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LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS.

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ONE SHILLING.

The Spirit Lamp.

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THE DISCIPLE.

WHEN Narcissus died the Trees and the Flowers desired to weep for him.

And the Flowers said to the Trees "Let us go to the River and pray it to lend us of its waters, that we may make tears and weep and have our fill of sorrow."

So the Trees and the Flowers went to the River, and the Trees called to the River and said, "We pray thee to lend us of thy waters that we may make tears and weep and have our fill of sorrow."

And the River answered, "Surely ye may have of my waters as ye desire. But wherefore would ye turn my waters, which are waters of laughter, into waters that are waters of pain? And why do ye seek after sorrow?"

And the Flowers answered, "We seek after sorrow because Narcissus is dead."

And when the River heard that Narcissus was dead, it changed from a river of water into a river of tears.

And it cried out to the Trees and the Flowers and said, "Though every drop of my waters is a tear, and I have changed from a river of water into a river of tears, and my waters that

were waters of laughter are now waters of pain, yet can I not lend ye a tear, so loved I Narcissus."

And the Trees and the Flowers were silent, and after a time, the Trees answered and said, "We do not marvel that thou should'st mourn for Narcissus in this manner, so beautiful was he."

And the River said, "But was Narcissus beautiful?"

And the Trees and the Flowers answered, "Who should know that better than thou? Us did he ever pass by, but thee he sought for, and would lie on thy banks and look down at thee, and in the mirror of thy waters he would mirror his own beauty."

And the River answered, "But I loved Narcissus because, as he lay on my banks and looked down at me, in the mirror of his eyes I saw ever my own beauty mirrored. Therefore loved I Narcissus, and therefore must I weep and have my fill of sorrow, nor can I lend thee a tear."

OSCAR WILDE.

IN SUMMER.

THERE were the black pine trees,
And the sullen hills
Frowning, there were pretty trills
Of birds, and the sweet hot sun,
And little rippling rills
Of water, every one
Singing and prattling; there were bees

Honey-laden, tuneful, and a song
Far off, and a timid air
That sighed and kissed my hair,
My hair that the hot sun loves:
The day was very fair,
There was wooing of doves,
And the shadows were not yet long.

And I lay on the soft green grass,
And the smell of the earth was sweet:
And I dipped my naked feet
In the little stream, and was cool,
As a flower is cool in the heat.
And the day lay still in a dream,
And the hours forgot to pass.

And you came, my love, so stealthily
That I saw you not
Till I felt that your arms were hot
Round my neck, and my lips were wet
With your lips; I had forgot
How sweet you were: and lo! the sun had set,
And the pale moon came up silently.

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

"THE OTHER SIDE."

A BRETON LEGEND.

A la joyouse Messe noire.

"NOT that I like it, but one does feel so much better after it—oh, thank you, Mère Yvonne, yes just a little drop more." So the old crones fell to drinking their hot brandy and water (although of course they only took it medicinally, as a remedy for their rheumatics), all seated round the big fire and Mère Pinquele continued her story.

"Oh, yes, then when they get to the top of the hill, there is an altar with six candles quite black and a sort of something in between, that nobody sees quite clearly, and the old black ram with the man's face and long horns begins to say Mass in a sort of gibberish nobody understands, and two black strange things like monkeys glide about with the book and the cruets—and there's music too, such music. There are things the top half like black cats, and the bottom part like men only their legs are all covered with close black hair, and they play on the bag-pipes, and when they come to the elevation, then——" Amid the old crones there was lying on the hearth-rug, before the fire, a boy, whose large lovely eyes dilated and whose limbs quivered in the very ecstacy of terror.

"Is that all true, Mère Pinquèle?" he said.

"Oh, quite true, and not only that, the best part is yet to come; for they take a child and ——." Here Mère Pinquèle showed her fang-like teeth.

"Oh! Mère Pinquèle, are you a witch too?"

"Silence, Gabriel," said Mère Yvonne, "how can you say anything so wicked? Why, bless me, the boy ought to have been in bed ages ago."

Just then all shuddered, and all made the sign of the cross except Mère Pinquèle, for they heard that most dreadful of dreadful sounds—the howl of a wolf, which begins with three sharp barks and then lifts itself up in a long protracted wail of commingled cruelty and despair, and at last subsides into a whispered growl fraught with eternal malice.

There was a forest and a village and a brook, the village was on one side of the brook, none had dared to cross to the other side. Where the village was, all was green and glad and fertile and fruitful; on the other side the trees never put forth green leaves, and a dark shadow hung over it even at noon-day, and in the night-time one could hear the wolves howling—the were-wolves and the wolf-men and the men-wolves, and those very wicked men who for nine days in every year are turned into wolves; but on the green side no wolf was ever seen, and only one little running brook like a silver streak flowed between.

It was spring now and the old crones sat no longer by the fire but before their cottages sunning themselves, and everyone felt so happy that they ceased to tell stories of the "other side." But Gabriel wandered by the brook as he was wont to wander, drawn thither by some strange attraction mingled with intense horror.

His schoolfellows did not like Gabriel; all laughed and jeered at him, because he was less cruel and more gentle of nature than the rest, and even as a rare and beautiful bird escaped from a cage is hacked to death by the common sparrows, so was Gabriel among his fellows. Everyone wondered how Mère Yvonne, that buxom and worthy matron, could have produced a son like this, with strange dreamy eyes, who was as they said "pas comme les autres gamins." His only friends were the Abbé Félicien whose Mass he served each morning, and one little girl called Carmeille, who loved him, no one could make out why.

The sun had already set, Gabriel still wandered by the brook, filled with vague terror and irresistible fascination. The sun set and the moon rose, the full moon, very large and very clear, and the moonlight flooded the forest both this side and "the other side," and just on the "other side" of the brook, hanging over, Gabriel saw a large deep blue flower, whose strange intoxicating perfume reached him and fascinated him even where he stood.

"If I could only make one step across," he thought, "nothing could harm me if I only plucked that one flower, and nobody would know I had been over at all," for the villagers looked with hatred and suspicion on anyone who was said to have crossed to the "other side," so summing up courage he leapt lightly to the other side of the brook. Then the moon breaking from a cloud shone with unusual brilliance, and he saw, stretching before him, long reaches of the same strange blue flowers each one lovelier than the last, till, not being able to make up his mind which one flower to take or whether to take several, he went on and on,

and the moon shone very brightly, and a strange unseen bird, somewhat like a nightingale, but louder and lovelier, sang, and his heart was filled with longing for he knew not what, and the moon shone and the nightingale sang. But on a sudden a black cloud covered the moon entirely, and all was black, utter darkness, and through the darkness he heard wolves howling and shrieking in the hideous ardour of the chase, and there passed before him a horrible procession of wolves (black wolves with red fiery eyes), and with them men that had the heads of wolves and wolves that had the heads of men, and above them flew owls (black owls with red fiery eyes), and bats and long serpentine black things, and last of all seated on an enormous black ram with hideous human face the wolf-keeper on whose face was eternal shadow; but they continued their horrid chase and passed him by, and when they had passed the moon shone out more beautiful than ever, and the strange nightingale sang again, and the strange intense blue flowers were in long reaches in front to the right and to the left. But one thing was there which had not been before, among the deep blue flowers walked one with long gleaming golden hair, and she turned once round and her eyes were of the same colour as the strange blue flowers, and she walked on and Gabriel could not choose but follow. But when a cloud passed over the moon he saw no beautiful woman but a wolf, so in utter terror he turned and fled, plucking one of the strange blue flowers on the way, and leapt again over the brook and ran home.

