his subject from an essentially poetic point of view, we never, strangely enough, apply the same rule, and say that he ought to have written in verse. "Prosaic" has come, by a process of moral degradation well known to philologists, to stand for what is dull and unimaginative. But what, in the name of astonishment, should prose be if not prosaic? It is an excellent rule that the prose-writer should be prosaic, and the verse-writer poetic. Poetic prose is every whit as offensive, to a taste formed on the best models, as prosaic verse. When Scott calls Fielding "the prose Homer of human nature" he means that Fielding's world is a world of epical variety, seen from the prosaic point of view; no one ever accused that great master of exalting his men and women into poetic creations. Stevenson's whimsical comparison of Pepys with Shelley is of like nature. The same "Spirit of delight" informs the work of both; but Pepys plays, as it were, the Sancho Panza to Shelley's Quixote.

Now, the prosaic expresses itself in a rhythm of its own, but it is never the poetic rhythm. And though the laws of prose rhythm have never been laid down with any attempt at accuracy, I think it will be found true that, whereas poetry uses the rhythm of song, prose uses the rhythm of conversation. I am one of those who believe that mastery of prose is a thing more difficult of attainment than mastery of verse; that the history

of English literature shows many masters of verse and very few masters of prose. The ordinary writer of prose is apt to fall into one of two mistakes — either he fails to perceive that harmony is possible and desirable in prose, or he confuses the harmony of prose with that of verse. This is why I account Dryden a greater master of prose than De Quincey, and Swift a greater master of prose than Ruskin. Milton's handling of prose, in spite of magnificent purple patches, is felt to be eminently unsatisfactory, and the reason is that Milton, our greatest master of all the resources of verse, is here using a medium which he imperfectly understands; his turgid periods are far from echoing the rhythm of conversation. And, if the student of literary history will look carefully into the nature of Dryden's reforms, and of Addison's further reforms, he will find that what these great writers did was to bring English prose down from the mountains into the street; to make it in the best sense prosaic, to introduce into it the rhythm of ordinary colloquy.

We all have a vague feeling that metrical prose is wrong, but we are sometimes hard put to it to give a reasonable explanation of our feeling. At the bottom of that feeling there is, I think, a perception that the writer is attempting to say in prose more than prose was ever meant to express; that he is looking at his subject from the poetic point of view, and has therefore slipped unconsciously into metre, which is the proper means of expressing that point of view. If you examine "Lorna Doone" with care you will find that it is just at the points where the narrative rises into emotion that the prose has a way of dropping into verse. Verse is the natural and primitive language of emotion, and the primeval man in us prompts us to write metrically whenever we essay to write emotionally. It is true that Whewell was not, in the instance quoted, writing emotionally; far from it. But he wished to be particularly emphatic, he wished to put the law in an easily-remembered form; and it is certainly one of the minor distinctions of verse that it puts the truth in an emphatic and memorable way. In the prose of the earlier Ruskin there is much verse; but as he gained fuller mastery of his magnificent instrument, as he ceased to be super-eloquent, so he learned to avoid the rhythms of poetry. The habit of sentimentalising, it will be found, was responsible for all the lapses of Dickens into blank verse. The gushing emotionalism of many women-writers in our own day shows itself in precisely the same way, though it passes for the most part unnoticed. How many readers of this paper have noticed that the first sentence of it consists of five lines of very bad blank verse?

I set out to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, but the point to which my somewhat desultory remarks have been tending is simply this. Many critics have spoken vaguely of poetry as a thing only arbitrarily associated with verse, of there being such a thing as a prose-poem, of Sir Thomas Browne's work containing more poetry than Alexander Pope's,

and so forth. To speak thus is to neglect a fundamental distinction, a distinction that cannot be lost sight of without disaster. Shelley says, justly, that “nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse.” It is also true, though it is not usually admitted, that nothing can be equally well expressed in verse that is not tedious and supererogatory in prose. By poetic prose I mean prose which shows, whether by its metrical qualities or by any other symptom, that the writer is trying to express in prose what can only be adequately uttered in verse. And in this sense poetic prose is a monstrosity.

Early Australian Verses

It was not until close upon the middle of the century that Australia brought forth a poet in the accepted sense of the term; for the earliest work of Charles Harpur — “the grey fore-father of Australian song” — appeared somewhere in the early forties. Harpur has written nothing memorable, and owes his immortality — if immortality is to be his entirely to his primacy of birth. Hundreds of men have written better verse, and yet been numbered with the democracy of the forgotten; still, it is undeniable that, if we can bring ourselves to read him, we do feel blowing across his pages the breath of something that is more than mere facility in rhyming. He is, undoubtedly, our first Australian poet. But long before his little volume dropped from the Sydney press, there had appeared some verses which the student of our literary annals cannot afford to neglect.

In 1822 the subject set for the Cambridge prize poem was *Australasia*, and it would have been strange if William Charles Wentworth, probably the only native of Australasia then resident at Cambridge, had not competed for the Chancellor's medal. Though the prize was not for him, he was beaten only by a man whose name was to become famous wherever English verse of the lighter order finds a welcome — W. M. Praed. To be beaten in these competitions, moreover, is no disgrace; it is difficult to see by what principle the judges can make their award, where the competitors achieve what strikes the ordinary reader as a dreadful equality of badness. I have looked through a collection of the poems which have won this Cambridge prize, and if the defeated candidates really wrote more feebly, more tamely, more insignificantly than the winners — if there is really a deep beyond the deep — it represents an abyss from which the imagination recoils. But such as it is, Wentworth's unsuccessful poem has probably been more widely read than any prize poem, except those of men who have afterwards become famous poets, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold.

Wentworth's talents lay in other directions than poetry. He was destined to win, in his native land, a splendid name as an orator and a statesman. Serious criticism of his youthful essay in verse is out of the question. It reeks of the era when, to most men, Pope was still the indisputable master of song. Pope's manner, though not the manner of a great poet, was doubtless an admirable instrument in the hands of its

inventor; in the hands of servile imitators it became an unspeakable weariness. Wentworth sings in what we agree to call, in our airy way, the eighteenth-century style. You find in his verse the usual graceful artifices, the elegantly balanced absurdities, the worn “poetic” diction, which Wordsworth and Shelley and Coleridge had already covered with ridicule.

Did not of old th' Imperial Eagle rise,
Unfurl his pinions, and astound the skies?

To the experienced reader that one couplet is enough. He knows exactly what the rest is like. He will not, if he read further, be disappointed; he will find the accustomed “bounding coursers” and “trellis'd bowers.” The “sportive breeze” will rustle, for the millionth time, in the “spacious grove.” Drovers and bushmen, who have since been described with brutal candour by Mr. Henry Lawson and others, will solace themselves with the knowledge that they were once referred to as “peaceful swains” and “amorous shepherds.” The closing lines, the most spirited in the poem, may be quoted; they were once part of the stock-in-trade of every Australian orator: —

And, oh Britannia, should'st thou cease to ride,
Despotic Empress of old Ocean's tide —
Should thy tam'd Lion — spent his former might —
No longer roar, the terror of the fight;
Should e'er arrive that dark, disastrous hour,
When, bow'd by luxury, thou yield'st to power;
When thou, no longer freest of the free,
To some proud victor, bend'st the vanquish'd knee —
May all thy glories in another sphere
Relume, and shine more brightly still than here:
May this, thy last-borne infant, then arise,
To glad thy heart, and greet thy parent eyes;
And Australasia float, with flag unfurl'd,
A new Britannia in another world!

For verses in the Popish vein, it will not be denied that these lines have considerable merit; but their goodness is the goodness of rhetoric, not of poetry.

Lovers of Charles Lamb — best-loved name in modern letters — will feel an interest out of all proportion to its deserving in the earliest volume of verses actually calling themselves Australian — the *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, first privately printed in the colony, and afterwards published in London by way of appendix to a geographical account of New South Wales. For the author is no other than the “B.F.”

of Lamb's delightful correspondence, and the person addressed in that most excellent piece of fooling, the essay on "Distant Correspondents." He is also the author of one of the worst of the many memoirs of Elia. His full style and title is "Barron Field, Esq., F.L.S., late judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and its Dependencies"; or, as he called himself with more brevity — I can scarcely think he meant it for blasphemy — "The Supreme Judge." His volume of poems has the honour of being the only Australian publication ever reviewed by Lamb, whose lukewarm eulogy appeared in the "Examiner" in 1820. After saying something about the author, who had quitted his friends, his family, and his pleasing avocations, "to go and administer tedious justice in inauspicious and unliterary Thiefland," Lamb goes on to say: — "The 'First Fruits' consist of two poems. The first celebrates the plant *epacris grandiflora*; but we are no botanists, and, perhaps, there is too much matter mixed up in it from the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' to please some readers. The thefts are, indeed, so open and palpable, that we almost recur to our first surmise, that the author must be some unfortunate wight, sent on his travels for plagiarisms of a more serious complexion. ...We select for our readers the second poem; and are mistaken if it does not relish of the graceful hyperboles of our elder writers. We can conceive it to have been written by Andrew Marvell, supposing him to have been banished to Botany Bay, as he did, we believe, once meditate a voluntary exile to Bermuda." The poem thus introduced, and quoted in full, is called "The Kangaroo." Few who read it will endorse Lamb's mild panegyric.

Kangaroo! Kangaroo!
Thou spirit of Australia
That redeems from utter failure,
From perfect desolation,
And warrants the creation
Of this fifth part of the earth.

The poet proceeds to liken the marsupial to a sphynx, a mermaid, a centaur, a minotaur, a Pegasus, and a hippogriff.

But what Nature would compile,
Nature knows to reconcile;
She had made the squirrel fragile,
She had made the bounding hart,
But a third, so strong and agile,
Was beyond ev'n Nature's art,
So she joined the former two,
In thee, Kangaroo.. ...
Thy fore-half, it would appear

Had belong'd to 'some small deer,'
Such as liveth in a tree;
By thy hinder, thou should'st be
A large animal of chase,
Bounding o'er the forest's space——

and so on. Execrable as the lines are, the manner of them is, perhaps, rather better, because more natural and spontaneous, than the frigidly artificial manner of Wentworth's heroics. But that Lamb should have spoken of the “graceful hyperbole” of the piece, that he could “conceive it to have been written by Andrew Marvell,” is an amusing instance of the personal bias. Field's other effusion, the *Botany Bay Flowers*, is an equally curious gallop of verses. Both poems reveal an acquaintance with the seventeenth-century lyrists. Lamb himself has adopted a very similar manner in his *Farewell to Tobacco*, but Lamb's quaint doggerel is full of fine strokes of humour, a quality which the Supreme Judge appears to have lacked.

“He was a weak, silly man, and fancied himself a poet born,” says Dr. Lang, who aims at the judge a shaft of his clumsy satire: —

'Tis strange to see a justice turning poet,
And writing doggerel verse; 'tis passing strange,
'Tis wondrous pitiful, Judge Field! I'll show it
From some quotations. You ascend the range
Of Mount Parnassus, Mr. Justice! No, it
Will never do. Down, down! When once the mangle
Of rhyming doth infect a judge's skin,
He'll scratch for ever if he once begin.

