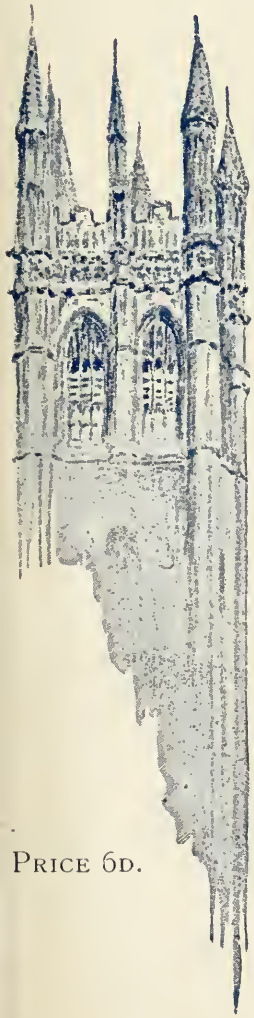
VOL. III. No. III.

The Spirit Lamp.



PRICE 6D.

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EDITED BY LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS.

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The Spirit Lamp.

Vol. 3. No. III. March 10, 1893.

IMPRESSIONS.

In White.

THE morning light was on the bed
Sheer silver laid on silver grey,
The sudden subtle dawn was shed
In argent fire, and night was day;
I rose and looked across the bay.
What morn will bring my love to me?
Ah, life is love and life is gay,
White sails upon a silver sea!

In Rose-Pink.

No more alone, but night is o'er
And to the beach our way we make
And strip on the familiar shore
While all the summer birds, awake,
The inland woods with music shake.
Sing birds, while rapt I gaze upon
Those glowing limbs, those lips which take
Love's rose-pink and vermilion.

In Violet.

The purple mystery of night
Once more upon the land descends,
And flaming sunset yields to light
Where blue with red in music blends,
The colour consecrate to friends,
The colour when the sun has set,
The line wherewith the vision ends
The secret of the violet.

Charles Kains Jackson.

ESSAYS I HAVE SHOWN UP.

No. I.—What is the true Method of Ethics?

THE question "What is the true Method of Ethics?" is one of that numerous body of questions, in which a complacent facility on the part of the interrogator is not balanced by a correspondingly complacent sense of triumph, on the part of the individual who attempts to answer it. Questions may be broadly divided into two classes: (1) *Those to which the interrogator may reasonably hope to get answers which may be either obviously or at least probably true;* (2) *Those to which the interrogator can have no expectation, reasonable or otherwise, of getting any answer which will not be obviously or at least probably untrue.*

To the former of these classes belongs the question: "What is twice two?" and indeed it may be taken to be as nearly perfect a specimen of its class as can be looked for in any sphere, short of an absolutely reasonable one, such as that conceived by Kant; it being understood that a question of class 1 is more perfect, in inverse proportion to the difficulty which is likely to be experienced in obtaining an answer to it. Thus the question, "What is twice two?" is one, in asking which, a seeker after truth may entertain a degree of hope amounting very nearly to a certainty of receiving a correct answer, even if the questioned individual be possessed of only so little intelligence as is often playfully, and to my mind erroneously, attributed to the shrimp or oyster. I say erroneously particularly with reference to the oyster, for on the subject of the intelligence of the shrimp I hold merely a negative view, being simply entirely unacquainted with any reason for supposing the animal in question to be any more deficient in intellect than any other fish or fowl. But with regard to the oyster, I cannot help feeling that the slight upon its intellectual capacity has been thrown upon it more through the paltry misconception of the vulgar, than the far-seeing wisdom of the philosopher, arising, as I firmly believe it to do, from a philistine

scorn of its sedentary and voiceless life, a scorn which I am so far from sharing that I have even had to struggle hard against the poison of a strange fascination, which the thought of its eternal silence, and the splendour of its vast ocean home, has forced upon me to such an extent, that my reason and my individuality itself have at times been almost forcibly merged in the infinite magnificence of its fatal charm.

But to return to our questions; as it is plain that the question, "What is twice two?" for the reasons referred to is as very nearly perfect an instance of class 1 as one can expect to find, it will easily be seen that in proportion as the difficulty of obtaining an answer which will be self-evidently true increases, so the perfection of the question in class 1 decreases. Thus to take an instance, the question "Does your mother know you're out?" will be a far less perfect example of a question in class 1 than the question "What is twice two?" and why? for this reason, that whereas the latter question admits of but one answer which is the correct one, namely, "four," which is obviously the true one; the former admits of an almost infinite variety of answers, the probable truth of any one of which will vary considerably, according to the knowledge and *bona fides* of the questioned.