When he got home Gabriel could not resist showing his treasure to his mother, though he knew she would

not appreciate it; but when she saw the strange blue flower, Mère Yvonne turned pale and said, "Why child, where hast thou been? sure it is the witch flower"; and so saying she snatched it from him and cast it into the corner, and immediately all its beauty and strange fragrance faded from it and it looked charred as though it had been burnt. So Gabriel sat down silently and rather sulkily, and having eaten no supper went up to bed, but he did not sleep but waited and waited till all was quiet within the house. Then he crept downstairs in his long white night-shirt and bare feet on the square cold stones and picked hurriedly up the charred and faded flower and put it in his warm bosom next his heart, and immediately the flower bloomed again lovelier than ever, and he fell into a deep sleep, but through his sleep he seemed to hear a soft low voice singing underneath his window in a strange language (in which the subtle sounds melted into one another), but he could distinguish no word except his own name.

When he went forth in the morning to serve Mass, he still kept the flower with him next his heart. Now when the priest began Mass and said "Intriobo ad altare Dei," then said Gabriel "Qui nequiquam laetificavit juventutem meam." And the Abbé Félicien turned round on hearing this strange response, and he saw the boy's face deadly pale, his eyes fixed and his limbs rigid, and as the priest looked on him Gabriel fell fainting to the floor, so the sacristan had to carry him home and seek another acolyte for the Abbé Félicien.

Now when the Abbé Félicien came to see after him, Gabriel felt strangely reluctant to say anything about

the blue flower and for the first time he deceived the priest.

In the afternoon as sunset drew nigh he felt better and Carmeille came to see him and begged him to go out with her into the fresh air. So they went out hand in hand, the dark haired, gazelle-eyed boy, and the fair wavy haired girl, and something, he knew not what, led his steps (half knowingly and yet not so, for he could not but walk thither) to the brook, and they sat down together on the bank.

Gabriel thought at least he might tell his secret to Carmeille, so he took out the flower from his bosom and said, "Look here, Carmeille, hast thou seen ever so lovely a flower as this?" but Carmeille turned pale and faint and said, "Oh, Gabriel what is this flower? I but touched it and I felt something strange come over me. No, no, I don't like its perfume, no, there's something not quite right about it, oh, dear Gabriel, do let me throw it away," and before he had time to answer, she cast it from her, and again all its beauty and fragrance went from it and it looked charred as though it had been burnt. But suddenly where the flower had been thrown on this side of the brook, there appeared a wolf, which stood and looked at the children.

Carmeille said, "What shall we do," and clung to Gabriel, but the wolf looked at them very steadfastly and Gabriel recognized in the eyes of the wolf the strange deep intense blue eyes of the wolf-woman he had seen on the "other side," so he said, "Stay here, dear Carmeille, see she is looking gently at us and will not hurt us."

"But it is a wolf," said Carmeille, and quivered all over with fear, but again Gabriel said languidly, "She

will not hurt us." Then Carmeille seized Gabriel's hand in an agony of terror and dragged him along with her till they reached the village, where she gave the alarm and all the lads of the village gathered together. They had never seen a wolf on this side of the brook, so they excited themselves greatly and arranged a grand wolf hunt for the morrow, but Gabriel sat silently apart and said no word.

That night Gabriel could not sleep at all nor could he bring himself to say his prayers; but he sat in his little room by the window with his shirt open at the throat and the strange blue flower at his heart and again this night he heard a voice singing beneath his window in the same soft, subtle, liquid language as before—

Ma zála liràl va jé
Cwamûlo zhajéla je
Cárma urádi el javé
Járma, symai,—carmé—
Zhála javály thra je
al vú al vlaûle va azré
Safralje vairálje va já?
Cárma serâja
Lâja lâja
Luzhà!"

and as he looked he could see the silvern shadows slide on the limmering light of golden hair, and the strange eyes gleaming dark blue through the night and it seemed to him that he could not but follow; so he walked half clad and bare foot as he was with eyes fixed as in a dream silently down the stairs and out into the night.

And ever and again she turned to look on him with her strange blue eyes full of tenderness and passion and sadness beyond the sadness of things human—and as

he foreknew his steps led him to the brink of the Brook. Then she, taking his hand, familiarly said, "Won't you help me over Gabriel?"

Then it seemed to him as though he had known her all his life—so he went with her to the "other side" but he saw no one by him; and looking again beside him there were *two wolves*. In a frenzy of terror, he (who had never thought to kill any living thing before) seized a log of wood lying by and smote one of the wolves on the head.

Immediately he saw the wolf-woman again at his side with blood streaming from her forehead, staining her wonderful golden hair, and with eyes looking at him with infinite reproach, she said—"Who did this?"

Then she whispered a few words to the other wolf, which leapt over the brook and made its way towards the village, and turning again towards him she said, "Oh Gabriel, how could you strike me, who would have loved you so long and so well." Then it seemed to him again as though he had known her all his life but he felt dazed and said nothing—but she gathered a dark green strangely shaped leaf and holding it to her forehead, she said—"Gabriel, kiss the place all will be well again." So he kissed as she has bidden him and he felt the salt taste of blood in his mouth and then he knew no more.

* * * *

Again he saw the wolf-keeper with his horrible troupe around him, but this time not engaged in the chase but sitting in strange conclave in a circle and the black owls sat in the trees and the black bats hung downwards from the branches. Gabriel stood alone in the middle with a hundred wicked eyes fixed on him. They seemed

to deliberate about what should be done with him, speaking in that same strange tongue which he had heard in the songs beneath his window. Suddenly he felt a hand pressing in his and saw the mysterious wolf-woman by his side. Then began what seemed a kind of incantation where human or half human creatures seemed to howl, and beasts to speak with human speech but in the unknown tongue. Then the wolf-keeper whose face was ever veiled in shadow spake some words in a voice that seemed to come from afar off, but all he could distinguish was his own name Gabriel and her name Lilith. Then he felt arms enlacing him.—

Gabriel awoke—in his own room—so it was a dream after all—but what a dreadful dream. Yes, but was it his own room? Of course there was his coat hanging over the chair—yes but—the Crucifix—where was the Crucifix and the benetier and the consecrated palm branch and the antique image of Our Lady perpetuae salutis, with the little ever-burning lamp before it, before which he placed every day the flowers he had gathered, yet had not dared to place the blue flower.—

Every morning he lifted his still dream-laden eyes to it and said Ave Maria and made the sign of the cross, which bringeth peace to the soul—but how horrible, how maddening, it was not there, not at all. No surely he could not be awake, at least not *quite* awake, he would make the benedictive sign and he would be freed from this fearful illusion—yes but the sign, he would make the sign—oh, but what was the sign? Had he forgotten? or was his arm paralyzed? No he could move. Then he had forgotten—and the prayer—he must remember that. A—vae—nunc—mortis—fructus. No surely it did not run thus—but something like it

surely—yes, he was awake he could move at any rate—he would reassure himself—he would get up—he would see the grey old church with the exquisitely pointed gables bathed in the light of dawn, and presently the deep solemn bell would toll and he would run down and don his red cassock and lace-worked cotta and light the tall candles on the altar and wait reverently to vest the good and gracious Abbé Félicien, kissing each vestment as he lifted it with reverent hands.

