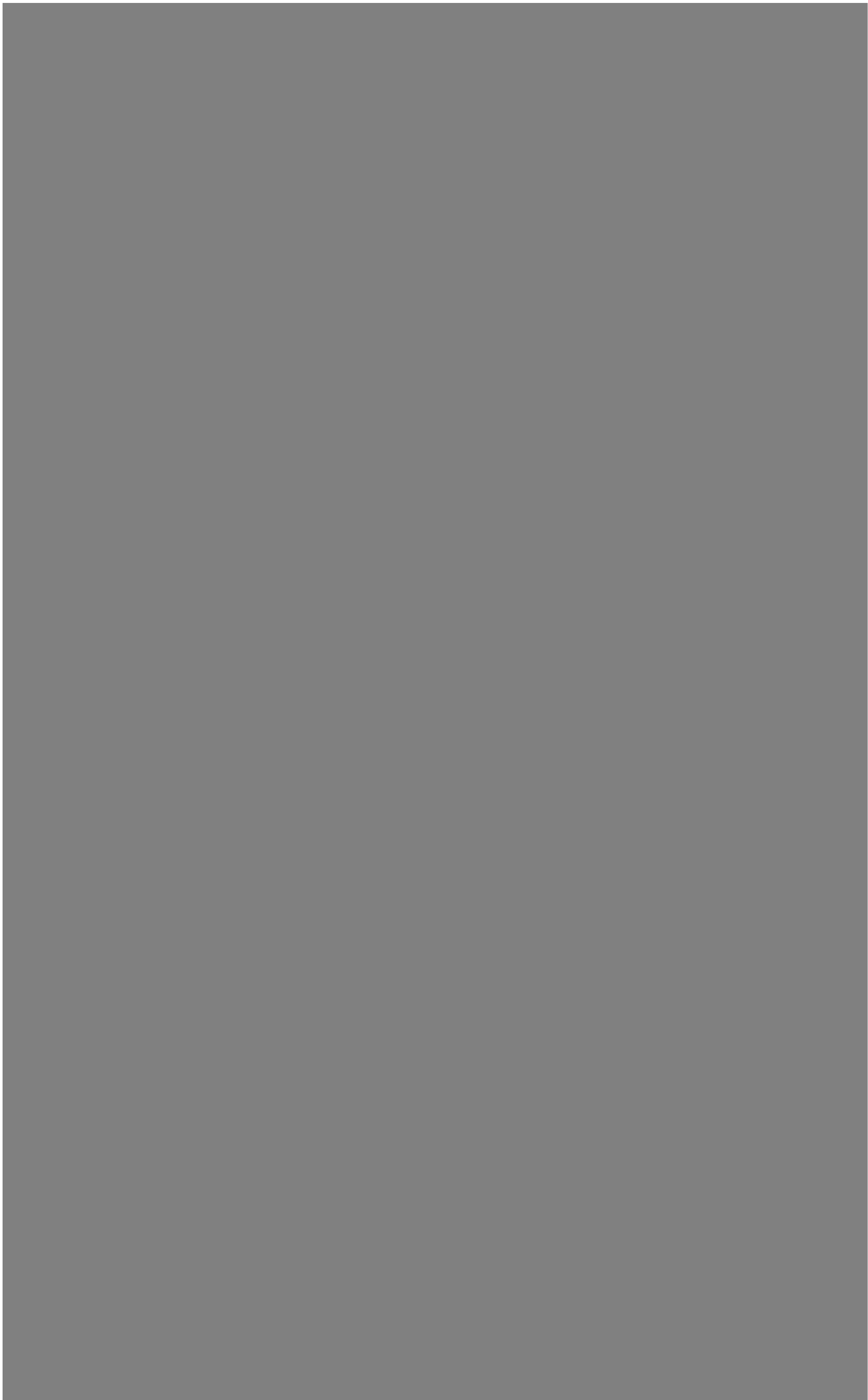
Idle Hours in a Library

William Henry Hudson



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Idle Hours in a Library

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Idle Hours in a Library

By

William Henry Hudson

Professor of English Literature, Stanford University

William Doxey

At the Sign of the Lark

San Francisco

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William Doxey
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TO