Thus a man in answer to the enquiry, might in perfect good faith reply that his mother was aware that he was out, being himself under the distinct impression that his mother had witnessed his exit from an upper window. And yet it is conceivable that the young man (if indeed he be a young man at all, which is a matter open to a great deal of doubt, and which, as it does not come directly into the scope of the present paper, I prefer to discuss at another time), and yet it is conceivable, I say, that the young man (granting for the sake of argument that he is a young man), may have made the error of supposing that the figure which he saw at the window, and which he concluded to be his mother, was in reality his sister or one of the female servants; nor again is it altogether outside the range of

possibility that the figure he saw, or imagined he saw, at the window, was a phantom conjured up by his heated imagination. At any rate it will easily be seen that it is quite possible for a number of different answers to be given to this same question, which whether by accident or by design, are untrue; indeed it might at first sight appear to fall under the head of class 2, namely, *questions to which one cannot hope to get answers which are not obviously or probably untrue;* but a little thought will shew that there is sufficient possibility of getting a probably true answer to prevent this. It might indeed be said, with some plausibility, that the question being itself not a genuine question, asked for information, but a mocking gibe veiling itself under the interrogatory form, is not such as to elicit an answer at all, but rather to provoke another question, a form of repartee common in the early doctrines of Christianity. But this is mere quibble, for it is quite apparent that the question, "Does your mother know you're out?" *might* be asked in perfect sincerity, and with the object of obtaining a truthful reply, and it is from this point of view that we are discussing it. And in addition to this it may well be observed that if the philosopher were to avoid the use of all terms, and the employment of all objects which the tongues or hands of the vulgar had distorted or polluted, he would find himself debarred from the discussion and contemplation of some of the greatest wonders in the intellectual as well as the material world.

Granting then that the question is asked in *bona fide*, and that the questioned replies in the same spirit, there is a certain probability of getting a true answer; and, although it is perfectly true that instances of perfect good faith both in questioner and questioned on this particular point are rare, yet they are sufficient to place this question in class No. 1.

We now come to the 2nd class of questions, *those to which an interrogator cannot hope reasonably to obtain any answer which will not be obviously or probably untrue.* There are many questions of this class, but they will mostly

be found to deal with the abstract, and when they aim at exact accuracy in the abstract they may be at once recognized; questions relating to accuracy in material things are mostly of the 1st class. A question such as, "What is the exact height of such and such a tree?" "What is the exact distance of —— to ——?" is manifestly capable of being answered with either obvious or probable truth. But change the question to, "What is the exact proportion of courage to obstinacy in a martyr?" and it is evident at once that nothing can be answered that will not be grossly improbable.

The reason of this is that there are no dimensions in the abstract, a man may have a clear idea of the relative proportions of two qualities in his head, but he cannot express it in words; he cannot measure courage in feet and inches. Now Methods of Ethics are abstract things, and to attempt to label one as true is to try to give it a dimension.

What is meant by the True Method of Ethics? That method which is *more* right than any other method, which has a *greater amount* of Truth in it. Acting then according to my own law, I recognize the attempt to find the true method of Ethics as an attempt to measure the abstract, therefore the question "What is the true Method of Ethics?" falls under the head of class 2: *questions to which the interrogator cannot hope to obtain answers which will not be obviously or probably untrue.*

To attempt then to discuss this question further would be an insult to the intelligence of the reader; for how can I ask him to follow me into the maze of argument and discussion which I *might* put before him to shew him what my own view on the subject is, when I have convinced myself and I trust him also, that my view, whatever it may be, will be obviously or probably untrue. I am compelled then reluctantly to abandon the search after truth, or at any rate to conduct it mentally and not on paper, and to the original hopefully propounded question, "What is the true Method of Ethics?" to answer sadly, "I do not know."

Alfred Douglas.

SONNET.

The Louvre, May, 1848.

VENUS OF MILO. HEINE THE POET.