But surely this was not the light of dawn it was liker sunset! He leapt from his small white bed, and a vague terror came over him, he trembled and had to hold on to the chair before he reached the window. No, the solemn spires of the grey church were not to be seen—he was in the depths of the forest; but in a part he had never seen before—but surely he had explored every part, it must be the "other side." To terror succeeded a languor and lassitude not without charm—passivity, acquiescence indulgence—he felt, as it were, the strong caress of another will flowing over him like water and clothing him with invisible hands in an impalpable garment; so he dressed himself almost mechanically and walked downstairs, the same stairs it seemed to him down which it was his wont to run and spring. The broad square stones seemed singularly beautiful and irridescent with many strange colours—how was it he had never noticed this before—but he was gradually losing the power of wondering—he entered the room below—the wonted coffee and bread-rolls were on the table.

"Why Gabriel, how late you are to-day." The voice was very sweet but the intonation strange—and there sat Lilith, the mysterious wolf-woman, her glittering

gold hair tied loose in a loose knot and an embroidery whereon she was tracing strange serpentine patterns, lay over the lap of her maize coloured garment—and she looked at Gabriel steadfastly with her wonderful dark blue eyes and said, "Why, Gabriel, you are late to-day," and Gabriel answered, "I was tired yesterday, give me some coffee."

* * * *

A dream within a dream—yes, he had known her all his life, and they dwelt together; had they not always done so? And she would take him through the glades of the forest and gather for him flowers, such as he had never seen before, and tell him stories in her strange, low deep voice, which seemed ever to be accompanied by the faint vibration of strings, looking at him fixedly the while with her marvellous blue eyes.

* * * *

Little by little the flame of vitality which burned within him seemed to grow fainter and fainter, and his lithe lissom limbs waxed languorous and luxurious—yet was he ever filled with a languid content and a will not his own perpetually overshadowed him.

One day in their wanderings he saw a strange dark blue flower like unto the eyes of Lilith, and a sudden half remembrance flashed through his mind.

"What is this blue flower?" he said, and Lilith shuddered and said nothing; but as they went a little further there was a brook—*the* brook he thought, and felt his fetters falling off him, and he prepared to spring over the brook; but Lilith seized him by the arm and held him back with all her strength, and trembling all over she said, "Promise me Gabriel that you will not cross over." But he said, "Tell me what is this blue

flower, and why you will not tell me?" And she said, "Look Gabriel at the brook." And he looked and saw that though it was just like the brook of separation it was not the same, the waters did not flow.

As Gabriel looked steadfastly into the still waters it seemed to him as though he saw voices—some impression of the Vespers for the Dead. "Hei mihi quia incolatus sum," and again "De profundis clamavi ad te"—oh, that veil, that overshadowing veil! Why could he not hear properly and see, and why did he only remember as one looking through a threefold semi-transparent curtain. Yes they were praying for him—but who were they? He heard again the voice of Lilith in whispered anguish, "Come away!"

Then he said, this time in monotone, "What is this blue flower, and what is its use?"

And the low thrilling voice answered, "It is called 'lûli uzhûri,' two drops pressed upon the face of the sleeper and he will *sleep*."

He was as a child in her hand and suffered himself to be led from thence, nevertheless he plucked listlessly one of the blue flowers, holding it downwards in his hand. What did she mean? Would the sleeper wake? Would the blue flower leave any stain? Could that stain be wiped off?

But as he lay asleep at early dawn he heard voices from afar off praying for him—the Abbé Félicien, Carmeille, his mother too, then some familiar words struck his ear: "Libera mea porta inferi." Mass was being said for the repose of his soul, he knew this. No, he could not stay, he would leap over the brook, he knew the way—he had forgotten that the brook did not flow. Ah, but Lilith would know—what should he do? The

blue flower—there it lay close by his bedside—he understood now; so he crept very silently to where Lilith lay asleep, her long hair glittening gold, shining like a glory round about her. He pressed two drops on her forehead, she sighed once, and a shade of praeternatural anguish passed over her beautiful face. He fled—terror, remorse, and hope tearing his soul and making fleet his feet. He came to the brook—he did not see that the water did not flow—of course it was the brook of separation; one bound, he should be with things human again. He leapt over and ——

A change had come over him—what was it? He could not tell—did he walk on all fours? Yes surely. He looked into the brook, whose still waters were fixed as a mirror, and there, horror, he beheld himself; or was it himself? His head and face, yes; but his body transformed to that of a wolf. Even as he looked he heard a sound of hideous mocking laughter behind him. He turned round—there, in a gleam of red lurid light, he saw one whose body was human, but whose head was that of a wolf, with eyes of infinite malice; and, while this hideous being laughed with a loud human laugh, he, essaying to speak, could only utter the prolonged howl of a wolf.

* * * *

But we will transfer our thoughts from the alien things on the "other side" to the simple human village where Gabriel used to dwell. Mère Yvonne was not much surprised when Gabriel did not turn up to breakfast—he often did not, so absent minded was he; this time she said, "I suppose he has gone with the others to the wolf hunt." Not that Gabriel was given to hunting, but, as she sagely said, "there was no knowing

what he might do next." The boys said, "Of course that muff Gabriel is skulking and hiding himself, he's afraid to join the wolf hunt; why, he wouldn't even kill a cat," for their one notion of excellence was slaughter —so the greater the game the greater the glory. They were chiefly now confined to cats and sparrows, but they all hoped in after time to become generals of armies.

Yet these children had been taught all their life through with the gentle words of Christ — but alas, nearly all the seed falls by the wayside, where it could not bear flower or fruit; how little these know the suffering and bitter anguish or realize the full meaning of the words to those, of whom it is written "Some fell among thorns."

The wolf hunt was so far a success that they did actually see a wolf, but not a success, as they did not kill it before it leapt over the brook to the "other side," where, of course, they were afraid to pursue it. No emotion is more inrooted and intense in the minds of common people than hatred and fear of anything "strange."

Days passed by, but Gabriel was nowhere seen—and Mère Yvonne began to see clearly at last how deeply she loved her only son, who was so unlike her that she had thought herself an object of pity to other mothers— the goose and the swan's egg. People searched and pretended to search, they even went to the length of dragging the ponds, which the boys thought very amusing, as it enabled them to kill a great number of water rats, and Carmeille sat in a corner and cried all day long. Mère Pinquèle also sat in a corner and chuckled and said that she had always said Gabriel

would come to no good. The Abbé Fèlicien looked pale and anxious, but said very little, save to God and those that dwelt with God.

At last, as Gabriel was not there, they supposed he must be nowhere—that is *dead.* (Their knowledge of other localities being so limited, that it did not even occur to them to suppose he might be living elsewhere than in the village.) So it was agreed that an empty catafalque should be put up in the church with tall candles round it, and Mère Yvonne said all the prayers that were in her prayer book, beginning at the beginning and ending at the end, regardless of their appropriateness—not even omitting the instructions of the rubrics. And Carmeille sat in the corner of the little side chapel and cried, and cried. And the Abbé Fèlicien caused the boys to sing the Vespers for the Dead (this did not amuse them so much as dragging the pond), and on the following morning, in the silence of early dawn, said the Dirge and the Requiem—*and this Gabriel heard.*

Then the Abbé Fèlicien received a message to bring the Holy Viaticum to one sick. So they set forth in solemn procession with great torches, and their way lay along the brook of separation.