F. E. H.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE

DEAR OLD DAYS

Preface

The title of this little volume was chosen because it seems to indicate a characteristic possessed in common by the otherwise unrelated essays here brought together. They may all be described in a general way as holiday tasks—the results of many hours of quiet but rather aimless browsing among books, and not of special investigations, undertaken with a view to definite scholastic ends. They are, moreover, as will readily be seen, completely unacademic in style and intention. Three of the papers were originally put into shape as popular lectures. The remaining one—that on the Restoration novelists—was written for a magazine which appeals not to a special body of students, but to the more general reading public. The title, hit upon after some little searching, will, I believe, therefore be accepted as fairly descriptive, and will not, I hope, be condemned as overfanciful.

A word or two of more detailed explanation may, perhaps, be permitted. Of the essays on Pepys's Diary and the "Scenes of Bohemian Life," I would simply say that they may be taken to testify to the unfailing sources of unalloyed enjoyment I have found in these delightful books; and I should be pleased to think that, while they may renew for some readers the charm of old associations, they may perhaps send others here and there for the first time to the works themselves—in which case I shall be sure of the gratitude of some at least of those into whose hands this little volume may chance to fall. I can scarcely say as much as this for the study of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley—for most readers will be quite as well off if they leave the lucubrations of these two ladies alone. But in these days we all read novels; and it has seemed to me, therefore, that my brief account of some of the early experiments in English fiction may not be altogether lacking in interest and

suggestiveness. Thus, after some hesitation, I decided to find a place for the authors of “Oroonoko” and “The New Atalantis” in these pages. So far as the chapter on Shakspere’s London is concerned, it is needless to do more than indicate the way in which it came to be written. A number of years ago, while engaged for other purposes in the study of Elizabethan popular literature, and more especially of the drama of the period, I began, for my own satisfaction, to jot down, as I lighted upon them, the more striking references and allusions to manners, customs, and the social life of the time. I presently found that I had thus gathered a good deal of miscellaneous material; and it then occurred to me that, properly organized, my memoranda might be made into an interesting popular lecture. The lecture was presently prepared, and was frequently delivered, both in England and in this country. Naturally enough, the paper can lay no claim to exhaustiveness; it is scrappy, formless, and sometimes superficial. But the reader of Shakspere may find it of some value, so far as it goes.

The essay on the Restoration novel is reproduced, greatly changed and somewhat amplified, from the English magazine, “Time.” The remainder of the volume has not before been in print.

In such a book as this, it would be pedantic to make a display of authorities and references, though I hope that any direct indebtedness has always been duly recorded in the proper place. But I must do myself the pleasure of adding, that here, as elsewhere in my work, I have gained more than I can say from the help and encouragement of my wife.

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON.

Stanford University, California, 1897

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London Life in Shakspere’s Time

London Life in Shakspere’s Time

It is the purpose of the present paper to give some glimpses of every-day life in the English metropolis in the latter part of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth centuries. Our subject will take us from the main highways of history into by-paths illuminated by the popular literature of the time. It is not the grave historian, the statesman, or the philosopher, but rather the common playwright, the ballad-monger, the pamphleteer, whom we must take here as our guides. Yet ere we intrust ourselves to their care it will not be amiss if, with the view of making the clearer what we shall presently have to say, we pause for a moment at the outset to consider some of the more general aspects of the period with which we are to deal.

Looking, then, first of all, at the political conditions of the time, we may describe the history of the reign of Elizabeth as the history of consolidation rather than of superficial change. What strikes us most is not the addition of fresh culture-elements, but the reorganization and expansion of elements already existing. The forces of evolution had turned inward, acting more upon the internal structure than upon the external forms of society. The Wars of the Roses were now things of recollection only, the fierce contentions which the struggle between York and Lancaster had produced having subsided with most of the bitter feelings engendered by them. Save for the collision with Spain, which ended in the defeat of the great Armada, England enjoyed a singular immunity from complications with foreign powers; and an opportunity, freely made use of, was thus offered for the development of foreign trade. The growth of a strong commercial sentiment, consequent on this, acted as a powerful solvent in the dissolution of feudal ideas and the disintegration of feudal forms of life. The conflict was now mainly between opinions—between rival forces of an intellectual and moral character. The power of the upper classes—the representatives of the ancient *régime* of chivalry—was on the wane; the power of the middle classes—the representatives of the modern *régime* of commerce—showed corresponding growth. The voice of the people, through their