H. Dear lady mine of Milo, I am here;
V. To worship at my long neglected shrine?
H. To drink perchance a cup of deadly wine:
V. With me to guide; what need is there of fear?
H. Life is become a leaf of yesteryear—
V. My poor pale poet—yet not wholly mine—
H. Alas! the bitter Rood is for a sign.
V. Woe's me! the Christ steals my last worshipper!
H. 'Twixt Heaven and Hell His torn Hands beckon me.
V. O for some isle Aegean, far away!
H. Crawling from out my mattress-grave I came—
V. Not one is left to call on Beauty's name.
H. To bid my own heart's Queen farewell for aye.
V. Ah Heaven! that I had arms to succour thee.

A. R. BAYLEY.

OF GREEK NOSES.

Mayhap there is more meant than is said in it, quoth my father. Learned men, brother Toby, don't write dissertations upon noses for nothing.—TRISTRAM SHANDY.

"NON cuicunque datum est habere nasum," said an adept in the lost art of irony. By Martial's time the Greeks and Romans of pure blood had dwindled to a remnant, some sped in conquering the world, some in dividing its spoils, the most in dissipating them. Barbarians from the provinces were for filling the gaps. Half bred, half civilised, they knew how to mimic outward observances, habit of dress, and cast of phrase. But, habit of mind and cast of feature, essential things, they could not imitate. The mark of the beast was upon their faces. A palpable distinction —their nose bewrayed them. So now, many centuries afterwards, still prevails this crudity and uncomeliness, this "indefectible defect," in the most striking and significant of features. We other barbarians are versed all our school days in the language and the literature of Greeks and Romans: in after years the Romans are our patterns in the affairs, the Greeks in the amenities of life. But to what purpose? The form baffles, the spirit eludes our journeyman imitation: and all that comes of it is a motley, a masquerade. Still Martial reminds us from the grave that we, our cultured selves, are but barbarians, though, it may be—differing so far from our forefathers—"of a larger growth."

And yet, it will be said, do we not hear tell of Greek and Roman noses in talk and books? The heroine of the novel, that mirror of contemporary life, has as surely a Greek nose as the hero has an aquiline. To examine, then, this opinion. "The Vicar's youngest daughter, Ermentrude," writes a lady novelist in great vogue, "had eyes of watchet blue, soft as a dove's, a delicately chiselled nose of the purest Greek, a wealth of crisp auburn hair, and pearly teeth which glinted in the sunlight. She painted *à ravir* in water-colours and sang divinely." The magic

of the writer's touch sets the likeness of this paragon as plainly before us as though it were some gorgeous chromo-lithograph in the Christmas number of an illustrated paper. We can see her benign and vacant eye, her simpering rose-bud mouth, set to say "prunes and prism": we mark the stilted fascinations of her manner, the stereotyped seductions of her carriage, and, *coup de grace*, the short, limp, puny nose, of no curve nor proportion nor character. Set beside it the nose of the true Greek, sensuous, serene, sublime. Should you see it in the flesh—and I think you will not—by these signs you shall know it. Its line is straight from the forehead till it breaks in sinuous, rippling curves at the full and sensitive nostril. Its measure (one third, says Fuseli, of the profile) is in agreement with the attendant features: "Take one-twelfth of an inch from the nose of the Apollo Belvidere and the god is lost." Such is the glorious nose of the Discobolos of Myron, of the Hermes of Praxitiles; godlike in that it shows the perfect man (the most beautiful of divine creations); the nose of the Zeus of Phidias and the Jehovah of Michael Angelo. "Look on that picture and on this, Hyperion to a Satyr."

Candid and judicious reader, observe the noses of your neighbours and acquaintance! Are they not all bulbous or pinched, simian or beaked or retroussés (elegant euphemism), imperfect in themselves, incongrous with their fellow features? Other points, eyes large and melting, hair fine and crisp, teeth white and regular, are common in the lower as in the higher creation. Animals have them, gazelles for instance, and terriers of choice. Locks of jet and languishing almond-shaped eyes are the charms of the Houris. These and no others Ferdusi sings, the greatest except "Omar" Fitzgerald of Mohammedan poets. "The amaranthine eyes of the angels vie with the azure of heaven, and the glory of their flaxen tresses with the glittering gold and gleaming gems of its ornate and eligible mansions." Thus wrote Ordericus Vitalis, a

monkish chronicler, as he related in his empesé and Ouidaesque Latin—so singularly modern—that celebrated papal oracle which compared the angels with some captive Angles. But of noses he is silent, and the noses of the Angles are commonplace. Our Protestants, too (witness their Christmas cards), have endorsed this description of the modern Olympians. For once they are at one with the Pope; reflecting in their vein of original humour that his puns are more orthodox than his bulls. Barbarians all! Our text includes them in the same condemnation. "Nasum non habent."