* * * * *

Essaying to speak he could only utter the prolonged howl of a wolf—the most fearful of all beastial sounds. He howled and howled again—perhaps Lilith would hear him! Perhaps she could rescue him? Then he remembered the blue flower—the beginning and end of all his woe. His cries aroused all the denizens of the forest—the wolves, the wolf-men, and the men-wolves. He fled before them in an agony of terror—behind him, seated on the black ram with human face, was the wolf-

keeper, whose face was veiled in eternal shadow. Only once he turned to look behind—for among the shrieks and howls of beastial chase he heard one thrilling voice moan with pain. And there among them he beheld Lilith, her body too was that of a wolf, almost hidden in the masses of her glittering golden hair, on her forehead was a stain of blue, like in colour to her mysterious eyes, now veiled with tears she could not shed.

* * * * *

The way of the Most Holy Viaticum lay along the brook of separation. They heard the fearful howlings afar off, the torch bearers turned pale and trembled—but the Abbé Fèlicien, holding aloft the Ciborium, said "They cannot harm us."

Suddenly the whole horrid chase came in sight. Gabriel sprang over the brook, the Abbé Fèlecian held the most Blessed Sacrament before him, and his shape was restored to him and he fell down prostrate in adoration. But the Abbé Fèlicien still held aloft the Sacres Ciborium, and the people fell on their knees in the agony of fear, but the face of the priest seemed to shine with divine effulgence. Then the wolf-keeper held up in his hands the shape of something horrible and inconceivable—a monstrance to the Sacrament of Hell, and three times he raised it, in mockery of the blessed rite of Benediction. And on the third time streams of fire went forth from his fingers, and all the "other side" of the forest took fire, and great darkness was over all.

All who were there and saw and heard it have kept the impress thereof for the rest of their lives—nor till in their death hour was the remembrance thereof absent from their minds. Shrieks, horrible

beyond conception, were heard till nightfall—then the rain rained.

The "other side" is harmless now—charred ashes only; but none dares to cross but Gabriel alone—for once a year for nine days a strange madness comes over him.

ERIC STENBOK.

HARMONY OF EVENING.

From French of Baudelaire, "Harmonie du Soir," p. 155, ed. Lévy.

NOW trembles on its stem each flower I know,
And like a censer breathes its incense rare,
Music and perfume fill the evening air. . . .
O dreary valse; O dreamy vertigo!

Flowers from their censers breathe an incense rare;
The viol quivers like a heart in woe—
O dreary valse! O dreamy vertigo!
Sad is the sky; but, like God's altar, fair.

The viol quivers like a heart in woe,
A heart that hates the night of blank despair;
The sky is sad; but, like God's altar, fair;
Drowned as in curdling blood the Sun sinks low.

This tender heart that shrinks from blank despair
Culls remnants of bright days of long ago;
Tho' sinks the Sun in blood, my heart's a-glow;
For thoughts of thee shine like a monstrance there.

(Fleurs du Mal.) P.L.O.

ECHELLE D'EROS.

(D'après Lucien "Amours.")

LE premier pas de ton échelle,
Aphrodite unisexuelle
C'est regarder le doux enfant,
Et de sa voix oüir le chant.

Le second pas est quand tu serres
Avec des oeillades légères
Ses mains au contour velouté,
Dont charme l'électricite.

Puis, le troisième est quand ta bouche
Ses lévres purpurines touche,
Ainsi qu' un rayon de soleil
Baise une fleur au teint vermeil.

Le pas prochain, c'est la caresse,
Quand ton bras amoureux le presse,
Pendant que presque sans dessein
Tu Frottes doucement son sein !

Le dernier pas de l'amourette,
N'est-ce-pas l'union compléte ;
L'extase des corps et des coeurs,
Et je ne sais quelles laugueurs.

(Chants et Poesies de P.L.O.)

OF THE DEFENCE OF POESY.

SHELLEY, although far from a respecter of pedigrees, was nevertheless justly proud of his alleged descent from so exquisite a poet and courtier as the renowned Sir Philip Sidney. Moreover; while his actual kinship with the elder poet appears to have been collateral rather than direct: yet the author of the *Adonais* offers, undoubtedly, not a few psychical resemblances to the impassioned singer of the incomparable *Stella*. Both in their day defended the citadel of Poesy against the onslaughts of the Philistines: by means of their characteristic prose Alastor and Astrophel defeated the legions of the profane with their own weapons.

In the year 1579 Stephen Gosson (late of Ch. Ch., Oxon), an actor and playwright turned preacher, published a pamphlet called *The School of Abuse*, which, according to the title-page, contained "a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters and suchlike Caterpillars of a Commonwealth." It was a tediously learned composition; and Gosson was rash enough to dedicate it to Sidney. Two years later Sidney produced an answer to it by composing his famous essay *An Apologie for Poetrie*, which however was left unpublished until 1595, nine years after Sir Philip's death at Arnheim. Thus, Gosson's *School of Abuse* was the precursor, by a little over fifty years, of Prynne's *Histriomastix, or The*

Scourge of Stage Players, to be in its turn immortalised by Milton's magnificent counterblast, the *Masque of Comus*. The later editions of Sidney's famous essay are entitled *The Defence of Poesy*; and it was probably no accident which caused Shelley to write above his unfinished piece on the same subject the words "*A Defence of Poetry*."

Sidney, after modestly declaring that he knows not "by what mischance in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipt into the title of a Poet, I am provoked to say something unto you in defence of that my unelected vocation"; proceeds forthwith to give a sketch of poetry from the earliest ages to his own day. He tells his reader how history has usurped the seat of Poetry, Herodotus even calling each of the books of his history by the name of one of the Muses; how Plato has clothed the dry bones of his philosophy in a beautiful vesture, borrowed from Poetry; how among the Romans a poet was called Vates, the Diviner or Prophet, "so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge"; how both the oracles of Apollo and the prophecies of the Sibyls were wholly delivered in verse; and how David's psalms are a divine poem, while "lastly and principally, his handling his prophecy, is merely poetical." He then shows how the imagination may transcend Nature: for "Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry, as divers poets have done: her world is brazen, the Poets only deliver a golden." And yet the Idea of the poet or maker is not wholly imaginative; to bestow a Cyrus on the world is "to make many Cyrus's, if they will learn aright, why, and how that Maker made him": the Art of Poetry then, above everything else, differentiates us from the rest of created beings; themselves, as it were, the finished

poems of the arch-singer; for "our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will, keepeth us from reaching unto it." Poesy, then, is an art of imitation, as Aristotle says; and of this Sidney discovers three several kinds. The religious, as in the *Song of Songs* and the *Book of Job*; the philosophical, as in Lucretius and Vergil's *Georgics*; and lastly the group of Poets *par excellence*, "for these third be they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be: but range only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be, and should be." Sidney uses the word Poet in its fullest sense; for even anent his third division of singers while admitting that "the greatest part of Poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numbrous kind of writing which is called verse": yet he adds, "indeed but apparelled, verse being but an ornament and no cause to Poetry: since there have been many most excellent Poets, that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of Poets. For Xenophon, who did imitate so excellently, as to give us '*effigiem justi imperii*,' the portraiture of a Just Empire under the name of Cyrus (as Cicero saith of him) made therein an absolute heroical Poem." From which it may be surmised that the learned Sir Philip Sidney would, had he the opportunity, have found a place among his third division of Poets for the writer of *Leaves of Grass* as well as for the maker of *Marius the Epicuræan*.