“Perhaps,” adds Dr. Lang in a note, “the critique on his Honour's poetry was unnecessarily severe; but it was a good joke at the time.” As to the goodness of the joke, it is possible to hold another opinion. Dr. Lang was an excellent person, and a man of diverse gifts; but to those who respect his memory it is extremely painful to watch him dancing a hob-nailed breakdown.

I am a plain, perhaps rude, man,
Tho' a true Caledonian,

he sings. The word “tho' ” may not be quite necessary, but otherwise the description is eminently just.

Dr. Lang's own first volume of verse was published in Sydney in 1826, under the title of *Aurora Australis*. With the aesthetic side of life Dr. Lang had little sympathy; his temper was ever that of the practical reformer. He believed that some religious verses might, in his own

words, "become instrumental in advancing the interests of pure religion, and promote the practice of virtue throughout the colony." He then gravely sat down to produce the required quantity of religious verses, with the result that might have been expected. He begins, in quite the Miltonic manner, by invoking the "Heavenly Muse," but she does not appear to have taken any notice of him: —

I ask not for the heaps of gold,
The worldling may enjoy;
A little may I humbly hold,
And usefully employ.

The sentiment is admirable; the expression of it can scarce be called inspired. But no man has ever lived who could do all that Dr. Lang tried to do. Minister of the first Presbyterian Church in Sydney, member of the Legislative Council, editor of two newspapers, founder of the first great educational institution in Australia, planner of far-reaching schemes of colonial reform, historian, geographer, ethnologist, ecclesiastic, was there any enterprise too vast for his fiery energy, or could any opposition make a stand against his indomitable will? When Australia gets, at last, an honest and impartial historian, Dr. Lang's figure will be seen towering head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries. But it will not be as a man of letters that his memory will survive. His versatility was against him. It was said of him by an admiring contemporary that he "could write a hymn-book or a comic-song book with equal facility." And, one might add, with equal success. His comic verses have the solemnity of hymns. As for his hymns, no doubt he thought himself perfectly sincere when he wrote them; but was he? They are full of the stock phrases indicative of disgust with life, contempt for the world, longing for death, and so on. Only to one in a hundred have such expressions any reality: and in the mouth of a man endowed with such exuberant vitality, such immense and indefatigable energy, they have an air of fluent insincerity. It is but just to remember, however, that this collection, like most of Dr. Lang's work, was written at sea, in the course of one of his numerous voyages between England and Australia. "Truly," he apostrophises himself, perhaps in the Bay of Biscay,

Truly, thou might'st relinquish well
This fleeting world without a groan.

In similar circumstances most of us have entertained a similar sentiment.

Marcus Clarke

At present we have to depend for our knowledge of Clarke's history mainly on the monograph of Mr. Henry Gyles Turner; but, kindly and sane and trustworthy as that monograph is, it was assuredly intended only to stop the gap till a full and authoritative biography should appear. For the rest, the memory of the real Clarke is covered over by an ever-deepening drift of reminiscence and anecdote and personal impression, bearing witness, some of them, to the truth of Carlyle's observation, that to a certain kind of eye few things are wonderful that are not distant. It is not for me to rake among these anecdotes, with their ancient and fish-like smell, so discouraging to the inquirer. It is abundantly clear that Clarke's doings were not at all times such as we can reasonably be asked to admire. It is clear that he did not invariably act wisely, and that he spoke at times even less wisely than he acted. What then? Whose biography can afford to dispense with some reticence in the writing and some charity in the reading? Not yours nor mine, I fear. "His faults," says a recent critic, writing of Henry Fielding, "were those which spring from too easy a temper and too mercurial a disposition." That, after all, is the worst that will be said of Clarke, I believe, when the verdict of posterity comes to be uttered.

By most people in Europe and America, and by many in Australia, Clarke is thought of as *homo unius libri* — he is known by *His Natural Life*, and by nothing else that he did. But, as a matter of fact, he did many other things. Beside me as I write lie ten volumes, each with his name on its title page; and my collection is by no means complete. The notion of a man who could write one work of arresting force and beauty and nothing else worth reading — who could pour the whole strength of his genius into one magnificent *tour de force* and "live a fool the rest of his dull life" — is an engaging paradox. There have been such men: Christopher Smart lives by one grand ode, Blanco White is remembered for a single lovely sonnet. But in Clarke we have no such startling exception. A born man of letters, he wrote enormously; and being endowed with brains and a temperament, he touched hardly anything that he did not vivify. Had the great novel never been written, he would still be a conspicuous figure in the literature of Australia.

I am not attempting to argue that the popular estimate is all wrong, and that the great novel is not, after all, his masterpiece. It is; alike in

conception and execution, it puts the rest of his work in the shade. It is his one work which can fitly be called great; one wonders, indeed, whether the casual reader understands how great it is. One hears it praised as “powerful” by people whose conception of power begins and ends with command of melodramatic effect. There are, it is true, touches of melodrama in the book. The original prologue was, as Mr. A. B. Paterson notes, “a grotesquely close imitation of Dickens”; the prologue as it now stands is an imitation hardly less grotesque. Lord Bellasis and Sir Richard Devine are of the stage, stagey. Sarah Purfoy is pure melodrama; what she and her Adelphi love affairs have to make in the matter one does not try to understand. The Rev. Mr. North is a vague and shadowy reminiscence of Charles Reade's heroic clergyman. The Rev. Mr. Meekin is an admirable ass, but his place, one feels, is in the asinine gallery of Labiche; here, in this sombre record, he strikes a false note — the farcical. The portrait of Gabbet, on the other hand, is a masterpiece of sheer animal horror; and yet, good as he is, I could wish him away, for he distracts our attention from the central figures and the central story.

But when all deductions have been made, how penetrating, in its tragic intensity, that central story is! It has been objected that the characterisation is weak. This refers, I suppose, to Rufus Dawes; and Rufus Dawes is certainly not drawn with strongly-marked individual traits; you do not meet people in the street who remind you of Rufus Dawes, as you meet people who remind you of Captain Costigan. But the objection is nothing to the purpose; tragedy, as Aristotle saw, can afford to do without character. As you watch from the shore the movements of the one man still clinging to the wreck, you do not feel that you would be more interested if you could discern the colour of his hair. When a woman appears, with agonising gestures, at an upper window of a burning house you are not indifferent to her fate because you do not know whether she reads Ibsen. At such tragic moments the accidents of existence go for nothing; you see a human being, and your sympathies are aroused. So the protagonist of a great tragedy need by no means be drawn with features that distinguish him from the rest of his species; if he be recognisably human, it is enough. This is, I think, of immense importance in judging such a book as *His Natural Life*; the interest in Dawes is aroused, not by the drawing of his character, but by the drawing of his situation; and that interest would not be a whit more poignant if we knew him, complete in every inflection of voice and trick of gesture, as we know a character of Meredith's. The picture of this mere human soul, in the vicissitudes of his struggle with the system — the system whose shadow hangs over the story as the shadow of necessity hangs over a tragedy of Æschylus — has a grandeur of outline that raises its maker almost to a level with Hugo — the Hugo of *Les*

Miserables. In one point he compares favourably, indeed, with Hugo; with that author's leaning for the grandiose he has no sympathy; his art is everywhere restrained. And in his method of handling his material — in what the French call *documentation*, in the patient, laborious working-up of his historical evidence — he is the co-mate not of Hugo, but of Flaubert and Zola, and of the great master of all who employ this method, Defoe. Not Defoe himself, collecting his materials for the *Journal of the Plague Year*, worked more diligently or to better purpose than Clarke with his records of the convict system. The idea of such a book being written by a careless Bohemian, writing as the mood took him from day to day, is merely preposterous. The book was written by a great and serious artist in love with his art, patient, sedulous, and industrious in pursuit of it. His reward is a book that lives. It is not a story with a moral “thrown externally over it,” in Stevenson's phrase, “like a carpet over a railing.” It is not a “novel with a purpose,” which becomes valueless when its purpose is accomplished. The transportation system has passed, but man's inhumanity to man remains, and Clarke's great sermon is still of universal validity.

None of his other works, assuredly, could have given him his European fame; but his minor work as a whole forms an important adminicle of his fame. His good writing is, as I have said, far more voluminous than the general public supposes; nevertheless, when you think of his industry and his versatility, you are surprised at the smallness of the amount. It is true that he died young, but it is also true that, in a sense, he was born old. Look at his very first efforts — the first, at all events, to be collected in book form — the *Peripatetic Philosopher*. You seem to be listening to an ancient sage who sees from the height of his sixty years all the futility of life and all the depravity of man; whereas, in fact, you are listening to a youth of twenty-one. The cynical cocksureness of precocious worldly wisdom was never more brilliantly or more vivaciously expressed. “Brilliant” is a word we do not use in speaking of the greatest names in literature; it is hard to speak of Marcus Clarke without using it again and again. In the *Peripatetic Philosopher*, he has already fashioned for himself a style of singular lightness, ease, and flexibility — a style which many a veteran might have envied him. From beginning to end it was the same; whatever else he might be, he could never be dull. His almost Gallic vivacity gives value to his work as a whole, for all its shortcomings. Take, for instance, his notorious pamphlet, *Civilisation Without Delusion*. It is impossible to take it seriously; no man ever entered the field of theological controversy with an equipment so ridiculous. He has had time, it would seem, neither to read nor to think about the subject at all; and yet, armed with a few shreds of irrelevant information and half-a-dozen ancient arguments, he steps out jauntily to demolish Christianity. Well, his pamphlet can be read from start to finish

without fatigue. That is all that can be said for it; but in the circumstances it is a great tribute to his literary art that we can say so much.

Of all his pamphlets, *The Future Australian Race* is most agreeable reading. In this little *jeu d'esprit* he set himself the task of out-Buckling Buckle in the determination of racial characteristics by environment. The little book has been criticised with portentous gravity by persons who do not know a parody when they see one. The humorous intention is, one would think, sufficiently obvious in the closing paragraphs, where we are solemnly informed that the Australasian of a century hence will wear a full beard; that he will be prematurely bald; that his religion will be a form of Presbyterianism; and that his average duration of life will be (if married) 65 years and a decimal. It is, of course, a caricature of the sweeping generalisations of Buckle.

Pretty Dick was pronounced by Oliver Wendell Holmes to be "a very touching story, very well told." But I fear that few will accept it, even on so high authority, as anything but a lamentable failure. It is not merely that, like all Clarke's bush stories, it convicts him of having neither loved nor understood the Australian bush, though in this respect it is bad enough; you must set it beside a story of Mr. Henry Lawson's to see how bad it is. But it follows the tradition begun by Sterne and carried to a fearful length by Dickens, the tradition of a wire-drawn and affected pathos. *Pretty Dick* is of the order of Paul Dombey and Little Nell; and we are no longer amenable to pathos of that order. Where Clarke, in the short story, really succeeds is in the fantastic, the non-natural — not the supernatural. Stevenson (in *Markheim* and *Dr. Jekyll*) and Poe (in *William Wilson*) are the masters of this form of story, in which the conditions of existence are set at naught, in which Destiny stands on its head, in which the universe is not the universe we know. In *Holiday Peak* the world presented is one in which the past can be undone. In *Human Repetends* it is a world in which the past can reproduce itself. These and half-a-dozen similar fantasies represent Clarke, I think, at his best, if taken with the great novel and the witty commentary on society of which a selection is to be found in the *Peripatetic Philosopher*.