In the perfect nose, then, the Greek nose, is contained all that is lacking in the cases cited—the beauty and the virtue of man. Never can a beautiful nose be seen without a beautiful face around it: nor a beautiful face without a comely body: nor a perfect face and body without a fair soul within. This is the conclusion of all poets and Platonists. It is summed in the line of Spenser, "the poet's poet," more Platonist than Plato himself, a verse as simple and exquisite as though it were of Sophocles:

"All that is good is beautiful and fair."

And science thinks the same. A notable empiric, one Lavater, a friend of Goethe, wrote a great book called "Physionomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniss und Menschenliebe" "for the furtherance of the knowledge of man and the love of man." For him too and his system the nose was the central and crowning feature on which did rest all character and comeliness. He forestalled in his flights of speculation the plodding inferences of the modern scientific psychologists. Like them he held that the lineaments of man were "the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual grace"—to borrow a phrase from our beautiful Catechism; that the bodily form corresponded with the psychical idea. Unlike them, anticipating, doubtless, the research of the future, he found in the nose the compendious epitome, the abstract and symbol of the character of its possessor, or, in the

language of legal demonology—to use a finer precision—its "possessee." In the nose, then, reside the great Capital qualities: only by this cult can we learn in Goethe's oft-quoted phrase "Im Schönen, Guten, Wahren, resolut zu leben." Adore only the beautiful in this, its symbol and summit, and the rest will be added unto you—all the knowledge, wisdom and virtue by which it is informed. The nose is the test of morality as it is the touchstone of beauty: by its very nature it is an end unto itself.

To apply, then, this criterion to the needs of the day: for the English essay, that prodigy of literature, is nothing if not practical. The noses of our authors, our politicians, and our proletariat are, ex hypothesi, out of joint. So, therefore, are the times. What does it profit to analyse the uninteresting, the offensive with Bourget and Zola. They have no noses. The nose of Mr. Gladstone approaches the aquiline. But alas! the bend is too abrupt, the caesura (like that of our modern verse-makers) too near the middle. He is a publicist, and the truth must be outright, sad though it be of a man so nearly great—he has the nose not of an eagle but of a jackdaw. Why then discuss Home Rule? In all callings are in vain to seek the virtues which the Greek nose enshrines; the "Allgemeinheit und Heiterkeit" of Winkelmann, "the breadth and generality, the blitheness and felicity" of Mr. Pater's happy rendering. To win back these qualities the Greek nose must be restored; but how? I adopt, as a token of admiration and regret, the method of the late M. Taine.

There are, accordingly, three modes of nose-reformation—a moral change, a change in the environment, and a physical change. For the first, cultivate the Greek manner of life. Inspire the dry bones of "Literae Humaniores" (*sic*) with the spirit that is sedulously lost in the letter. To enlarge were useless or unnecessary. Environment, the second mode, saves so much trouble. A few statues for the niches of the colleges in the High,

a Hermes to every lamp-post. Surely the breaking of lamps and the detachment of knockers is a little banausic in our civilised Oxford. The riots of our youth should be as classic as their studies; and, then, to think of the reaction of horror and dismay which would stir dons from their moral torpor to a holy indignation! To contemplate these statues would be an education in itself, and we should all be "made perfect by visible beauty."

Last, there is need of a physical revolution, and, indeed, this is all that is required. Mr. John Morley has nobly said that a care for the physical, moral, and social well-being of its members is the first and highest duty of the State. This millenium would at once be attained if only the community were furnished forth with perfect noses. Let the State establish a department of nasology, a school of nasologists. It would be their function and privilege to fashion on the model of the Apollo Belvidere the crude amorphous nose of each new-born infant. Then, at last, Individualist and Socialist will join hands: all "ists" and "isms" will be returned to the past. Every man will be good, useful, beautiful. We shall all be Hellenists, and there will be no more decadence.