Sidney shows how the peerless Poet illuminates the dark places unearthed by Philosopher or Historian, by giving a perfect picture of some imagined scene or circumstance. He quotes many an instance from Poetry

of fiction more real than history; of some poetical conceit surviving reality: for instance, "Let us hear," he says, "old Anchises speaking in the midst of Troy's flames, or see Ulysses in the fulness of all Calypso's delights, bewail his absence from barren and beggarly Ithaca": or again, "Meseems I see before my eyes the lost Child's disdainful prodigality, turned to envy a Swine's dinner"; moreover; he quotes the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and the fables of Æsop, as of far greater value than any mere collocation of hard facts or tangled theories. He proceeds to shew how Aristotle considers Poetry more philosophical and more studiously serious than history: for the former deals with the universal consideration; whereas history is more especially concerned with the particular. There is a close analogy between this position and that of Shelley in the opening sentences of his essay. The later poet defines reason and imagination as the principles of analysis (τὸ λογιζειν) and of synthesis (κὸ ποιειν) respectively. He then considers Poetry in a general sense as the expression of the imagination; "as connate with the origin of man," who in an early state of society is a wind-swept lyre sensible to the most subtle influences both of nature and of his fellows: "Every original language," he finely says, "near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem: the copiousness of lexicography and the distinctness of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the form of the creations of poetry." He then restricts the word poetry to its more ordinary use; and becoming strangely reminiscent of Sidney's words on the same subject declares the popular division into prose and verse to be "inadmissable in accurate philosophy." He decries the vanity of trans-

lation: "It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel." He holds that if the harmony or spirit of poetical language be retained, the poet may often discard traditional form: he cites Plato and Bacon as essentially poets; while he instances Shakspere, Dante, and Milton, as before all things, supreme philosophers. To Sidney of all Sciences the Poet is the monarch who will lead you through a fair country: to Shelley a poem is "the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth"; and while "a story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted." Shelley also names Herodotus, Plutarch, and Livy as poets: the poet indeed is a nightingale the whole beauty of whose song cannot be fully understood until after he has ceased to sing; for "the Jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impanneled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations." The wise of many generations have, since Sidney, been moved by "the old song of Percy and Douglas" more than with a trumpet and have not scrupled to be proud of their "own barbarousness." Both poets instance how the founder of Christianity vouchsafed to use the flowers of Poetry, allegory and parable: Shelley mentions Homer as the delight of infant Greece; the foundation of all future civilization; the creator of heroic types such as Achilles, Hector and Ulysses: while

Sidney speaks of how Homer, a Greek, flourished, before Greece flourished; for the honour of whose birthplace seven cities strove, though many towns banished philosophers; whose Achilles was the ideal knight of Alexander, "the Phœnix of Warlike Princes, who left his schoolmaster, living Aristotle, behind him, but took dead Homer with him." Sidney easily overthrows the time-honoured objections against poetry: its uselessness; its falsity; its being the "Nurse of Abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires"; and the fact that Plato banished Poets out of his Commonwealth. The first three objections he answers with charming paradoxes: such as "the Poet never affirms anything, and therefore never lieth"; or "Poetry abuseth not man's wit, but man's wit abuseth Poetry"; while as for Plato's dislike for Poets it was the custom of Philosophers after having "picked out of the sweet mystries of Poetry" to seek by all means, like ungrateful apprentices, to discredit their masters.

Sidney indeed appears as a strict upholder of the Unities in the drama; he deprecates the mingling of Kings and Clowns, and the production of mongrel tragi-comedies: but Sir Philip wrote before Marlowe's mighty line was heard in the land; and before Doctor Faustus's greater pupil had in *King Lear*—in Shelley's words "the most perfect specimen of the dramatic art existing in the world"—mingled Clowns and Kings in so transcendent a fashion. The author of *An Apologie for Poetrie* had only the cumbrous *Gorboduc* to swear by amid the arid waste which stretched from the far-off splendours of Chaucer and Gower almost to his own time. Finally: he ends a long peroration with the hope that "all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine" may

no more scorn the sacred mysteries of Poetry; but should they still remain obdurate then although he could not wish them the asses ears of Midas "nor to be rimed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland: yet this much curse I must send you, in the behalf of all poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour, for lacking skill of a Sonnet: and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an Epitaph."

Shelley, on the other hand, traverses much the same ground; save that he has the most glorious period of English literature between the date of his essay and the death of Sidney; but on the Elizabethan age as a whole he hardly touches: he is more concerned with the abstract qualifications of poetry; and of the beautiful things to be said by the way. With *King Lear* before him; his view of the Drama is more wide than Sidney's could well be. It takes Genius to transcend tradition: and the pioneer into the untraversed places of the spirit is doubly happy who has a man of kindred mind to interpret him. Shelley, although he is willing to admit that the combination of tragedy with comedy as in *King Lear* may determine the balance in its favour as against the *Agamemnon*, yet looks wistfully at the more complete equipment of the Greek stage as concerns the semi-religious accessories of harmonious music and dancing. In a luminous paragraph he sums up the poetical history of Rome: the great writers of the Augustan age saw man and nature in the mirror of Greece; the true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions; these "are the episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of men. The Past, like an inspired raphsodist, fills the theatre of everlasting generations with their harmony."

Dante and Milton who stand at equal intervals from the Reformation were both deeply penetrated with the ancient religion of the civilised world: the first is the bridge uniting the stream of time, the ancient with the modern world; the first religious reformer and awakener of entranced Europe, inspirer of our own Chaucer eventually: the second is the maker of the great epic, the hero is Satan. It may not here be wholly irrelevant to remark that the attitude of Satan to God in the *Paradise Lost* is curiously parallel to that of Prometheus to Zeus in Shelley's own wonderful poem.

Finally: as a poet writing of his art Shelley declares that "poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it; it is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred; it is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds; it is as it were the interpenetration of a divine nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over the sea, which the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only as on the wrinkled sand which paves it; poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man. The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry; for poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

A. R. Bayley.

IN PRAISE OF IDLENESS.

NOW and again some person with more courage than discretion adventures a pæan in praise of idleness. But it falls on deaf ears, for the world has long since made up its mind to avow its contempt for the foibles it fears to betray, especially for those it would willingly practice were it not afraid of consequences. Only lately the author of one of the least known, and therefore most delicious, modern books—himself a citizen of Chicago, of all places for such a prophet to arise—expressed his belief that "too much has been said about the dignity of labour and not enough of the preciousness of leisure." Civilization he would have you admit is "heavily in the debt of leisure, and the success of any society worth considering is to be estimated largely by the use to which its fortunate ones put their spare moments"; going on to say that "in the great land of which Shelby County may be called the centre"—in other words America—"activity considered of itself, and quite apart from its object and results, is regarded as a very meritorious thing. There the bare figure of leisure when exposed to the public gaze is expected to be decorously draped in the garments of strenuous endeavour. People there are expected to be busy, even if they are not."

To an unprejudiced person—the favourite synonym

for oneself—it is always beyond doubt that many of the labels which ticket the virtues and vices to-day have been mixed up. Whether designedly by the custodians of our morals we need not enquire. Probably the muddle is the debris of an outworn creed that mortification is in itself wholesome; that nasty doses are health giving, and pleasant draughts the reverse of innocuous. At the time cleanliness was loudly proclaimed as next to godliness its unfashionable address caused it to be neglected; now when advertising placards recognise no other virtue people practise it secretly. So possibly the gospel of work so strenuously insisted on will ultimately induce people to let it alone, because of its noisy companions. Most people have not education enough to appear ignorant, nor enough energy to decide to be lazy. They still fancy that useless information is an excellent substitute for knowledge, and that idleness is a crime and work in itself a virtue.