Much might be said of the *Old Tales of a Young Country* and *'Twixt Shadow and Shine*, and half-a-dozen works beside; but I have probably said enough, and more than enough, to emphasise the main contention. I have probably spoken too strongly; the general apathy is so complete that a little over-enthusiasm on the part of an individual may be forgiven. Clarke is the one Melbourne man whose work, as pure literature, has a fame that can justly be called European; and yet, in the city where that fame was won, you cannot buy a complete edition of his works — at least, not unless you have time to haunt the secondhand bookstalls, like an indignant ghost, for many months. Worse still, the Melbourne Public

Library, of which he was a paid officer, and in which he spent some of the best years of his life, has nothing like a complete collection of his works on its shelves. Surely it is too obvious for explicit assertion that it is the duty of our National Library to deal with our national literature in such a way that whoever, in future times, wishes to study the beginnings of that literature, may turn to the library with the certainty of finding there all that is worth finding. If there is no publisher sufficiently enterprising to bring out a worthy edition of Clarke's works in their entirety, let us at least be enabled to study them at the library with which his name will always be associated.

A Neglected Poet

The appearance of a selection from the poems of Thomas Edward Brown, in the well-known "Golden Treasury" series — a series regarded with affection by every lover of good literature — may serve as pretext for a few random words of appreciation by an admirer of many years' standing. I need make no apology for adopting the tone of a critic drawing attention to a new writer; strange as that tone may seem to those who know that some of Brown's best work was before the world in time to win the admiration of Robert Browning and of George Eliot. That writing of such rare excellence must ultimately win its way to wide fame, that sooner or later it will be known for what it is — one of the very best things left by the nineteenth century to be prized by the twentieth — no one who knows it well can for a moment doubt; but it has not yet won anything like real popularity. And this, in spite of the unwearied championship of it by men eminent in letters — men like the late W. E. Henley, Mr. Quiller-Couch, and others who came, either as fellow-teachers or as pupils, at Clifton or elsewhere, under the spell of Brown's singularly engaging personality.

Still, he has always had his circle of readers, and this circle has been steadily, if slowly, widening ever since the appearance, in the early seventies, of his first book — I think it was his first — *Betsy Lee: a Fo'c's'le Yarn*. The editor of the new volume of selections remarks, in the course of an admirable introductory note, that "though Brown is not yet so widely known as he probably will be, it is nevertheless certain that he has a growing number of admirers both in England and the colonies." That is true; we may note, in particular, two facts which seem to indicate that after a quarter of a century of neglect this great writer is at last coming to his own. The first fact is this appearance of a part, at least, of his work in an inexpensive form; in the form, moreover, of a popular classic. The second fact is the existence in Melbourne — an outlandish place, remote indeed, as Matthew Arnold would have said, from "the centre" — of a flourishing "Brown Society," which dedicates its collective energy to the study of the Manx poet.

His verse passes easily the first test of poetry; it is his own. It has an unmistakable savour of its own; it is racy of the mind from which it sprang. It is, of course, impossible to describe this savour. It may be that, as Mr. Swinburne says, the test of the highest poetry is that it eludes all

tests. What is certain, at all events, is that the qualities which give individuality to a man's work elude all analysis. I sometimes think the peculiar piquancy of Brown's style may be due, in part, to the fact that he was a primitive child of Nature who took a double first at Oxford; a faun who elected to wear cap and gown. However that may be, the flavour is unmistakable. It is not, of course, to be perceived in the very first line of him that one reads; you must read on, you must get to know him, you must learn, as it were, his language, before you become sensitive to the singular and wayward charm which his crudest fragment possesses for those who are familiar with his work as a whole.

The first, and perhaps the most abiding, impression that one gets from his poetry is an impression of full and exuberant life. Here was a man, you feel, who lived and felt intensely. He did nothing by halves; he enjoyed greatly and he suffered greatly. He has been likened to a volcano, constantly in eruption. He was a schoolmaster most of his life, and the atmosphere of the school-room — never wildly exhilarating — must have been peculiarly depressing to such a nature. In the school-room, doubtless,

His cabin'd, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath.

not once, but continually. But it is hard to imagine any sphere in which he could have quenched his insatiable thirst for life. If, as a great critic has recently assured us, "life, and the will to live eagerly, are the breath and fire of poetry," assuredly the poetry of Brown is blown through and through with that breath and is everywhere ablaze with that fire. This abounding vitality of his finds its clearest and most powerful expression, I think, in the *Fo'c's'le Yarns*, with their astonishing verve and swing. These stories rush along, with a kind of uproarious garrulity, in those loose, untrammelled measures in which his genius always moves most easily.

He was indeed a born storyteller; which makes his unpopularity, in an age which worships fiction, the more inexplicable. He was the master of a pathos as poignant and tender as anything in nineteenth-century literature; and he was the master — or, if you will, the slave — of a humour wellnigh Rabelaisian in its breadth and richness. ("There are nice Rabelaisians," says Brown in one of his letters, "and there are nasty, but the latter are not Rabelaisians.") He had, moreover, the keenest eye for character, and an unerring hand in the presentment thereof. Tom Baynes ("old salt, old rip, old friend!"), Parson Gale, and the Doctor — to have become acquainted with these three excellent Manxmen is to have made three friends for life. In short, as a narrative poet Brown is very nearly in the front rank; quite in the front rank of nineteenth-century

narrative poets.

My one quarrel with the editor of the new volume is that in it Brown the storyteller is very ill-represented. *Mary Quayle* and *Bella Gorry* — each good in its way — are not nearly so interesting as the stories written in the Manx dialect — a dialect, I may remark in passing, which presents no difficulty whatever to the English-speaking reader. To make up for this (perhaps unavoidable) defect, the little volume contains the whole of Brown's published lyrical work; and in his lyrical work two of the qualities I have spoken of — the humour and the pathos — are abundantly in evidence. (Read, for the former, the rollicking *In the Coach* series; for the latter, *Mater Dolorosa*, a little poem not fifty lines long which would alone have sufficed to set its author among the great masters of pity.) Moreover, it is Brown's lyrical work that best reveals to us a quality of which I have not yet spoken — the man's passion for nature, a passion as burning and intense as Wordsworth's own, though he never managed to render it in terms of consummate beauty as Wordsworth did. His love of nature, like Wordsworth's and like Meredith's, is allied with a profound optimism. He was a man in love with life. He had his philosophic side, of course; he had his doubts, and they found frequent and poignant expression in his verse — in the agonised questionings of *Aber Stations* and, for a crowning instance, in the splendid audacities of *Dartmoor*. But his doubts never touched, I think, the central core of his being; at heart he was not a reasoner, but — like all great poets and all great optimists — a mystic. He loved nature, and she rewarded him, as she rewarded Wordsworth, with a gift of unwavering faith and unfathomable tranquillity. It was by and through his reverent passion for nature that he “had the ultimate vision”; and he found that vision surpassingly fair. ...

I have only begun to say what I wanted to say. But perhaps even these few inadequate words may suffice to win a new reader or two for one of the freshest, sanest, and joyfullest of modern poets.

Shakespeare's Nose

Some day — if it has not been done already — an erudite German will present the world with an elaborate and exhaustive treatise, in two octavo volumes, on *Shakespeare's Nose in its Political Aspect*; the subject is, in fact, one far worthier of patient investigation than some others about which Shakespearean critics are inclined to be garrulous. Needless to say, I do not refer to the external feature, as depicted for us in various portraits and busts and statues; so far as one can judge from such untrustworthy evidence, the nose of Shakespeare was not outwardly remarkable, like that of Cyrano or of Slawkenbergius. But regarded on its psychical side, in connection with the part it played in the making of the dramas and the sonnets, it is easily demonstrated to have been the most considerable nose of which history holds any record.

It used to be highly necessary to keep reminding people that Shakespeare is a dramatist, and is not personally responsible for the opinions put into the mouths of his creations. It is undeniably true that he never gives us in so many words his opinion on any subject whatsoever. You cannot take an aphorism from this character and an epigram from that, and say — so Shakespeare thought; but only — so Hamlet, or so Portia, or so Iago thought. The dramatist does not reflect upon life; he reflects it. It is not his business to judge men and women, but to represent them. It used to be necessary, I say, to insist on this, because people used to be given to citing, for Shakespeare's own, opinions which he himself would very probably have repudiated with warmth. Nowadays, however, it is quite needless to dwell upon that undeniable truth, because everyone accepts it, and because most people now rush to the opposite extreme and assert with vehemence that of “Shakespeare the man” we know, and can know, nothing at all. What needs now rather to be insisted on, so it seems to me, is that Shakespeare is the man whom we can know with a fuller intimacy of knowledge than any other alive or dead. To Wordsworth he seemed to have “unlocked his heart” in the sonnets alone; but the sonnets (as Mr. Sidney Lee has shown) are very probably more dramatic than the plays. He has unlocked his heart in his dramas, because in drama he is the supreme artist, and because art is neither more nor less than self-revelation.

It is true, of course, that of what are commonly called “the facts of his life” we know very little: indeed, I doubt whether many people realise

how little we do know. We do not know, for instance, whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant; we do not know whether his marriage was a happy one; we do not know whether the story of the sonnets represents a real tragedy in his life; we know next to nothing of his career in London: we know next to nothing of how the public regarded him: of the externals of his existence we know hardly anything. A few confident statements we hear made from time to time, but they almost all turn out on examination to be sheer guesswork. But to say that therefore we know nothing about "Shakespeare the man" is to assert that the real life of a man consists in the externals and accidents of existence. What distinguishes a good biography from a bad one is, not fullness and accuracy in the recording of events, but clearness and convincingness in the portraiture of the essential man. If this be so, then Shakespeare's biography is written in his six-and-thirty plays as fully as anyone ought to desire. If we have read the plays with understanding, we know the man. It does not follow that we can describe him in words, even to ourselves. The more intimately you know your friend, the more hopelessly inadequate does all effort at description seem.

To be a little more particular and precise: Walter Bagehot, after quoting the celebrated description of the hunt, from *Venus and Adonis*, remarks that "it is absurd to say we know nothing about the man who wrote that; we know that he had been after a hare." True; there are some quite external facts which may be fairly inferred from his writings, facts which no amount of burrowing in the archives at Stratford would ever have laid bare to us. But I am thinking rather of another class of facts — facts of the inner life. We know that the man who wrote *Romeo and Juliet* had been in love. We know that the creator of *Mamillius* had watched children with a friendly and understanding eye. It is not fair to infer from Prospero's great speech that Shakespeare had a definite idealistic philosophy of his own, but we know that the man who wrote that speech had the cosmic eye and could look at the universe as a philosopher looks at it. And, to come to the point, the man who could put the whole agony of the guilty Claudius into the cry that his offence was rank and smelled to heaven — the man who could make Lady Macbeth declare in a lamentable voice that all the perfumes of Arabia could never sweeten that little hand — the man who bestrewed his writings with metaphors drawn from the same source — it is absurd to say that we can know nothing about him. We know that he had a nose.