But this era will be long a dawning. For a while, at least, we can dally in the twilight of the dim incomprehensible; crooning our lamentations by the waters of Babylon, while we turn our gaze languidly westward to the murk in which faded the bright sunlight of Greece. Pathetically we sigh with Villon, the first of the decadents (and he was hanged), sympathetically we echo with our own Dante Gabriel "Mais où sont les nez d'antan?" "Where is the nose of an age gone by?"

II.

THE SERAPH AND THE SONG.

I SANG a song by the silent mere,
A song of my love:
I sang to the birds, and the sky above,
To the trees in the wood,
And the water that sleeps in the water-flood,
And I sang not for man to hear.

But my song fell down from the sky
And lay on the earth,
And the many heard it, with scornful mirth
Or angry mutter;
And they trampled it into the gutter,
And stifled its cry.

And I hid my face for shame of my song,
And I broke my lute,
And my half-fledged voice died wingless and mute.
And I sought my song, both far and near,
To hide it where never a man might hear;
And vainly I sought it and long.

For a seraph, that rode on the wings of the north,
Had found it lying
In the foot-trod mud of the street; and sighing,
Made it white with the tears of seven times seven,
And carried it through the gates of Heaven;
And God did not drive it forth.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

ROBERT HERRICK.

WE are fortunate in that we know of Herrick's life only so much as is necessary for a bare sketch: we know who he was, and who his friends were; there is no shroud of mystery cast round him by time to encourage the curious and the dryasdusts to grovel among records in order to drag to light some paltry fact which might fit a theory. At the same time we do not know too much, we have few of those intimate touches of the man's life, which, however interesting, however missed, tend always to lead us off the path. The brightness of one particular thread in the tapestry does not tempt the eye to follow it so closely that the beauty of the whole fades away into the mistiness of that which is beyond the view.

Herrick's own words most perfectly give us the 'argument' of his book.

> I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
> Of April, May, of June and July flowers.

The greatest of all prologues only has a surer note than Herrick's Prologue to the Hesperides. If Lowell can say—"Though I repeat a thousand times: 'When that Aprille with his showeres sootë;' still at the thousandth time a breath of uncontaminated springtide lifts the hair upon my forehead;"—so can we say that as "uncontaminated a breath of English springtide" blows out to meet us as we read "Corrinna's Maying," or "The Country Life." We smell "the breath of greatey'd kine, sweet as the blossoms of the vine;" or see the "dancing feet—tripping the comely country round, with daffodils and daisies crown'd." If sometimes the followers of Björnson or Ibsen would condescend to go back with Herrick and take a breath of open air, they might acknowledge that the world contains something wider and fresher than the atmosphere of middle-class Norwegian kitchens or "parlours."

The common estimate of Herrick is that he is an old pagan, and that we must picture him sitting with his jolly old head crowned with a garland of roses, cocked

perhaps a little askew over his roguish winking eyes, with a smiling lady of doubtful reputation dandled on either knee. With this estimate, to come upon a lyric addressed to "Julia her Legs," and over the page perhaps that fine epigram, "Devotion makes the Deity," would force us to conclude that sensuality was his natural level, and that any higher flights were but the heavy floundering flappings of affectation. But it is fairer to take every type of his verses as illustrating, each and every, some side of a many sided life. Herrick, as all who go to him will find, is ready to laugh with our mirth, grow serious in our staider moments, or weep with our tears.

> Come sit we by the fireside,
> And roundly drink we here,
> Till that we see our cheeks ale-dyed
> And noses tanned with beer.

Or in a more refined moment—and it is curious to notice the care with which the different tones are distinguished by the rhythm—

> Bring me my rosebuds, drawer, come,
> So while I thus sit crown'd,
> I'll drink the aged Caecubum
> Until the roof turn round.

But more prominent than his mirth is Herrick's melancholy. It is a melancholy not drawn from a constant and obstinate gaze upon the wounds and scars and diseases of poor humanity, but rather inspired by the too keen appreciation and delight in the fleeting beauties of flowers, and maidens, and bright sunshiny days. It is an after-note that is struck almost with too persistent frequency. Take nearly every one of his exquisite lyrics to flowers—To Daffodils—To Blossoms —To Primroses. Of so many it is difficult to choose one more characteristic than the rest; but there is one "than which," Mr. Swinburne says "Herrick has written nothing sweeter or better." No one can have failed to have felt the sad emptiness and dreariness of fields at sundown, yet after reading "To Meadows," that feeling must have been touched with a deeper and fuller colour.