delegates in Parliament, began to be acknowledged by the caution exhibited on sundry critical occasions by the crown; the country at large was growing richer and stronger; the sense of English unity was intensified by the very dangers which menaced the national life; and as men came more and more to recognize their individualities, they demanded greater freedom of thought and speech. “England, alone of European nations,” as Mr. Symonds pointed out, “received the influences of both Renaissance and Reformation simultaneously.” The mighty forces generated by these two movements in combination—one emancipating the reason, the other the conscience, from the trammels of the Middle Ages—told in countless ways upon the masses of society. But with all this,—partly, indeed, in consequence of all this,—there was a deep-seated restlessness at the very springs of life. The contests of opposing parties were carried on with a fierceness and acerbity of which we know little in these more moderate days; the minds of men were set at variance and thrown into confusion by a thousand distracting issues; and, unrealized as yet in all their significance and power, those Titanic religious and political agencies were beginning to take shape which were by and by to rend English society to its very core.

When we turn from the political character of the age to the moral character of the people, we find it difficult to avoid having recourse to a series of antitheses, after the familiar manner of Macaulay, so violent and surprising are the contrasts, so diverse the component qualities which analysis everywhere brings to light. The age was virile in its power, its restlessness, its amazing energy and fertility; it was virile, too, in its unrestraint, its fierceness, its licentiousness and brutality. Men gloried in their newly conquered freedom, and in that wider knowledge of the world which had been opened up to them by the study of the past, by the scientific researches of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, by the discoveries of Amerigo Vespucci, Columbus, Jenkinson, Willoughby, Drake. National feeling was strong; the national pulse beat high. Yet, in spite of Protestantism and an open Bible, it was essentially a pagan age; in spite of its Platonism and Euphuism, a coarse and sensual one. You had only to scratch the superficial polish to find the old savagery beneath. Your smiling and graceful courtier would discourse of Seneca and Aristotle, but he would relish the obscenest jest and act his part in the grossest intrigue. Your young gallant would turn an Italian sonnet, or “tune the music of an ever vain tongue,” but within an hour he might

have been found in all the blood and filth and turmoil of the cockpit or the bear-ring. The unseemliest freedom prevailed throughout society—amidst the noble ladies in immediate attendance upon the queen, and thence all down the social scale. Laws were horribly brutal, habits revoltingly rude. All the powerful instincts of a fresh, buoyant, self-reliant, ambitious, robust, sensuous manhood had burst loose, finding expression now in wild extravagance, indulgence, animalism, now in great effort on distant seas, now in the mighty utterances of the drama; for these things were but different facets of the same national character. Still, with all its gigantic prodigality of energy, with all its untempered misuse of genius and power, the English Renaissance kept itself free from many of the worst features of the Spanish and Italian revivals. It was all very well for Benvenuto Cellini to call the English "wild beasts." Deep down beneath the casuistry and Euphuism, beneath the artificiality and the glittering veneer, beneath the coarseness and the brutalism, there was ever to be found that which was lacking in the Southern character—a stern, hardy, tough-fibred moral sense, which in that critical period of disquietude and upheaval formed indeed the very sheet-anchor of the nation's hopes. It must never be forgotten that it was this age of new-found freedom, and of that license which went with it like its shadow, that produced such types of magnificent manhood as Raleigh, strong "the fierce extremes of good and ill to brook"; as Spenser, sweetest and purest of poets and of men; as Sidney, whom that same Spenser might well describe as "the most noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles, both of learning and chivalry"; as Shakspere, whom, all slanders notwithstanding, we, like his own close friends, still think and speak of as our "Gentle Will."

Such, so far as we are able to sum them up in a few brief sentences, were some of the salient characteristics of the great age of the Virgin Queen—an age, as Dean Church has said, "of vast ambitious adventure, which went to sea, little knowing whither it went, and ill-provided with knowledge or instrument"; but an age of magnificent enterprise and achievement, none the less. And now it is for us to follow down into some of the details of their private, every-day existence the men and women who, to use a suggestive phrase of Goethe's, were the citizens of this period, and whose little lives shared, no matter in how small and obscure a way, in the movements and destinies of the large world into which they were born.