That is obvious. What is perhaps less generally noted is the close connection between Shakespeare's nose and his political sentiments. We know, of course, what those sentiments were. We do not know what he may have thought of any particular statesman or of any particular measure; but we do know that he was by temperament and conviction a conservative. This unquestionable fact may be displeasing to the stern

unbending liberal; but then any statement about Shakespeare's views, must be displeasing to somebody. One would gladly, if it were possible, to please one's personal friends, prove that Shakespeare was a vegetarian, an Esoteric Buddhist, a passive resister, a Christian Scientist, a materialist, a Primitive Methodist, a neurotic, a golf maniac, and Heaven knows what beside. We do not know, indeed, what Shakespeare might have been had he lived in our times; possibly a red revolutionary; but in his own time and place he was a Tory of the Tories. He was a Royalist, as anyone connected with the stage could at that time hardly fail to be, for the people who constituted the opposition were the very people who hated actors as children of the devil and the theatre as the ante-chamber of hell. But he was more than a Royalist, he was a hero-worshipper after Carlyle's own heart. He believed in personal forces; he had a fiercely aristocratic scorn for the mob — "this bisson multitude." He seldom neglects an opportunity of making the commonalty ridiculous. Whenever he introduces a first, second, and third citizen in colloquy, yot behold a spectacle of laughable unreason and incredible fickleness. "Shakespeare's contempt for the mob," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "may be good-humoured, but it is surely unequivocal." In *Julius Caesar*, in *Coriolanus*, and in the second part of *King Henry VI*. he makes it quite plain that he has no sympathy with the aspirations of democracy.

Dr. Brandes — that brooding Dane — is the only critic I know of who has drawn attention to the fact that Shakespeare's political views are based upon his sense of smell. It is very distressing, of course, if we judge by the standards of our own enlightened age, when everyone bases his politics on the loftiest considerations of reason and justice and other highly abstract and impersonal principles. But so it is; to Shakespeare the mob is "the mutable, rank-scented many," and whenever he approaches politics we can feel that "his nose is in great indignation." If anyone supposes that I am coining paradox for the fun of the thing, let him turn to the three plays above-named. There is no reason to believe that the acerbity of *Coriolanus* was shared by Shakespeare; but there is no mistaking the fact that the man who wrote the speeches of *Coriolanus* was writing at a time when the bath was not yet a democratic institution. It were easy to prove this by quoting a hundred unsavoury similes: it seems preferable to refer the sceptic to the plays themselves.

Social Service

The Service of the State, by J. H. Muirhead, professor of philosophy in the University of Birmingham, consists of four lectures on the political philosophy of T. H. Green. "Only a great man," according to Hegel's well-known saying "condemns the world to the task of explaining him"; and it more and more begins to appear that Green was a great man. Henry Sidgwick has assailed him in a course of lectures; D. G. Ritchie has written several books which are mainly expositions of his political system; Mr. Fairbrother has given us, in a useful little volume, a summary of his philosophy as a whole; Professor MacCunn included him in *Six Radical Thinkers* a year or two ago; and now comes Dr. Muirhead, devoting himself, as Ritchie did, mainly to the political aspects of Green's teaching. In Oxford, during his lifetime, Green appears to have exercised a profound influence on a select circle; by the labours of his disciples the sphere of that influence is now being very greatly widened; so that before long even the man in the street may be expected to know who T. H. Green was, and what particular ways of thinking his name stands for.

It seems curious that England, which at various periods has been regarded by other nations as the very embodiment of political genius, should have contributed so little to the world's stock of political ideas. She has had great politicians, and great philosophers; but her politicians have seldom been philosophers, and her philosophers have not often been politicians. In fact, we have got into the habit of regarding politics as a preserve for the "practical" man, from which the "mere theorist" must be sternly excluded. And this divorce of theory from practice has doubtless had its own lamentable results in our history. Of course there is no such thing as "mere theory;" a theory that will not stand the strain of practice is merely a bad theory. And the "practical" man who despises theory is merely a man who does things without knowing why or how he does them; and nowadays the world is growing a little weary of doing things without knowing why; we are beginning to see the necessity, even in politics, of going back to first principles. And so it is timely that we should be reminded of Green, a man in whom the speculative and the practical were combined in a remarkable degree; a man who, as Ritchie tells us, "went straight from the declaration of the poll, when he was elected a town councillor, to lecture on the 'Critique of Pure Reason,' "

and was robbed of his sleep by thinking of the Eastern Question. It was characteristic of him that when he began to think about politics, he found it necessary to go back to ethics; and that he could not construct a satisfactory system of ethics till he had asked and answered, to his own satisfaction, the very ultimate questions, the questions of metaphysics.

To put the matter more simply: when you are confronted by a definite political question, you always find that you cannot answer it till you have found the answer to a wider question — What is the chief end of politics? (That is political philosophy.) But this question drives you back to a still wider one — What is the chief end of man? (That is ethics.) And this in its turn drives you back to the ultimate question — What is man? (That is metaphysics.)

So Aristotle, having discussed in the *Ethics* the nature of the good life, passes naturally on to *Politics*, because he considers that “the good life can only be fully realised by the citizen of the good state.” In like manner Green's ethical work finds its completion in his political work; and those who have read his *Prolegomena to Ethics* should go on to his *Principles of Political Obligation*.

To the consideration of the ethical and metaphysical basis of Green's philosophy of politics, Dr. Muirhead devotes the first two of his four lectures. Fifty pages of large type suffice only for an exposition — leaving no room for a discussion — of Green's leading principles. These principles need not concern us here. His main conclusion — we can leave on one side the subtle argumentation by which he reached it — is that the supreme good of man is, not “pleasure” nor “happiness,” but “self-realisation,” the realisation of personality. This means that the supreme good is a common good; for, as Dr. Muirhead puts it, “it is just in so far as a man is able to set aside private ends and identify himself with the larger purposes of society that his life becomes rounded into the unity in which personality, in the full sense of the word, consists.” To put it otherwise, a man can attain his supreme good only as the citizen of a state; and the whole function of the state is to remove the obstacles which hinder a man from realising himself. Men can realise themselves only by attaining a good which is common to themselves and other men. Hence comes Green's theory — a most interesting and far-reaching theory — of the relations of Man and State.

Briefly, I think it may be said that Green has done more than any other modern thinker to show the falsehood of the old antithesis of Individual and State. He has taught, more powerfully than any other teacher, that either of the two, considered apart from the other, is a mere abstraction. The common assumption was — and perhaps still is — that man and state are two “mighty curiosities,” standing over against one another in irreconcilable antagonism. The man in the street, if he thinks at all on this subject, will still probably tell you, quoting Tom Paine, that “Society

is the outcome of our needs, Government of our wickedness.” State restraint, according to this assumption, represents encroachment on the rights of the individual — necessary encroachment it may be, but certainly encroachment. Matthew Arnold, in a brilliant passage of *Culture and Anarchy*, has explained how this idea grew up and became strong. At one time it was necessary that all friends of progress and reform should unite in resisting Government tyranny; in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Liberalism meant, mainly, the defence of personal liberties against the usurpations of an hereditary ruling class. It is most curious and interesting to see how this idea turned round upon itself, and became, in Herbert Spencer, reactionary; this idea of personal liberty to be guarded against State interference, from being the watchword of advanced liberalism, became the watchword of ultra-conservatism; and Factory Acts and Education Acts were condemned as somehow opposed to the laws of biology. Spencer's *The Man versus the State* is the great, the classical expression of this reactionary individualism.

To Green, on the other hand, the State exists as a means of assuring to individuals a chance of exercising their faculty of self-development; and that self-development implies, in its turn, the well-being of a community. Spencer sets up his ideal of “personal freedom” in everlasting opposition to the State; but Green would have agreed with Hegel, that the very object of the State is freedom. Spencer appears to have thought of freedom as something of which there was a fixed amount available; if the State took some of it, there was so much less left for the individual. Whereas Green showed that personal freedom increased with wisely-directed State action. A thousand examples speak in favour of Green's view; perhaps the most obvious is State education. Compulsory education! — it is certainly an “encroachment on personal freedom;” but to millions of people it has meant an enormous increase of personal freedom, a setting free from the direst compulsion of all — the compulsion of ignorance. State interference may, of course, be an evil and tyrannical interference with personal liberty; but it may be, and ought to be, an interference with something which interferes with personal liberty. Green's position is, that to object to any reform, however drastic, that it is an interference with individual freedom, “is to ignore the essential condition under which alone every particular liberty can rightly be allowed to the individual — the condition that the allowance of it is not an impediment to social good.”

As an Education Bill is at this moment* occupying the attention of our legislators, it may not be amiss to quote another of Green's sentences — an oft-quoted and characteristic sentence. The following words would be of no special significance if they were not the words of a man who never spoke except weightily and soberly; for Green was neither a

sentimentalist nor a stump-orator. Speaking of the old-fashioned phrase, "The education of a gentleman," he said — "I confess to hoping for a time when the phrase will have lost its meaning, because the sort of education which alone makes the gentleman in any true sense will be within the reach of all. As it was the aspiration of Moses that all the Lord's people should be prophets, so with all seriousness and reverence we may hope and pray for a condition of English society in which all honest citizens will recognise themselves, and be recognised by each other, as gentlemen."

Was Green a socialist? He nowhere speaks explicitly on this subject: we have to find out, from the general bearing of his philosophy, what his attitude towards this burning question would most probably have been. Dr. Muirhead offers us two or three suggestive pages on the point. Very briefly the matter may, I think, be put somewhat as follows: — The word socialism has, as everyone knows, several hundreds of different meanings; but it has two principal meanings, and two only. It may stand for a particular system of property-holding; that is economic socialism. And it may stand for the conviction that man's moral being lies in his social being; that is moral socialism. Professor Bosanquet (in the tenth chapter of his *Civilisation of Christendom*) maintains that moral socialism is the exact antithesis of economic socialism; whether that be so or not, they are at any rate quite distinct, and ought not to be confused with one another, as they so often are. It would be easy enough to show from his writings that Green would have abhorred economic socialism; equally easy to show that moral socialism was of the very essence of his system.

*1909.