Ye have been fresh and green,
Ye have been filled with flowers;
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

* * * *

Ye've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round;
Each virgin like a spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread . . . .

So too can he share in our tears.

The shades grow great, but greater grows our sorrow
But let's go steep
Our eyes in sleep,
And meet to weep
To-morrow.

It does not much matter to us that Herrick published his Hesperides amid the crash of the Monarchy as Théophile Gautier published his Emaux et Camées during the Siege of Paris.

Be Herrick Royalist or Roundhead, or but a poor trimmer, he had to the depth of his heart a pure appreciation of England, her people, her broad meadows, her bright banks of flowers, her lads and her lasses, in their country dances, barley breakes, and old world games and customs.

There is a gorgeous poem of Lodge, "full," as Mr. Palgrave remarks, "of the colouring of the Venetian Artists"—which, if read side by side with Corinna's Maying, throws up the more sober hues of Herrick's palette.

It can well be understood that Lodge wrote during a voyage to the Canaries his verses to "Rosaline," but that Herrick kept before his eyes the rosebud faces of English maids and boys peeping out from between masses of white thorn blossom, clad in their bright May-green.

Herrick's power could not be better exemplified than by Corinna's Maying. Without a superfluous word,

with an unerring touch he has painted the picture, starting with the eagerness of childhood, to end with the sad note of the prescience of a time when "the fresh quilted colours" of the dawn will not call him from his last sleep. It is this sureness of touch which is one of the greatest characteristics of Herrick. In four lines he can bring up and set before us a picture as perfectly and with as dainty a solidity as any painter. We see the nymphs drinking at the fountain, their white hands turning the cup's brim all to lilies; or, in the crystal lines "To Julia Washing." We almost hear the clear water rippling round her as she stands half hid by the stream which crosses her like a cloud of lawn. Only to read the titles of many of his lyrics is sufficient; "To Julia's hair in a golden net," or "Love in a Shower of Blossoms."

You may turn the leaves of the Hesperides and, to quote Mr. Gosse, find suddenly lines that "are like an opal set in some rare gold setting."

One more characteristic we may notice—his power of musical rhythm. No matter whether in simple couplets, or in the most fantastic and delicate trills, he is master alike in each. Take only this—"To Julia's Voice," which in sound apart from sense, distils music,

> So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice
> As, could they hear, the damn'd would make no noise
> But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,
> Melting melodious words to lutes of amber.

Herrick is above all a singer of songs, for singing "He has the merits of Shelley and Coleridge with the capacities of Tommy Moore or Haynes Bayley." To appreciate them fully we ought to hear them sung by a good singer to a good setting. In Hatton's setting of the greatest of all Herrick's love-songs—To Anthea—we realise the rise and fall and fullness of the passion; starting slowly and humbly it rises higher and higher till it rests in a spirit of entire and absolute devotion. Yet at the same time a quiet reading will make the words sing themselves into the memory.

Herrick's charm and grace are so obvious that they must appeal to every one; he is too delicate to analyse, for the effect is somewhat fleeting, and apt, if too keenly, too subtly pressed, to fade away. Whatever the effect his lyre may have on different ears, the strings will never be dumb, for his subject lasts to the end of time. As a true poet that is still left to us says of a singer of these later days, so also can we say of Herrick—

In vain men tell us time can alter
Old loves—or make old memories falter,
  That with the old year, the old year's life closes;
The old dew still falls on the old sweet flowers,
The old sun revives the new fledg'd hours,
  The old summer rears the new-born roses.

CECIL WEATHERLY.

IN MEMORIAM E. B. F.

THEY brought him home when the sun
In the southern sky sank red,
When the winter day was done;
On his own white bed
They laid him cold and dead.

They told how they found him there
In the water, dead and cold.
Did the clear ice fail to bear?
Was he over bold?
Did he fall?—'Tis a tale untold.

Shroud of the winter mist,
Splendid and white and dumb!
Cold were the lips I kiss'd
And his fingers numb;
Will never the warm breath come?

Friend and more than a friend,
Brother and comrade true,
We are come to the dim sad end
Of the way we knew:
I bleed in the dark for you.