Far from the wise philosophy of the savage, who has learned to limit his desires to the easily attainable, is this greedy effort to make the most of that brief life which an orthodox hymn assures us is here our portion. Odd is it not that we deplore the brevity of time and waste in needless labours the grudged measure allotted to us? We delight to destroy happiness by efforts to obtain it. The peace of a lazy day between the sheets, the superb omnipotence of complete inaction is held to be an active crime. We are told also on the authority of a popular hymn that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," which is exactly the point. Satan objects to idleness sinless and satisfying, and prefers activity, which is obviously mischief. The hurrying to and fro is held to be peculiarly an attribute

of our ghostly foe. "Dost laugh in scorn to see how fools are vexed to add to golden numbers golden numbers" is not the utterance of a preacher but of a poet. Yet we cannot forget too often that poets are sometimes preachers—despite the fact that successors of the ever-lamented Tupper, who proclaim the beauty of work, unmindful of the example they offer of its futility, gain not even the immortality of Clapham they strive so hard to attain.

The joy of idleness is often confused with that rapt contemplation of the Ideal—something symbolic and Ibsen-born, which is the attribute of a limited income and still more limited common sense. The state of subjection desired by a Buddhist who would attain Nirvana is akin to the glorified torpidity of a retired butterman. The weary woman's epitaph, "Don't weep for me now, don't weep for me never, I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever," holds a wiser faith. Merely to avoid work is not idleness, on the contrary, such an effort is dangerously near activity, for the vigour needed to suppress—a revolution, or a rhyme—is quite distinct from the ease of renunciation, giving up that which one does not really desire. Preferable to this is the attitude of the sagacious fox who on the suspicion that the grapes were out of reach knew intuitively that they were sour. Overlooking the obvious fact that in England foxes are deemed to be carnivorous, and might be trusted in Covent Garden with impunity, one cannot do better than thus recognise all difficult pleasures as sour, which in truth they must be, however sweet when close at hand. Idleness, like the unexpected itself, only happens when one is not looking for it.

Custom and Mrs. Grundy are too strong. In the

privacy of print one may advocate heresies forbidden in the publicity of home life. Hogarth, who gave a career full of novel emotions to his idle prentice, awarded a dull Paradise to the industrious; and we still fail to catch the point of his sarcasm, which seems to be the folly of either sort of work—for real idleness neither of his heroes knew.

We pity—especially if we are poor—the mere money-maker, yet all the time shew greater agility in pursuing even less valuable stuff. Yea though one digested the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, supplement and all, shall it help you to gain a new thrill from a sunset over the grimy Thames, or add a new rhythm to its flashing water beneath an August sun? The man who despises all his creature comforts is better employed; the Salvation Army fanatic is more meritoriously content. For to pursue the superfluous is the true folly. To be idle frankly and gracefully is a lost art. Nobody preaches its gospel. Did he believe it he would not trouble to proselytize any more than had I the courage of my convictions I should venture a word in their praise. "To exist beautifully" has become a bye-word in Philistia—this shows the folly of betraying the utterance of the Sphinx, and also the certainty of her secret being misunderstood by all who hear it at second hand.

Of course we must not overlook the fatal temptation that besets a certain class. Probably to abstain from a course of university extension lectures demands a healthy brutality unknown alike to the muscular Christian or the sanitary Agnostic. The craving for culture and the acquisition of other people's knowledge is supposed to be a product of civilization; on the contrary it is the lowest human passion. To be mindful of the

value of the unimportant is only known to the monarchs of creation, the few bipeds and quadrupeds who have retained the supernatural power of avoiding profitable industry. Idleness is its own reward, as surely as virtue is its own punishment. But we must take its reward first—to look forward to idleness as the final end of work is the most insidious fallacy. Work indeed is but a narcotic to dull one's real vitality. The actual dignity of labour should never be imperilled by too close familiarity. Idleness may be one's bedfellow—work should be kept at a formal distance, and the pleasure of its companionship left to very rich people only, who have no other amusement possible. Idleness, forbidden to kings and not unknown to costers, would, if once it became universal, bring back the Golden Age—for when nobody did anything except what they wished, the fatal inclination to industry would prompt all the foolish people to the few necessary labours, which all the wise could then placidly enjoy.

Laziness is too often but procrastination, merely putting off the needless pleasure until one has more energy to be disappointed with it. Indolence which is mere inertness is also a foolish imitation. The true idleness is to let fancy have play, to loiter and own that the pleasure of life is living. The disease of mere work—whether passively doing it, or actively leaving it undone—has a library to record its approval; the disease of idleness may not be proven, since ease is its real synonym. He who has learned so much becomes a king straightway, the content beloved of the poets is not that which is attainable after effort, but the attained with no effort, save the enormous vigour needed to prevent hereditary restlessness goading one to useful

labour, which must be conquered ere real idling is possible. The art of doing without must not be confused with a monastic and theatrical renunciation, which shows how much it really values a thing by refusing to accept it. The idle singer neath a blossomed bough, content to see the wild world go its ways —heedless of whence or how—is the type one loves most.

Since the apologist for leisure, the author of *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani* quoted just now, spake from that lotus eating city, the abode of apathy—Chicago—one is tempted to say that he who sang its joys knows it not, seeing that the portion the fates allot him he destroys in praising it; but this were to misunderstand the case, one man's work is another man's leisure. Idleness is surely not always to refrain even from leisure; that is merely another aspect of work—it is the involuntary impulse to drift with the whim of the moment, to discover exquisite delight in a sound or an odour, to cease to enquire, and above all to refuse to defend one's position. Such impulse must be inborn. The cult of the excellent Mr. Smiles showed "self-help" to be helping oneself at life's banquet table as largely as others permitted. The genuinely idle person merely allows others to help him. For happy as he must be, the world has always a weak corner in its heart for a charming idler. Idle—in its easy sense its early meaning is something that is sportive, playful, a mood of dainty toying with life, the opposite of strenuous endeavour, and may be as nearly allied to activity as inactivity so it be but spontaneous. But reasoning on such a matter would be folly—better to remember that as *gloire* rhyming nearly enough to *victoire* made the

French a military people, so leisure rhyming to pleasure should make the English a happy nation. But nobody wants to be happy—he would rather be busily malcontent. For idleness disturbs no one, and to cease from troubling his fellows is the last renunciation a philosopher ever dreams of practising.

GLEESON WHITE.

IN LYONESSE.

LEAN but thy forehead backward o'er my breast
  Till nigh-enshrouded by thy curls sun dight,
  Death's self grown gracious in his own despite
Us twain forget to slay. O Rose, confessed
Flower crowned consummate o'er the radiant rest
  In earthly furrow sown! Thou beacon-light
  Of Love's own fashioning for his heart's delight
No cares corroding our scant hours arrest!
  Be thou my care, my coronet, my cross
Of faith unfeigned beside the Severn Sea,
That crawls with sapphire fingers amorously
  To clip thy foot; for here no mad waves toss
  To break repose, nor memory maketh loss
Of hours too brief to mock Eternity.

A. R. Bayley.

Fragment of last month's SPIRIT LAMP *with marginal comments supposed to have been written by the Editor of the* ISIS, *picked up in the High Street.*

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

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

Hear! hear!

I quite agree with you.