A New Life of Swift

Miss Sophie Shilleto Smith, the writer of the latest biography of Dean Swift, makes a gallant attempt to force her way into a region forbidden to her sex. Biography, account for the fact how we may, is not one of the departments of literature in which women achieve distinction. There has never been a female Boswell, nor even a female Lockhart. Miss Smith's failure — for a failure, on the whole, her book unquestionably is — is perhaps partly due to the fact that she has chosen one of the very worst subjects in the world for a woman's pen to touch; if a man ever lived whose biography could be worthily written by a woman, assuredly that man was not Swift. For this reason, among others: that women are always somewhat disconcerted by irony; they can never read, with genuine understanding and unaffected relish, a writer who habitually employs the ironic method. Some people hold that, even among men, the taste for that kind of writing is shared by few; it is certain, at least, that *Jonathan Wild* — that magnificent masterpiece of irony — is the least popular of Fielding's novels; and that Jonathan Swift — the world's supreme master of the ironic — is among the least popular of our great classics. However that may be, his admirers, one feels sure, are exclusively of his own sex; no woman ever reads him with real enjoyment. Miss Smith has read him, of course, conscientiously; but, or one is greatly mistaken, she has read him without relish, and therefore without understanding. The result of her misunderstanding is, not that she gives us a false impression of the man, but that she gives us no impression at all. The great Dean stalks through her pages, not as a recognisable creature of flesh and blood, but as a huge formless phantom. She has painted his portrait in shadows against a background of mist.

This, as I have said, was only what was to be expected when a woman sat down to essay the biography of such a man as Swift. But we can scarcely hold the fact of her sex responsible for all the defects of Miss Smith's volume. For instance, a woman can read proof-sheets, I suppose, as well as a man can, and is not compelled to let a book go forth to the world full of irritating misprints. A woman is not exempted from the rules of punctuation, and all our chivalrous sentiments will not overcome our instinctive feeling that, when a subject is mentioned, a predicate ought to be found somewhere in the neighbourhood. Even a woman need

not be so appallingly careless as to quote Thackeray's description of Sir William Temple as "a contemporary criticism." Women, as everyone knows, tend to be shaky in their handling of pronouns; but Miss Smith's negligence in this matter passes the bounds of the allowable. What, for example, is one to make of this sentence? — "Though he admired St. John's brilliance, the fact of his superior genius was sufficient to deter Swift from the close friendship with him which he maintained with Harley." This statement has three possible meanings — that St. John's genius was superior to Swift's; that St. John's genius was superior to Harley's; or that Swift's genius was superior to St. John's. Besides being fond of ambiguity, Miss Smith has a remarkable turn for sheer nonsense. "In Swift's friendship with Stella, perhaps, we find the chief reason for that world-wide fame which he has attained." Bolingbroke had a "mental and moral genius far above the rest of his time." "It is impossible to separate the two elements of Swift's genius, verse or satire." "In Swift's work, imagination is lacking." A person capable of making any one of these assertions is not a person whom one can manage to take seriously.

It is a thousand pities; for there was, and is, ample room for a good book about Swift, a book which should set him right with the world. "Perhaps," says Miss Smith, "more untruth has been circulated about Swift than about any other character in history." The statement is rather strong; but in literary history, at any rate, it is not easy to point to a man whose character has been more generally or more grossly misunderstood. One point in his character must always be greatly dark; the whole tragic business of Stella and Vanessa remains a riddle, which who will may attempt to solve. Was Swift married to Stella? We do not know; even Vanessa herself did not know — she only suspected. It is highly improbable that any decisive evidence, for or against the marriage, will ever come to light now; and it is no great matter; for even if we knew for certain that Swift and Stella were, or were not, married, the mystery of Swift's love affairs would still remain impenetrable. But at every other point his life is unusually open to our inspection; few men of letters have lived more continuously in the full blaze of publicity: the materials for his biography are ample. His writings, moreover, are singularly free of ambiguity; he was in the habit of saying what he thought, and of saying it in a style which has never been matched for lucidity. Yet he is misunderstood, and grossly misunderstood.

The misunderstanding is largely due to the efforts of two men, both brilliant perverters of the truth — Macaulay and Thackeray. Johnson showed them the way; he had an invincible prejudice against Swift; but as no one now reads Johnson, we cannot hold him responsible for the world's failure to understand. Macaulay's dazzling rhetoric still exerts an influence; and to Macaulay Swift was anathema for political reasons. It was not merely that Swift was a Tory, though that in itself was enough to

prove him incapable of writing a page of decent prose, of constructing a line of poetry which would scan, or of acting without an entirely dishonourable motive. But Swift was something worse than an ordinary Tory: he was a Tory who had once been a Whig. To desert that party which has a monopoly of intelligence and honesty argues a black heart. Swift, says Macaulay, "sacrificed honour and consistency to revenge;" he was the arch-renegade, and, like all renegades, "found a peculiar pleasure in attacking old friends." Prudent readers always distrust Macaulay when he grows oratorical, and seek to examine the facts for themselves. The facts, in this case, are — that Swift's desertion of the Whigs was entirely honourable to him; that, in an age of political corruption unparalleled even by the municipal politics of America to-day, he kept his hands clean; that he never sacrificed a principle; and that, during the years when the Tory Ministry thought its very existence dependent on his support, and when he was, accordingly, the most powerful person in England, he never touched a penny of the Government's money, nor used his personal influence with the Ministers except on behalf of others — and those others (as Macaulay must surely have known) in many cases Whigs; a member of the Ministry complained that Swift never came to them "without a Whig in his sleeve." Looking carefully at the history of the Age of Anne — and a sufficiently sorry and sordid history it is! — one sees that Swift is almost the only public man whose record is clean.

Miss Smith, unsatisfactory as her book is, does not, at any rate, fail in admiration. She champions Swift through thick and thin; even his most obvious imperfections are invisible to her. For instance, Canon Ainger says that Swift "had an extreme and disagreeable love of the coarse and the offensive." Miss Smith declares that this is emphatically untrue. She says that if a man's habit of mind is coarse, it is sure to come out in his familiar letters and that, in those familiar letters, which we know collectively as "The Journal to Stella," there is not a trace of coarseness. The obvious reply is that those letters were written to a woman; Swift had a high ideal, very uncommon in that era, of womanly delicacy. Most of the accusations hurled at Swift are false, but I am afraid this of Ainger's is true. Swift does, undoubtedly, reveal in his writings a morbid love of dwelling on the physically nauseous. As Leslie Stephen has pointed out, this habit grew upon him in later life, and may in fact be regarded as one of the symptoms of his mental decay. The public is not so squeamish as it was fifty years ago; but there are pages of Swift which we are still unable to read without sickening at them. Sicken at them as we may, however, we get no harm from them; for in almost everything he wrote there is a fire of passion that burns away all impurities. Careless readers, judging him by his restrained manner and his sardonic smile, have called him cold-hearted. Never was a greater ineptitude. In an era of

cool formalism, he was the one fierily impassioned fighter for truth and justice; and it was his passion that drove him mad in the end. We are told, in medical slang, that he suffered from labyrinthine vertigo, and that this was responsible for his insanity. One prefers his own phrase: it was *saeva indignatio* that maddened him. And that his indignation was always indignation against baseness and hypocrisy and oppression — this, with many other things, will become clear when an adequate biography of this great and gallant Englishman is written.

Damien and Stevenson

In the strict sense, Miss May Quinlan's *Damien of Molokai* is an unnecessary little book; for the plain heroic tale of Father Damien's life and martyrdom has already been told, not once but many times; and all that it concerns us to know about this simple-minded and true-hearted peasant priest has been accessible to the world for some years. An unnecessary book; nevertheless, a book to be received with gratitude, and that for two reasons. First, because most of us lead rather a tame, barnyard sort of life; seldom attempting anything much more adventurous than a bridge-party. It is not possible for many of us to obey Nietzsche's precept, and "live dangerously" — how can anyone live dangerously who lives in a suburban villa? We, the heirs of all the ages, with our timid virtues and our squalid vices, with our paltry aims and our still paltrier achievements — by what means are we to be saved from boring one another to death? We are saved by the fact that we do, every now and then, get glimpses of a larger world, a world more fit to be the habitation of the human spirit; that every now and then there blows into our stifling suburban life a bracing breath from the outer seas, from the region of gallant endeavour and high achievement. Glory and loveliness have not wholly passed away from the actions of men with the progress of civilisation; and we need to be constantly reminded of the fact. The suburban villa needs to be reminded of the lazaretto of Molokai — a place not to be thought on save with horror and exultation. When Damien stepped on board the cattle-boat and sailed away to the Isle of Despair, leaving all sweet and pleasant things behind him, embracing a life of strenuous and loathsome labour, with a leper's grave for the inevitable end of it, he showed, once for all, that to speak of the heroic age as of a time long past over and done with is to speak falsely. Detraction has done its worst; fulsome panegyric has done its worst; but nothing has availed to mar the simple splendour of Damien's story. It is a story which bears re-telling.

That is one reason why we may welcome Miss Quinlan's book; the other is, that she has obtained permission to reprint, at the end of the volume, Robert Louis Stevenson's famous *Open Letter to the Reverend Dr. Hyde, of Honolulu*. This document has long been out of print as a separate publication, and has been accessible only to the fortunate few who can afford to possess the sumptuous "Edinburgh Edition" of

Stevenson's works. It was first printed in Sydney: afterwards it appeared in the columns of the *Scots Observer*, and was finally published in England as a pamphlet. It deserves to be read, not merely as a triumphant vindication of Damien's fame, but as one of the most masterly pieces of invective in the language. If Stevenson had written nothing else, this letter to Dr. Hyde would have sufficed to place him with the greatest masters of English prose.

Need we recall the circumstances which led to its being written? Damien died in April, 1889; and, in almost every civilised country, men of all creeds and of all classes had taken hands in doing honour to his memory. King Edward VII. (then Prince of Wales) had addressed a great public meeting in London, advocating the building of a fit monument in Molokai and the foundation of a Damien Institute (for the study of leprosy) in England. The Rev. Dr. Hyde, of Honolulu, however, had no admiration for Damien, and thought the value of his work had been over-rated. The enthusiasm of the public filled him with disgust, and he wrote a letter, giving what he called "the simple truth" about Damien, to a brother Presbyterian in Sydney, the Rev. H. B. Gage; this letter Mr. Gage saw fit to publish in a religious paper, the *Sydney Presbyterian*; and it met the eye of Stevenson, then on a visit to Sydney. Now Stevenson had lately visited Molokai; he had lived for a week on the island where Damien. "crowned with glories and horrors, toiled and rotted in that pigsty of his under the cliff of Kalawao." As his boat drew near the landing-place, he had "seen the stairs crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood;" he had sojourned "in the midst of such a population as only now and then surrounds us in the horror of a nightmare." He had visited the hospital, and seen "the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognisable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering." Readers of Stevenson's collected letters will remember his descriptions of the place — descriptions as vivid and as horrible as Tolstoy's account of the hospital at Sebastopol. "A pitiful place to visit and a hell to dwell in," he called it; and if it was this when he saw it, what must it have been, he reflected, when Damien first set foot in it, twenty years earlier? He spoke with official persons, and doctors, and nursing sisters, people who had known Damien long and intimately, and who were by no means blind to the man's weaknesses; and his conclusion was that Damien was a saint and a hero. "His imperfections are the traits of his race, by which we know him for our fellow; his martyrdom and his example nothing can lessen or annul; and only a person here on the spot can properly appreciate their greatness." So wrote Stevenson in his diary.