The way that we two together
Hand in hand have gone,
Thro' sunny and stormy weather
On still and on ——
And now I am left alone.

I am left alone and I dream
Of the days spent side by side,
Of nights on the summer stream
Or the open tide,
With love for our star to guide.

Our love was as pure and free
As the grace that the lilies win,
As God judg'd you and me
Not a trace of sin
Or shame was there found therein.

Our love was as fervent-deep
  As the heart of a golden wine,
In lands where the warm suns keep,
  Thro' the days divine,
Long watch o'er the fruitful vine.

Brave boy with the bright blue eyes,
  Faithful and fair and strong!
Dead now—when the short day dies
  Like a broken song,
And the night comes dark and long.

Friend and more than a friend,
  Brother and comrade true,
We are come to the dim sad end
  Of the way we knew:
I bleed in the dark for you.

G. G. S. G.

Jan. 10*th.*

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE BEAUTY OF UNPUNCTUALITY.

THERE is an old proverb which says that "procrastination is the thief of time." This has been amended and improved, along with many other proverbs, by a brilliant and witty modern author, who says "Punctuality is the thief of time." This latter saying is very true. Nothing is more fatal to time than punctuality; under its influence time gallops away. It cuts time up into little square bits, all quite square; and when the process is finished there is no time left, but each little square bit represents some one thing, such as breakfast, a lecture, or luncheon. So the saying is very true and very subtle. And yet if we look at the old saying in a certain way, and a way different from the usual way, we will see that it too contains its modicum of truth. In both the proverb quoted, and in its emendation, the word "time" is, I presume, taken to mean *one's own time.* I mean that when the author of the proverb, whoever he was, originally wrote it he intended to intimate that procrastination was an undesirable thing, and that the unpunctual man was a loser by practising unpunctuality. Mr. Oscar Wilde at once perceived the fallaciousness of this idea, and very properly corrected the proverb into what I have already quoted. He saw that procrastination was a charming thing, he realized that unpunctuality made life beautiful, and he noted the alarming and dangerous prevalence of baldness, seriousness and solid common-sense among the punctual. But now that the old proverb has been effectually knocked on the head, or perhaps rather I should say neatly spitted, and now that it is hiding itself away among the middle classes, let us seek it and find it again, and, by misinterpreting the meaning of its original propounder, give to it a new vitality, which will enable it to hold up its head again, and even to shake hands with Mr. Oscar Wilde's emendation.

To do this we have merely to interpret the word "time" in the proverb as "*othev people's time.*"

Then it becomes quite true and, what is more important, quite modern to say that procrastination is the thief of time. Of course it steals other people's time and gives it to the unpunctual man; and by so doing it fulfils another saying that "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away." For the punctual man, as all the world knows, never has any time to spare, *his* time is money and he never throws that away recklessly; whereas the unpunctual man has all his time through all the day to do what he likes with, and in addition to that he can add on whenever it suits him, those other little bits that his slave Procrastination steals from the punctual. By giving this meaning to the word "*time*" we have brought the old proverb round again, and it has now been shown that the statement "Procrastination is the thief of time" is in one sense as true and as modern as the statement "Punctuality is the thief of time" is in another. But, no doubt, there is still a large proportion of people who cling to the old idea that punctuality is a desirable thing and unpunctuality the reverse; and who, although they must have observed the frightful evils which spring from punctuality, and the fearful tendency among the punctual towards early rising, regular exercise, and methodical habits, yet persist in going to bed at a reasonable hour in order that they may be able to rise for early breakfast, or worse still attend a roll-call in the morning.

Of such I would earnestly beg that they will spend a few moments of that portion of the day which is set apart for,—shall we say reading? (in the academical sense of the word), in cultivating habits of unpunctuality; they will, no doubt, find it difficult at first, the path is steep and is beset with thorns and quagmires, not to say dons, but perseverance will be rewarded and, although they may often slip back and waver, yet if they earnestly fix their eyes on *the absolute unpunctuality* and struggle on, they will in the end find it easy and pleasant. Once they have tasted of the real fruit of

unpunctuality, I have no fears for them; they will look back with horror to their former lives, and regret every hour that they lived as slaves to punctuality.