So much the worse f the dialogue.

There is one here wh would like to get hold you.

How can a disease tak the form of health?

Charles Kingsley is better writer than you' ever be.

Rot! Bosh!

PLEASURE THE PILGRIM.

WHERE the dust is thick, in the toiling street;
Through the hush that reigns where the stately dwell,
He passes with sound of flute and bell,
By night and day in cold and heat;

He passes along with a dancing gait
And twines bright flowers in his hair;
His eyes are clear as the winter air
When night is early and dawn comes late.

Two petals that curl, as wayward and red;
A kiss of blood upon night's new snow,
Are his lips, where the swift smiles come and go
Like meteor beams when the day is dead.

He dances unseen through the passers by,
His breath is a word in the ear of each,
A word that lives not in any speech,
And each one follows, he knows not why.

In the cup he holds with his long white hand,
He has mingled the red of the wine with dust,
And wisdom with folly, and love with lust,
That they who drink may not understand.

For a season he strews their path with gold
And holds bright jewels to their eyes.
For a season he stains with glorious dies
The tissue of life that is waxing old.

Then flitting further in wayward flight
He leaves in their hands the broken toys
Of outworn pleasures and tasteless joys
That can charm no longer or delight.

Still those who have not yet followed him
And the sound of his flute, or his magic smile,
They long to bask, if but for a while,
In the light that has made their lives look dim.

While the dancers that dance in his changing maze
Are as bubbles that shine on a moving stream,
As flowers that bloom in beauteous dream,
As the arching flight of a rocket's blaze.

Like a lute when the hand of the player is still,
Like a rose that the wind of the morning has strewn,
Like a cage whence the birds with their music have flown,
Are those who have drunk of his wine their fill!

The children laugh without knowing why,
While youth looks up with deeper blush,
And the aged stoop with a sudden hush,
When Pleasure the Pilgrim passes by.

B.

THE INCOMPARABLE BEAUTY OF MODERN DRESS.

IN one of the minor Colleges of Oxford, a mimic court was lately held to try the case of an undergraduate, against whom an indictment for excessive foppery had been lodged by one of his friends. The case created no little interest in the University. The most able speakers from the Union were retained on either side and, so as to secure a perfectly free and unprejudiced trial, the jury was empannelled of twelve undergraduates with no preconceived ideas upon any subject under the sun. The defendant, one of those who try to realize the ideal man by combining in themselves whatever seems best in either sex, was rather rich and not ill looking; he could paint very nicely in water-colour, spoke French with an accent that was the envy of all Paris and, though not exactly clever, had a considerable fund of woman's wit. In the course of the trial, counsel for the prosecution called for certain books that would, he contended, throw some light upon the toilet of the defendant and, though the application was opposed by the opposite side, the judge ruled that they should be produced. There were three of them, bound in apple-green leather and bearing the title *Journal de Toilette*. On the cover of each was a device in gold line of Narcissus regarding himself in a lake of formal scollops, while two little

fishes swam reverently round his reflection. The first page bore the signatures of the defendant and of his valet and of the remainder every one was given up—as in a diary—to one day of the year. In ruled spaces were recorded there the cut and texture of the suit, the colour of the necktie, the form of jewellery which had been worn on the day to which the page referred. No detail was omitted and a separate space was set aside for "Remarks." The prosecution called someone to prove that, taking into consideration all the articles of dress mentioned, there were no less than 95,000,000 possible combinations that could be worn; but the judge, a distinguished classic, ruled the evidence irrelevant on the ground that mathematics were not an exact science. How the trial terminated is not pertinent to the subject of this brief article (I believe the defendant was let off with the nominal sentence that he should sacrifice two virgin neckties in the quadrangle) and I merely cite the case as of import in so far as it teaches us to what a point of artistic excellence the dress of a modern man may attain.

It is quite true, I do not doubt, that in every epoch of history the youth of all the great courts or cities has given itself over to the vanity of the body and has indulged in all the little pomps of costume. We read of the delicately embroidered tunics worn by a *barbatulus* in the days of the Empire, of the care that the young Athenian would spend in knotting the thong of his sandal; at the Court of Richard II. we learn that the young nobles "thought more of the nice guilding of their belts and the pretty polishment of their sword-tops than of the cure of their master's kingship." Foppery may have found its chief extravagance at

Versailles when Louis XV. was king, but I doubt if there has ever been a time when dress amongst men reached so high an artistic level as in England at this moment, when the fashion was so reasonable and beautiful or the desire to conform to it so widespread. Morally, it may be that this tendency towards widespread love of dress is regretable. I should not wonder; though it seems to me that this very love often affords an admirable discipline to young men who otherwise might have dangerously little interest in life. The necessity of early rising which it entails—else how should the toilet be complete before sunset?—the habits of carefulness and self-respect and of conformity to social law which are inculcated by it—all these, I imagine, have their ethical value. The making of his toilet is to the young exquisite the healthy exercise of a trained faculty in accord with the highest excellence.

At all events, the spread of foppery from the upper to the middle classes is a cause for great aesthetic gladness. As in Life our first duty is to realise the soul, so in Art it should be to idealise the body. Apart from the intense pleasure that may be found in dressing well, to do so is our artistic duty to the community, and it is useless to set about beautifying our furniture or our thoroughfares till the principles of self-adornment have been truly gauged by all classes. Personal appearance is the very basis of Art. It is often asked how the Jews have contrived to exercise so vast and subtle an influence over the artistic history of modern Europe, and the answer is to be found in the number of tailor's shops owned and managed by members of the race in England, France and Germany. The scissors have been as powerful a weapon in their hands as the sword in the hands of the Gentiles.

But, it is argued, can any near approach be made to Beauty through the medium of costume, when we consider the narrow, sombre limits prescribed by the sumptuary laws of to-day? Nothing, in point of fact, could be more foolish than the complaints made against modern dress on the ground that it is monotonous, common or unlovely. Of the dress of no period whatsoever can we say that it is lacking in loveliness and we should not forget that, whilst Beauty is for ever being prattled of by those who have the slightest knowledge of it; ugliness is a word which is seldom heard except from the lips of those to whom the sense of Beauty has been denied. To the aesthetic temperament nothing seems ugly. There are degrees of beauty—that is all.

And I do not know of any period when costume reached so supreme a point of excellence as in London at this moment.

The problem of dress is, of course, intimately connected with the problem of the human form. So to cloak the body that its beauty may not be hidden nor its defects revealed, that is the enigma which, by flitting ever from one fashion to another, by the selection of many modes, we have for years been trying to solve, and at length, I maintain, we have solved it finally. It is as yet difficult to realise this, but let us reflect for a moment how everything points to its truth. How little fashion has changed during the last five years! The mean, which has been struck between the looseness of clothes in the 'seventies and their rigid tightness in the early 'eighties, is one from which there are no signs of our departure.

Take, for example, the problem of the leg. Different

centuries and different nations have all had their theories as to how the leg should be clothed. The Romans failed for the reason that they revealed too little of it. They allowed no form to the body; in the thick folds of a toga, the figure of Hyperion is hardly fairer than that of a Satyr; Punchinello, thus clad, might pass for Adonis. The other extreme is found in the costume of savages whether in the heart of Africa or merely across the border. Legs indeed may not be very beautiful things, but it is silly and barbarous of the Scotch to expose them, as the Spartans exposed the children who did not please them, to the bleak winds of the hill side. Moreover it is shirking the problem. For the truth is that though legs may be unsatisfactory in point of form, most of them possess a certain grace of movement and proportion to the rest of the frame: so that the only right way of dealing with them is to cover them, as is done by the tailor of to-day, in cloth that shall fall gracefully—not too loosely—round them. Thus the limbs of the weakling escape ridicule, the muscles of the "strong man" are veiled from our frightened eyes. The compromise is an excellent one.