It was, therefore, with disgust and anger that he read Dr. Hyde's letter, which scoffed at Damien's services to the lepers, jeered at him for "a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted," and (worst of all) revived

against his memory some ugly slanders. It was in a white heat of indignation that Stevenson sat down to reply to Dr. Hyde; righteous wrath made him utterly merciless. There is no Arnoldian urbanity about this attack. "I conceive you," he informs his victim, "as a man quite beyond and below the reticences of civility; with what measure you mete, with that shall it be measured you; with you, at least, I rejoice to feel the button off the foil and to plunge home." Mr. Balfour tells us, in his biography, that Stevenson knew he was writing a libel, and felt sure Dr. Hyde would bring an action against him. This consideration certainly did not mitigate the severity of his denunciation.

As I read this famous document over again, I find myself thinking not so much of Damien's fame as of Dr. Hyde's feelings. How can he have taken it? I think I can dimly understand the feelings of Salmasius when he read Milton's account of him and of "that barking she-wolf," his wife. With an effort I can fancy how Cibber felt when he found himself the hero of the "Dunciad." But my imagination staggers and fails hopelessly when I try to realise the feelings of this well-meaning Presbyterian minister when, coming down to breakfast in his manse at Honolulu, he found Stevenson's "Open Letter" among his correspondence. What, after all, had he done to deserve this punishment? He had failed to appreciate the greatness of a contemporary; we all fail in the same way. He had written a somewhat spiteful letter; which of us does not write spiteful letters? He had repeated a slanderous story about a man whom he disliked; alas! we all do it. Dr. Hyde was the victim of bad luck. Most of us escape the satirist, not because we are not fitting objects of satire, but because satirists are rare. We do and say petty and spiteful things, but there is no Stevenson at hand to set the seal of immortality on our infamy.

Yet, though we, as his fellow criminals, may feel some pity for the victim of this tremendous onslaught, we are bound to admit that the castigation was just. When one of the heroes and exemplars of mankind has finished his service, and gone to his rest, and we, who have witnessed his labours, can find nothing to say of him save that his clothes were ill-fitting, or that his manners lacked refinement, we deserve the worst that a Stevenson — or even a Swift — can say of us. Dr. Hyde was not wrong because he could see Damien's weaknesses, which were patent to all who knew him; he was wrong because he could see nothing else. Damien was coarse, dirty, headstrong, bigoted, and the rest of it; but his faults — such as they were — should have been as nothing in the eyes of one who knew what he had done.

That note applies
For sermons cosmopolitan.

We all fail in appreciation, especially of those who are close to us; allowing their small defects, their weaknesses, and their eccentricities, to blind us to what is noble and generous in them. And, that I may drive home this little sermon to myself, to none does this apply more forcibly than to those who write about books. The critic's main business, after all, is appreciation. How often does he write as if his main business were to spy upon an author's weakness; and how often does he dismiss a book for some small mannerism or affectation without a good word for what is great and genuine in it!

From a Bookman's Diary

“London Streets”

London Streets, by Arthur H. Adams, more than fulfils the promise of its author's early work. Henceforth he must rank, for me at least, as one of the three living Australian poets whose writings will endure. (Oxen and wain-ropes will not drag from me the names of the other two!) I do not mean that any one of the poems in this little book is definitely the best thing Mr. Adams has ever written; in *Maoriland* there were some pieces fresher, more spontaneous, more genuinely lyrical, than anything to be found here. But, looking at each book as a whole, it is indisputable that the Mr. Adams of *London Streets* carries heavier metal than the Mr. Adams of *Maoriland*. In his second volume of verse, *The Nasarene*, there were passages of real beauty; but, taken as a whole, it was the work of a man who had not yet learned exactly where his proper talents lay. In the present volume he has plainly acquired that invaluable piece of knowledge. He no longer flings forth carols in the first fine careless rapture; he is now the conscious artist, the sedulous artificer of jewelled verse. He is aware of his limitations; he knows precisely what is possible for him to say, and he sets himself to say it in the best possible manner. The result is that, whereas he has offered us in the past more or less interesting and more or less successful experiments, he now gives us a finished achievement.

I trust this is clear. I could make it clearer by taking Mr. Bernard O'Dowd, wafting him to London, setting him down in the same spots where Mr. Adams has stood, and inviting you to observe the result. But this method of illustrating one's meaning, even if Mr. O'Dowd would consent to be wafted, would be elaborate and expensive. Still, one may, by a little effort of the imagination, picture the result. The spectacle would assuredly move Mr. O'Dowd to the writing of verse — probably a good deal of verse, for it is eminently a spectacle to inspire poets of his species. And amid this verse there would be at least half-a-dozen burning and memorable stanzas, which we should feel that he had been literally stung into writing by the confounding vision of so much suffering and so much sin. He would not stand half-an-hour in a London street without conceiving a violent passion for reforming London; and, fine as his concentrated utterance might be, we should feel that he cared nothing for

the manner of his utterance, if only he could turn us all into reformers. Mr. Adams cares infinitely for the manner of his utterance. He is not a reformer, but an artist. Set him face to face with the most evil thing in the universe, and his first thought would not be how to destroy it; his first thought would be how to describe it. Set him down in a London street; he sees everything, like the born observer that he is; and no sooner does he see a thing than his mind begins to feel about for the most perfectly descriptive phrase for it. Well, as to which is the better of the two kinds of poetry, who am I to pronounce an opinion? There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal lays, and every single one of them is right. Still, there are degrees of rightness.. ...

These remarks have very likely succeeded only in conveying an entirely wrong impression of Mr. Adams — the impression that he is a mere phrase-maker. The best way of correcting that impression will be to quote. Here are a few stanzas from Mr. Adams's description of Fleet Street, the street of newspapers: —

There, uninspired, yet with the dower
Of mightier mechanic power,
Some bent, obscure Euripides
Builds the loud drama of the hour!

There, from the gaping presses hurled,
A thousand voices, passion-whirled,
With throats of steel vociferate
The incessant story of the world!

So through this artery from age
To age the tides of passion rage,
The swift historians of each day,
Flinging a world upon a page!

Here, as it seems to me, there is nothing that can fairly be called preciousness. There is real imaginative vision. If this is a phrasemaker it is, at least, a phrasemaker of genius. Take, again, those not less finely imaginative verses which conclude the little poem on Bond Street: —

And a suave carven god of jade,
By some enthralled old Asian made,
With that thin scorn still on his lips,
Waits, in a window-front displayed.

The hurrying, streaming crowds he sees.
With the same smile he watches these,
As from his temple-dusk he saw
The passing of the centuries!

One of the main duties of poetry is to prevent us from taking things for granted; creatures of custom that we are, that is our besetting sin. Poetry has to open our eyes and make us see, for the first time, things we have dully stared at a thousand times. That is the sufficient justification of descriptive poetry; it justifies the poetry of Mr. Adams.

Genius and Shirts

A writer of books, my friend, now knocking at the door of fame “there, in streaming London's central roar,” writes me a despairing letter about the present outlook for men of his craft. He thanks high heaven that he has a little money, and is not dependent on his exertions with the pen for his daily bread. He has met many professional authors, and he announces that his heart bleeds for them; “they would be better advised to be carpenters or masons.. ...The great bulk of literature to-day brings little money; and, indeed, only the very lucky novelist can make any money at all. Do you know that very few novels reach 1,000, and that the publisher reckons it success if so many are sold? Second editions are extremely rare. ...I was surprised to discover how little profit came to either author or publisher from the mass of books. ...Few buy books now — that's the truth” ...and so on. I cannot bear to transcribe any more of these depressing statements. The writer concludes by fervently advising Australian authors to stay in their own country.

One believes it all, of course; and of course one deeply sympathises. But, after all, what did my friend expect? How can writing be a lucrative business, when there are so many engaged in it? It is a business, be it remembered, from which a man does not retire when he dies; on the contrary, he often becomes, after his death, a more formidable competitor than he ever was while he lived. To me the wonder is, not that there should be so few readers, but that there should be any readers at all. The uneducated do not read because they know not the way; the educated do not read because they are too busy writing books of their own. A roaring cataract of printed matter pours from the press without a moment's cessation. Are we to expect the world to pay for it all? It is a pity, no doubt, that the good book should be so often engulfed in this torrent of mediocrity, but so it is, and so it always will be. Can anyone point to a time when the profession of letters has been a lucrative one? So far as “the great bulk of literature” is concerned, there has been no such golden age. Occasionally, very occasionally in the course of centuries, a man has taken to literature who has possessed the happy knack of telling the world, not precisely what was best for it to hear, but precisely what it desired to hear; and on these rare occasions the world has paid the piper with undeniable liberality — witness Macaulay's famous cheque. But, for

the most part, the minstrel has been ever a mendicant; the teller of tales has been glad to seize the crust flung to him churlishly when his tale was told; the prophet has been stoned. Every young artist should be advised either to learn some useful trade or to make himself master of that other fine art, the art of starving.

This subject, or something closely akin to it, is discussed in a recent number of the "Academy," apropos of a socialistic tract by Mr. Keir Hardie, in the course of which he observe: — "No really great genius was a business man, or ever could be. Most of the world's most priceless treasures in literature and art have been the work of men who, like the perfectly happy man of the Eastern fable, were shirtless." A London morning daily has, it seems, arisen in its wrath to confound Mr. Keir Hardie by the following authoritative pronouncement: — "The general rule has always been for real genius to secure recognition. Where genius has been left shirtless, the cause is usually found to be decadence or dissipation," &c., &c. Then comes forth the "Academy," terrible in its rage, and smites that morning daily, hip and thigh, from Aroer even unto Minneth, calling its utterance "a perfect expression of the typical Philistine's attitude towards genius," and bidding it look up in a biographical dictionary the names of Mozart and Marlowe. Apparently the writer in the "Academy" — being perhaps a man of genius himself — has been able to afford only one volume of the biographical dictionary by which he sets such store.

Now the striking feature of this curious and instructive discussion is that all the combatants seem to know exactly what genius is, and exactly who the historical personages have been who have possessed genius — and as that is precisely what I, for my part, do not know, I had better abstain from comment. Yet the criteria seem easily enough applied, if only we could determine which was the right one. To Mr. Keir Hardie the test of genius is its shirtlessness. To the writer in the morning daily, genius appears resplendent in a polished shirt-front, perhaps with a diamond stud in the middle of it; your shirtless person is a mere impostor, and most probably a dissipated decadent. And the "Academy" writer possesses an invaluable biographical dictionary which tells him who the men of genius really are — perhaps even marks their names with asterisks. The subject seems to demand inquiry. I shall certainly look into it; readers may expect from this pen, at no distant date, a treatise in two octavo volumes on "Genius and Shirts." My conclusions will be based on statistics obtained from all the best laundries of the civilised world. But in the meantime, and speaking with no pretence to such decisive knowledge, I should say that Mr. Keir Hardie's statement was an incontrovertible platitude. There have been happy exceptions; but, as a general rule, men of genius have had to pay for their departure from the normal by sleeping on bare boards and eating the bread of

bitterness, and enduring all manner of calumny and vituperation while life lasted. After their death the world has generally erected hideous statues to their memory in some public place. I may be wrong in that generalisation; but of one thing I am quite sure — whether genius is shirtless or not, such a discussion is certainly bootless.