But the unpunctual man is not as might, perhaps, be supposed the only one who is benefited by his own unpunctuality. No, it is his mission to bring light and joy to those who never knew it before; even the most degraded of the punctual sometimes benefits by his appearance. Who that has ever attended a dull lecture (say on the Ethics of Aristotle) and has come, we won't say quite in time, but reasonably early, can have failed to note the joyous and inspiriting effect of the arrival of the unpunctual man, say half an hour late, the ripple of happy laughter that flows through the room, the mild joke on the part of the lecturer, perhaps himself not the least pleased at the interruption, the blush of pleasure, and conscious well-doing on the part of the late arrival, and the triumphant and delighted pride of his close personal friends who indirectly share, as is only right with friends, in his distinction? Again what a great thing it is to be late for dinner! It is true that when people are waiting for an expected guest who is late, they are apt to say unkind things about him and to regard him with hatred and enmity, but when he *does* arrive they forgive him, and even bless him; for his arrival is the signal for the adjournment to the dining-room and thus he appears as a sort of deliverer from famine and (quite illogically no doubt) the very cause of the feast; and, besides, the unpunctual man who arrives late for dinner is bound to provide some beautiful and highly coloured legend to account for his lateness, and thus conservation is promoted, fiction is encouraged, and a basis is formed for the evening's conversation.

It is now so generally admitted that punctuality at breakfast (unless for some particular reason), is not a thing to be encouraged, that it is hardly worth while to discuss that point, and I will content myself with saying that, in my opinion, a man who consistently

comes down in time for breakfast and expects others to do likewise, is quite capable of going out for a walk *before* breakfast *in the fresh morning air*, and such a man usually goes to sleep in a chair and snores directly after dinner, "let no such man be trusted."

Again, how many people have escaped terrible deaths by being late for trains? the number must be something enormous; all the trains that *I* have ever missed have come to the most fearful ends; they have either run off the lines, or gone away from London, or stopped at stations to drink water; and who shall say which of these calamities is the greatest?

But why should I multiply instances of the beauty and blessedness of unpunctuality? Need I remind my readers that the Prussians, by being late for the Battle of Waterloo, not only got at least an equal amount of glory with the English, but to a large extent escaped the discomfort and inconvenience of being shot down in thousands and wounded? or need I dwell upon the exquisite and subtle pleasure which is to be obtained by arriving at a country church after the end of the second lesson, a pleasure which (I am told) is only to be equalled by that of arriving late for a wedding when one is acting one of the leading parts? I feel that it is superfluous; the unpunctual man will agree with me, he will understand my feelings; but the punctual man, being by nature a philistine, cannot understand them and never will. I do not wish to be misunderstood, I know that there are many people who are unpunctual by temperament, and yet are forced by circumstances to be punctual, and I sympathise deeply with them; there are no greater martyrs to be found in this world.

But for those who are really punctual by nature and temperament, there is little hope; they must be philistines. But some philistines are nice, and a nice philistine is one of the most charming and refreshing things in life.

Alfred Douglas.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Lionel Quirethorn.—Any one reading your poem could see that you have a sense of beauty, and a certain power of expression; but your poem has not enough form, and altogether shows too much immaturity of power. I like it and I like you for having written it, but I can't put it in. Write another, and remember that while a Hylas can trip prettily through the flowery meadows of rhyme, it needs a Hercules to scale the splendid sterile steeps of blank verse.—Ed.

Ariel.—Come, come, Caliban, it is no use your changing your *nom-de-plume*, I recognize your hand-writing and your style: for Heaven's sake go to Australia, I adjure you by Sycorax your mother.—Ed.

The Editor feels constrained to apologise for the frequent recurrence of his own signature in the present number, but, *faute de mieux*, he has been compelled to fill up the paper with his own articles. No doubt the approaching end of Term has caused this falling off in the number of suitable prose contributions; there is no lack of poetry.

Will the gentleman who wrote to reproach the Editor for the *injurious* nature of the *sweetmeats* he has provided for the *few*, and at the same time talked glibly of the Editor's *wide opportunities* of obtaining *wholesome intellectual food for the many*, kindly note the above?

The Editor would also like to take this opportunity of emphatically disclaiming any intention or desire to provide wholesome food for the many. Surely the many ought to be quite satisfied with Bovril and *The Isis*.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications, which must be accompanied by the writer's name and address (not necessarily for publication), should be addressed—The Editor, c/o Mr. James Thornton, High Street, Oxford.

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