Let any one who has modish yearnings to the dress of—say!—the Elizabethan era, pass one morning down the slope of St. James' Street. Can he fail to be pleased at the sight of the dandies he will meet there? Are they not better clad than the courtiers of the sixteenth century in their puffings and pinchings of silk or velvet. There is something wonderful in the sombre delicacy of modern dress, in its congruity of black and of white and of grey. There is not the smallest part of a modern dandy's dress that is not truly related to its fellows and inseparable

from them. The limbs of the body are not more necessary one to another, and it is in this "inevitableness," this elaborate simplicity that modern dress gives it greatest charm. The difference between the flawless and the faulty in our costume is the difference between a mosaic, closely and exquisitely wrought, and a piece of patch-work.

Not that, in any sense, this austerity tends to promote monotony. Fashion does not seek to rob us of our Free Will and, truly, there has never been a time when costume gave scope for so many tricks of taste and symbols of personality as it does to-day. One of the greatest exquisites in Europe, one of the strictest of Fashion's priests, dresses every day in accordance with his mood, yet never is known to violate the prevailing fashion. In the morning, after his bath, he puts on a plain gray dressing-gown, in this he breakfasts, looks through his letters and reads the morning papers at his leisure. With the aid of a cigarette, he allows his temper, as formed by the weather, the news and so forth, slowly to develop itself for the day. His mood suggests imperceptibly what colour, what form of clothes he shall wear. He rings for his valet—"I will wear such and such a coat, such and such a tie: my trousers will be of this or that tone and my jewellery of that or this pattern." Thus it is possible for a man of subtle taste and temperament to use dress in its most modern form, as a means of realising and—what is better—of accentuating the true mood of his mind.

This rational and practical side of costume, as an intensifier and an index of personality, has hitherto been almost unknown. There are scores of ways

in which character is read now-a-days—how comes it that no one has yet seriously tried to read it through the medium of clothes? In the curves and conditions of a top-hat there is, I maintain, fully as sure a criterion of the wearer's character as in his face or his hand or his handwriting. How comes it that no paper is devoted exclusively to the subject of male attire? The number of papers that cater for the foppery of ladies is ever on the increase; yet the columns of our press scarcely is mention ever made of the dress of men. Even the graphic reporters give us no more than the fact that "the Premier wore a tea-rose in his button-hole," "that the stalls were thronged with youths in immaculate cuffs and collars" or—this is seldom omitted—that "the prisoner wore a tightly buttoned frock-coat."

Yet, however, useful dress might be made to the science of psychology and whatever encouragement the establishment of a fashion-paper for gentlemen might give to the art of personal adornment, we must not forget that dress is, first of all, an art, something to be pursued for its own sake and the sake of the beauty it may yield us. To pursue it thus is, at this moment, the aim of the young dandies of Pall Mall; they dress well by virtue of instinctive imitation and their artistic value is as great as that of the plaster casts of Greek sculptury. But to lead the fashion, to be a giver of sumptuary laws is something to which they cannot aspire and is reserved for artists of the eye like Brummel or Disraeli, or of the touch like Wainwright or the brilliant favourite of Lady Blessington. And to understand the real value of the modern costume of man has been reserved for a poet, whom

journalists, seldom guilty of a breach of bad taste, attacked with unusual vulgarity for this very cause. The writer of that splendid, sinister work *Dorian Gray* has given an entirely modern setting to his characters. In every scene of the story we find him dwelling upon and drawing rich dramatic effect from such things as the wing of an Inverness cape or a pair of straw-coloured gloves or, even, a pair of patent-leather boots. Foppishness is woven, with exquisite effect, through the very fabric of the work.

Indeed, there has never been a time when man's dress afforded so many surprises of beauty. There is a great charm in the black and blue stripes which spring upon a top-hat when the sun smites it with his rays, and a charm—is there not?—in the glint of candles upon the polished surface of a shirt-front or in the facings of a coat covered by the gardenia's moonlike disc or the tattered crimson disc of a carnation, in the soft curves of a knotted tie or in the fall of a fur-lined coat?

Now in the ordering of all these elegantiae of costume there will always be ample scope for change. There are many things that Fashion in her fickleness may effect; she has a delightful future, full of whimsical ease and happy trifling. For in Dress, as in Politics, there cannot be absolute finality. New colours and patterns will be imagined, new stuffs woven, new gems, it may be, unearthed, and, to give such things their vogue, there must always be some prince paramount of Fashion whose taste shall dominate the town and guard dandyism from monotony by the daring of his whims.

But the basis of costume cannot, I think, be changed

hereafter. The fashion of the last few years has crystallised. It cannot be explained away. Everywhere it is accepted. The barbarous costumes which were designed in bygone days by vulgarity and class-hatred or hatred of race are happily dying out. The grotesque forms of Highland dress are so decadent that the kilt, I am assured, is now confined entirely to the soldiery and to a small cult of Scotch Archaïcists. The costermonger with his little rows of pearl buttons has fled for sanctuary to the variety stages and the costume of the Swiss girl has become a mere tradition of the fancy ball. From the boulevard of one capital and from the avenues of another the people flock to the tasteful tailors of London. Even into Oxford, this curious little city, where nothing is ever born and nothing ever quite dies, the force of the movement has penetrated, insomuch that tasselled cap and gown of degree are rarely seen in the streets or the colleges. In a place which was, till recent times, scarcely less remote, in Japan, the long bright gardens are trodden every day by men who are shod in boots like our own, who walk—a little strangely still—in closely-cut cloth of little colour and stop each other, from time to time, laughing to show how that they too can fold an umbrella after the manner of real Europeans.

It is very strange, this universal acquiesence in the dress that we have designed. It is very strange that, of all nations, England should have done this great service for the beauty of nations. Let us dwell upon this feature in her history. Much may be forgiven to the Victorian era for that it solved the problem of costume.

H. M. Beerbohm.

APOLOGIA PRO CLASSE SUA.

(A FRAGMENT.)

TALK not to me of broad philosophies,
Of morals, ethics, laws of life;
Give me no cautious theories,
No instruments of wordy strife.
I will not forge laborious chains
Link after link, till seven times seven,
I need no ponderous iron cranes
To haul my soul from earth to Heaven.
But with a burnished wing
Rainbow-hued in the sun,
I will dive and leap and run
In the air, and I will bring
Back to the earth a heavenly thing.
    I will dance through the stars
    And pass the blue bars
Of Heaven. I will catch hands with God
And speak with Him,
I will kiss the lips of the Seraphim
And the deep-eyed Cherubim,
I will pluck of the flowers that nod
Row upon row upon row,
In the infinite gardens of God,
To the breath of the wind of the sweep of the lyres,
    And the song of the strings
    And the golden wires,
And the mystical musical things
That the world may not know.

* * * *

ALFRED DOUGLAS.

FROM THE ARABIC.

OH when will it be, oh when will it be, oh when,
That she shall be here, and the flute be here, and the wine be here? oh then
Her lips shall kiss the lips of the flute, and my lips shall kiss the wine,
And I shall drink music from her sweet lips, and she shall drink madness from mine.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

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