Cold Poetry

Matthew Arnold's most famous sonnet, or rather the sonnet which contains his most famous phrase, opens with the not very melodious line —

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?

Considering the infamous weather we have been having, the line may stand with singular appropriateness as text for this week's sermon. If anyone wishes to know who has been propping, in these hot days, the mind of the present writer — and though it is true that I have not been inundated by inquiries, still there must be many whose natural diffidence alone has restrained their feverish anxiety on the point — I reply that there is a quite definitely hot-weather literature to which one has recourse on such occasions. During the past fortnight no reading has seemed worth much, except the history of Arctic exploration. Some people read ghost stories, but this is fallacious. It is true that a good ghost story makes you shiver for one happy moment — sends a chill down your spine, as it were; but you swelter again the next instant, and I doubt if a ghost story ever really cools your extremities. Whereas, such a book as Nansen's *Farthest North* is like a continuous ice-cream, without evil effects on the digestive system. ...Any good account of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, too, makes fine chilly reading. ...There have been days of late, however, when the grasshopper was a burden, when to hold a book in one's hands was weariness, when even pleasant pictures of people being frozen to death in the wastes of Siberia brought no relief. On such days one could but repeat to oneself all the cold poetry one knew; such as W. E. Henley's *Ballade Made in the Hot Weather*, which every Melbourne citizen ought to know by heart; it is perhaps the most cooling lyric in the language. Its concluding words may be quoted:

Dark aisles, new packs of cards,
Mermaidens' tails, cool swords,
Dawn dews and starlit seas,
White marbles, whiter words —
To live, I think of these!

These are the words of a true poet. Anybody might have thought of

mermaidens' tails; but new packs of cards! — who but Henley would have dreamed of calling up that particular image? Another nice, cool, shady poem is — but the awful reflection comes to me that, by the time these words appear in print — such are the vagaries of our astonishing climate — my remarks may be unseasonable and offensive. My readers may be sitting huddled over their fires, “propping their minds” with stories of the Indian jungle, inflammatory speeches on the tariff, or “Letters from Hell.”

Bernard O'Dowd

Once high they sat, and high o'er earthly shows
With sacrificial dance and song were greeted.
Once ...long ago; but now the story goes,
The gods are dead.
It must be true. The world, a world of prose,
Full-crammed with facts, in science swathed and sheeted,
Nods in a stertorous after-dinner doze.
Plangent and sad, in every wind that blows
Who will may hear the sorry words repeated —
The gods are dead.

So sang the late W. E. Henley, in a pensive rondeau. On the other hand, Mr. Bernard O'Dowd, in his latest volume — *Dominions of the Boundary* — expresses something more than a suspicion that the “story” to which Henley alludes is a mere canard de journal, and that “the gods are living yet.” And not only are they alive; we all worship them. We worship them

...by no mere cult of names,
No pattering of creeds,
But by the sacrificial flames
Of lifelong thoughts and deeds.

The subject of the book, then, is the Greek (and other) gods and goddesses; and the method is the method of dramatic monologue — these august personages are made to speak for themselves. Since they speak through the lips of a poet who thinks of them as still alive, they naturally employ an up-to-date style, and use language very different from that which is put into their mouths by Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, and other modern poets who have thought of them as beautiful but exploded myths. Mr. O'Dowd's deities bristle with modernity. A Hermes who talks about “obscure psychopathies,” an Athena who lightly refers to “the universe's phagocytes,” are obviously not the Hermes and Athena

to whom readers of poetry are accustomed. As for Bacchus, his own mother would not know him in the garb wherewith Mr. O'Dowd has clothed him. I need scarcely add, that there is no differentiation of styles: all the gods dealt with — “the wise, the fair, the awful, the jocose” — talk pure O'Dowd. Each of them explains himself in a series of those curious aphoristic quatrains with which Mr. O'Dowd has by this time made us all familiar.

You see the idea, of course. Mr. O'Dowd is not retelling a set of stories from the Greek mythology; he is writing, not about dead gods, but about — his old subject — the living forces by which human life is guided and controlled; forces which, however the names men know them by may pass and be forgotten, are themselves eternal and unchangeable. Bacchus, for instance, is enthusiasm; Vulcan is the force behind industrial progress; Athena is reason; Isis is, I take it, pretty much what Maeterlinck calls “raison mystique” — let us say, spiritual vision. Mnemosyne is memory, conscious and sub-conscious; Hermes appears to be used as a general name for the occult; the Sirens are the senses; Venus is sex; Juno is motherhood; and Fate is fate.

I think I have written about each of Mr. O'Dowd's volumes of verse as it has appeared, and I do not wish to be monotonous and iterative. Since I wrote of him last, *The Times* has called his poetry “the most arresting work of the younger generation” of Australian poets; some of us did not require the authority of *The Times* for a fact so obvious, but we are glad to have such backing for our belief. This volume, in my opinion, contains a greater amount of unforgettable writing than either of the two previous books; Mr. O'Dowd maintains himself at a higher level of execution than ever before; and I do not hesitate to say that in three of these poems — “Fate,” “Athena,” and “Mystery” — is the clearest and best expression he has yet found for his deepest thought about life.

But, and in conclusion, I wish to seriously remonstrate with Mr. O'Dowd. (The split infinitive is a sign of deep emotion.) My complaint against him is, and has been all along, that he is too fiercely aristocratic in temper. One can forgive a man for not being in full sympathy with democracy, but to be, like Mr. O'Dowd, bitterly and immitigably anti-democratic is an anachronism. Let me explain. The simple child of nature, hearing that this poet writes always in the ballad metre — and knowing that the ballad metre is the simplest known to prosody — opens the book with high hopes. “Here at least,” he thinks, “I shall find a poet who comes down from the pedestal of erudition and speaks to me in a speech I can understand.” And what does the simple child of nature find? The first stanza he lights upon, perhaps, is this —

We scaffold hyperbolic space
With lines, but wearied own

Its asymptote finds resting-place
In the lap of God alone.

It is obvious that such verse as that is aristocratic verse. There is an extreme exclusiveness about it. It appeals to a very small circle — to which I, personally, have not the honour of belonging (hence, perhaps, my indignation). Let Mr. O'Dowd learn to be less haughty and Nietzschean; let him acquire sympathy with the humble; let him respect the disabilities of simple folk who are too poor to buy encyclopaedias, and who, therefore, have no means of discovering whether an asymptote is an animal or a betting-machine. Honest poverty has its rights. Verbum sap.

Australian Poetry

Among the lost arts — so far, at least, as the English-speaking countries are concerned — must be reckoned the delightful art of doggerel. In contemporary verse, the general level of execution is astonishingly high. Macaulay would, if he were among us to-day, have to search far and wide before he could find another butt like Robert Montgomery. Perhaps he would have to search with even greater diligence before he could find a poet fit for one of his fine eulogies; but that, for the moment, is not the point. Seventy-one verse-writers are represented in Mr. Betram Stevens's new *Golden Treasury of Australian Verse*. And while the most patriotic reader will scarcely assert that the divine fire visibly blazes in the work of every one of them, neither is there a single poem, in the whole volume, which the most fastidious critic could pronounce doggerel. A century ago, the greatest poets wrote abominably bad verse quite cheerfully. Keats was not ashamed to print —

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds),
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

Campbell was not ashamed to end a ballad with the truly appalling lines —

Such was the throb and mutual sob
Of the Knight embracing Jane.

Our Australian verse-writers do not do that kind of thing. It may be objected that neither do they write another "Ode to Autumn," or another "Battle of the Baltic;" that, unfortunately, is also true. Dexterity in the

expression of vaguely poetic feeling does not carry us very far in the direction of real poetry, the poetry that matters. I am merely noting the fact that, in Mr. Stevens's collection, dexterous work is the rule, and unskilful, bungling work the exception.

Trying to look at this book from the standpoint of a stranger to our land, desirous of making its acquaintance through the medium of its poetry, I feel vaguely dissatisfied. The special conditions of Australian life seems to find little reflection. Of course, it is nonsense to demand of the Australian poet that he shall always be aggressively Australian. There is no earthly reason why an Australian poet should not write about Greek mythology if he wishes to, and if he can turn it into poetry; the Australian poet is as free to write odes to the sheeted dead as a Kamtchatkan poet is. But I think that in a representative collection of Australian verse there ought to be a fair proportion of verse which has a characteristically Australian flavour. Take, for instance, horse poems. Mr. Stevens seems to have rigidly excluded them. Now, I do not deny that there was a time when the horse bulked rather too largely in our literature, and when our verse, especially, was somewhat excessively equine. But some of these horse-poems have a glorious swing and gusto about them, and I do not think a collection which excludes them can be thoroughly representative of our muse. Mr. Paterson's "The Daylight is Dying," which might have been written anywhere, might well have been spared, and its place taken by one of his roaring ballads which could only have been written by an Australian in Australia. ... However, Mr. Stevens has sought rather the best verse than the most distinctively Australian verse; and, on second thoughts, I am not going to quarrel with his decision. No anthologist can hope to please everybody, and Mr. Stevens has shown himself once more a man of excellent taste and discrimination, and has laid lovers of poetry who also love Australia under a heavy obligation to him for this most pleasant book.

It will not do, by the way, to speak of "our young Australian poets," because most of them are middle-aged. A certain jaded and world-weary tone perceptible in the volume made me turn up the "biographical notes" at the end; and I made the interesting discovery that, of those of Mr. Stevens's company who still live, the average age is almost exactly 43; and that, out of the whole assemblage, there are only two who have not yet passed their thirtieth year. The very youngest of our Australian bards, it seems, is as old as Keats was when he died with all his work accomplished. Do poets mature late in this country? The question will be dealt with in my forthcoming work on "The Feeding and Management of Young Poets," a book which ought to be sure of a warm welcome from a country which produces minstrels in such unprecedented numbers. It will deal with the life history of the poet from incubator to crematorium, and with the etiology, prophylaxis, symptoms, and treatment of the chief

maladies incident to the species. It will tell you how to ward off an attack of didacticism, how to remove platitudes painlessly, how to cure acute verbiage by dietetic treatment, how to deal with diseases of the prosody, how to supply the young poet with a graduated series of hopeless love affairs, and so on.

Australia and Romance

I have been reading, with immense delight, a new book called *The Romance of Empire: Australia*, by W. H. Lang. Romance is a queer thing. It is magic, it is glamour, it is grammarye; the secret of its charm none may unfold, the heart of its mystery none may pluck out; we only know that if it were taken from life, life were naught, and that if it were subtracted from literature, the libraries might as well close their doors. It lurks in odd corners; it leaps out at you from a phrase of Keats, it marches bravely through a chapter of Dumas, it shows its face at the window of an old house, and you catch a glimpse of its twinkling heels in many an item of the morning's news. Mr. Chesterton finds romance in door-knockers and in painted omnibuses; for Mr. Kipling, romance brings up the 9.15. For us common folk, however, atmospheric effects of distance are required; to be romantic, a thing must be seen through the haze of time. For us, therefore, Australia is not a romantic country; it is all too new, too up-to-date, too aggressively modern. There are no ruined castles in Australia; nor, delve as we may, can we discover remains of a Roman camp. In England, you can scarce walk along a street without seeing something that reminds you of old unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago. In Wales he must be deaf indeed who cannot hear the horns of elfland faintly blowing. Scotland is a prime illustration of the potent wizardry of time; for while there is no created being more unromantic than the living Scot, every hill and glen of his country is steeped in romance; and the most romantic figure in all history is the figure of a Scottish Queen. There are streets in Paris which, the moment you set foot in them, whip your imagination back, back, past Richelieu, past Sully, right into a mediaeval world. Romance sets you upon Chaucer's magic horse; you dirl upon a pin, and lo! the enchantment of the Middle Ages is upon you. ...In Australia, when a house grows old we call it a disgrace to civilisation and loudly clamour for its demolition. Everything is bright and new and freshly-painted. It is all very salubrious, but it is not romantic.

That paragraph is, on the whole, plausibly written; the only objection to it is that it is quite untrue. For the ordinary unimaginative person, it is true that for an event to be romantic, it must be softened in its outlines by the lapse of time. But the curious thing about romance is, that though it dwells, for most of us, in the past, it must not be a too remote past. Scott,

the king of romance, is at his best and most romantic when he goes back, not to the times of the Crusades, nor to the age of Elizabeth, but to the Jacobite rebellion, an event not much more than half a century old when he wrote. ...Australia is a young country (I allude, of course, to the Australia of white men — the blackfellow, interesting as he is from many points of view, is hardly a romantic figure); but she is old enough to have had a romantic history. That history has three, at least, of the chief elements of romance: adventure, and buried treasure, and crime. In other words, three classes of men have combined to make her history picturesque — the explorers, and the gold-seekers, and the bushrangers.

From this point of view the book in question is, I think, one of the very best books ever written about Australian history. (Its author is credibly reported to be a doctor resident in Corowa, and a brother of Mr. Andrew Lang.) There are, of course, many other points of view from which Australian history may be regarded — there is, for instance, the political point of view — and of course the serious student of that history is not advised to discard all other writers in favour of Dr. Lang. But for the average reader, both in Australia and elsewhere, this book will form an admirable introduction to the subject, and one may confidently predict for it a great popular success. The style is so clear and simple that it would make an excellent school-book, if a cheaper edition could be brought out. But the oldest reader, and the most erudite reader, will find his account in reading it.

Bernard O'Dowd Again

Is it worth while writing about poets and poetry? You know well, and I know, that you never have any dealings with the Muse — except when you buy (for a wedding present) a volume of Tennyson, or some other traditionally respectable bard; bound in full morocco, it is quite a presentable gift, yet far less expensive than the recipient is likely to imagine. Poetry has fallen on evil days — evil, prosaic, practical days; the earth is the Philistine's, and the fulness thereof; the race is to the efficient, and the battle to the hard-headed. Amid such a din of mallet and chisel, what chance has the still small voice of poetry? Amid so much strenuous labour and such glorious achievements, what are we to say of the man who stands aside from the world's work, playing with metres, tasting the flavours of words, seeking diligently after a rhyme and rejoicing greatly when he has found it? What, but that he is a trifler, and that the world has no need of him?

I have often thought of writing an article — a cold, prosaic, unimpassioned article — setting forth a few obvious facts about poetry. I should show the practical man — only, alas, he would never read my article! — that, whatever he may think about poetry, he really eats

poetry, and drinks poetry, and breathes poetry every day of his life. I would show him that every real triumph of civilisation has simply been the coming true of a poet's dream; that all that we long for and all that we fight for, and all that we live for, and all that we die for, was once a vision in the heart of an unregarded poet; that poetry has been, all along, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to the marching army of mankind. I would show him — though he would resist the conclusion as an outrage — that he is himself a poet; and that if at any moment he ceased to be a poet, at that precise moment life would become intolerable to him. All this you may pronounce paradoxical, or even nonsensical. In fact, however, it is easily demonstrable truth. Some day I shall certainly write that article; meantime — while you are waiting! — will you hear what an Australian poet has said on the same subject? —

They tell you he hinders with tinklings, with gags from an obsolete stage,
The dramas of deed and the worship of Laws in a practical age;
But the deeds of to-day are the children of magical dreams he has sung,
And the Laws are ineffable Fires that from niggardly heaven he wrung!
The bosoms of women he sang of are heaving to-day in our maids;
The God that he drew from the Silence our woes or our weariness aids;
Not a maxim has needled through Time but a poet had feathered its shaft,
Not a law is a boon to the people but he has dictated its draft.
And why do we fight for our fellows? For Liberty why do we long?
Because with the core of our nerve-cells are woven the lightnings of song!
For the poet for ages illumined the animal dreams of our sires,
And his Thought-Become-Flesh is the matrix of all our unselfish desires.

Those who have read his previous books will be surprised to learn that these three stanzas are taken from a poem in Mr. Bernard O'Dowd's latest volume *The Seven Deadly Sins*. In his earlier work Mr. O'Dowd was, in point of style, unyieldingly severe. At times you might call him nobly austere, at times you were tempted to call him harsh and crabbed, but you never for a moment dreamed of calling him fluent and facile. The piece from which I have quoted is plainly an experiment in a new manner, and I hope Mr. O'Dowd will be tempted by its success to repeat it many times. The metre has its obvious dangers — it easily degenerates into a popular jingle. But Mr. O'Dowd's verse is far too closely packed with thought to degenerate. whatever metre he may employ, into a popular jingle. He needs rather to be warned against excessive severity of form; and it is good, now and then, to find him letting himself go, and writing in a more slap-dash manner than is his wont.

The most serious thing, however, in the present volume is undoubtedly the sonnet-sequence which gives its name to the volume. Mr. O'Dowd

has taken the traditional seven deadly sins — the seven of mediaeval ethics — and written two sonnets about each; one sonnet for the prosecution, one sonnet for the defence. (Mr. O'Dowd is a lawyer as well as a poet.) Modern manuals of ethics do not speak of the seven deadly sins. When, and why, did we part company with the conception? We came to see, I suppose, that there were far more than seven of them; but, above all, we came to see, dimly, that what had been called deadly sins might also put in a claim to be regarded as cardinal virtues; we came to see that pride (for instance), if it was the source of boundless evil, was the source also of immense good to mankind. We saw, in short, that a good word might be said for each of these much-abused outcasts; and Mr. O'Dowd has said that good word. You must not suppose, from this, that Mr. O'Dowd has wandered into a Nietzschean region “beyond good and evil.” On the contrary, these sonnets show him dwelling in a world where the distinction of good and evil is the supreme distinction.

I am inclined to think that in this little volume Mr. O'Dowd has shown a mastery of his material more complete than in any of his previous books. It is curious to find this poet, who has rebelled against so many conventions, accepting one of the most conventionalised forms of verse; he has inveighed against the shackles of the past, yet here he is, wearing the rigid shackles of the sonnet form, and looking more sinewy and athletic than ever; finding, moreover, within the sonnet's scanty room, ample space for originality of treatment. Note, too, that whereas his previous poems, miraculously good in parts, were seldom or never perfectly satisfactory as wholes — here, in the sonnet, where the form of the whole is prescribed him by the usage of centuries, he is often triumphantly successful. Having quoted from “The Poet,” I shall now quote “The Cow”; not because it is the best of Mr. O'Dowd's sonnets, but because its subject should bring it home to men's businesses and bosoms more closely than a mere abstract deadly sin could be expected to.

This is a rune I ravell'd in the still,
Arrogant stare of an Australian cow —
“These prankt intruders of the hornless brow,
Puffed up with strange illusions of their skill
To fence, to milk, to fatten, and to kill,
Once worshipped me with temple, rite, and vow,
Crowned me with stars, and bade rapt millions bow
Before what abject guess they called my will!

“To-day, this flunkey of my midden, Man,
Throws child-oblations in my milking byre,
Stifles in slums to spare me lordly fields,
Flatters with spotless consorts my desire,

And for a pail of cream his birth-right yields,
As once in Egypt, Hellas, Ind, Iran.”

Here, too, one may add, a sonnet for the defence was surely desirable.
That patient foster-mother of the human race has earned a good word!

A New Poet

It is always a pleasure to praise a good poet, and — if one is not wholly without patriotism — it is a treble pleasure to praise a good Australian poet. And this pleasure is, perhaps, intensified by the rarity of its occurrence. One gets rather tired of the Australian bard; he is as a rule so distressingly minor, and there are so many of him. But a new book has come to hand — a book, not of Australian, but at least of Australasian poetry — which has upset the reviewer's most cherished convictions. Have you ever pulled out a drawer which you believed to be full of old papers, bits of string, and other rubbish, and found it full of glittering, jingling, golden sovereigns? If you have you will be able to form a dim conception of the weary reviewer's feelings when he listlessly opens a new volume of New Zealand verse, and finds — sheer poetry. *Shingle-Short, and Other Verses*, is the name of the volume. The name on the title page is B. E. Baughan; as I am quite certain that the chief poem in the book could not have been written by a man, I shall take the liberty of speaking of the author as Miss Baughan. And Miss Baughan is a true poet; and her book is much the best that has come out of New Zealand since the *Maoriland* of Mr. Arthur Adams, a poet with whom she has little or nothing in common.

It is the title-poem, *Shingle-Short*, which gives distinction to the book. This is the soliloquy, thirty pages long, of a half-witted being in whom Wordsworth would have delighted. He makes a boat, floats it in a tank, is in the seventh heaven of delight about it, suddenly sees the futility of it and of himself, wanders off into an indictment of the universe, evolves a kind of crazy theology, and stops — that is all. But what a wealth of tenderness, of sympathy, of humour, of understanding! And how masterly the treatment — not a word, we feel, misplaced! The absolute rightness of the whole thing stamps it as a little masterpiece. In manner it reminds the reader very greatly of T. E. Brown and his *Fo'c'sle Yarns*. From him Miss Baughan has learnt much in the way of managing her loose octosyllables.* Brown, too, dedicated a poem to an idiot — the reader will not have forgotten *Poor Chalse*. But so far as the subject-matter is concerned, one thinks rather of Wordsworth and his *Idiot Boy*; and one thinks of Wordsworth's strange and wise remark, in a letter to Christopher North: — “I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture that ‘their life is hidden with God.’ ”

Miss Baughan might have put those words as the motto of her poem; and the poem would not have been unworthy of the motto. It is, I repeat, a masterpiece of pity, and of the understanding born of pity. I have looked up and down the poem to find something suitable for quotation; but I have found nothing which would not be spoiled by being torn from its context; and this also should be counted to Miss Baughan for artistic righteousness.

There are many other poems in the book, but nothing else of the same genre, and nothing else, to my mind, approaching the first poem in excellence. And yet *Maui's Fish* (a Maori legend) is full of vigour, and is a serious artistic effort in a new form; and there is some other excellent work. But *Shingle-Short* stands alone, unapproached of its kind in the poetry of Australasia; and those who have read it, though they will look to Miss Baughan for great things in the future, will hardly expect her to better this achievement.

* Miss Baughan tells me that this was a bad guess. She had not read Brown when *Shingle-Short* was written.