Just a quarter of a century before Queen Elizabeth’s death, a proclamation was issued, reciting that her Majesty foresaw that “great and manifold inconveniences and mischiefs” were likely to arise “from the access and confluence of the people” to the metropolis, and making certain stringent provisions with a view to keeping down the population of the city. This enactment is useful as showing us that even at that early date,—as later on, in the time of Smollett,—the enormous growth of London was held to be matter for alarm. London was indeed increasing rapidly in extent, population, wealth, and power; and Lyly was hardly guilty of extravagance when, in his “Euphues,” he wrote of it as a place that “both for the beauty of building, infinite riches, variety of all things,” “excelleth all the cities of the world; insomuch that it may be called the storehouse or mart of all Europe.” Yet we are most of us probably unable without much effort to realize how different was the English metropolis of Elizabeth’s time from the metropolis of the present day.

We have to remember, in the first place, that the London with which we are now concerned was a walled city, and that the territory which lay within the walls,—that is, the metropolis proper,—represented but a very small portion of what is now included within the civic area. Newgate, Ludgate, Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, and Aldersgate, still mark out and perpetuate by their names the narrow lines of those protecting walls which held snug and secure the mere handful of folk of which London was then composed. At nine o’clock in the evening, when Bow-bell rang, and the voices of the other city churches took up the curfew-strain, the gates were shut for the night, and the citizens retired to their dwellings under the protection of armed watchmen who guarded their slumbers along the walls. Westward from Fleet Street and Holborn, beyond which so much of modern London lies, the city had not then penetrated.

Within and about the walls there were many “fair churches for divine service,” with old St. Paul’s in their midst—the Gothic St. Paul’s of the days before the great fire; and many prisons to help the churches in their philanthropic work. Open spaces were very numerous; trees were everywhere to be seen; fields invaded the most sacred strongholds of commercial activity; conduits and brooks (whereof Lamb’s Conduit

Street to-day carries a nominal reminiscence) flowed through every part of the town. The narrow, straggling streets ran hither and thither with no very marked definity of aim; for county councils had not as yet come into existence, and metropolitan improvements were still hidden in the womb of time; and so unsanitary were the general conditions that they were seldom free from epidemic disease. Cheap, with its old cross just opposite the entrance to Wood Street, was a famous spot for trading of all kinds; but there were other localities which had their specialized activities. St. Paul's, for instance, was the acknowledged quarter for booksellers, as indeed it has continued to be down to the present time. Houndsditch, like the Houndsditch of to-day, and Long Lane in Smithfield, abounded in shops for second-hand clothing—*fripperies*, as they were called. "He shows like a walking frippery," says one of the characters in "The City Madam"; while it was in the latter place that Mistress Birdlime in "Westward Ho" speaks of "hiring three liveries." In St. Martin's-le-Grand clustered the foreign handicraftsmen of doubtful character, who manufactured copper lace and imitation jewellery; and Watling Street and Birchin Lane were the haunts of the tailors. Then, again, it was in Bucklersbury that the grocers and druggists most did congregate. "Go to Bucklersbury and fetch me two ounces of preserved melons," says Mistress Tenterhook in "Westward Ho." Fleet Lane and Pie Corner were so famous for their cook-shops that Anne in "The City Madam" might well exclaim, when the porters enter with their baskets of provisions, that they smell unmistakably of these localities; while to Panyer Alley repaired all true lovers of tripe. Even religious opinions had their special homes. Bloomsbury and Drury Lane, for example, were favorite haunts of Catholics; and the Puritans were particularly strong in Blackfriars. This explains the words put by Webster into the mouth of one of his characters: "We are as pure about the heart as if we dwelt amongst 'em in Blackfriars," and Doll Common's description of Face, in "The Alchemist," as—

> "A rascal, upstart, apocryphal captain,
>
> Whom not a Puritan in Blackfriars will trust."

And through all this jumble of wealth and dirt, away past the suburbs and into the open country beyond, ran "the famous River Thames"—the

“great silent highway,” as it has been called,—fed by the Fleet and other forgotten and now hidden streams, and bearing upon its majestic current its hundreds of watermen, its boats, its barges, and its swans. It was spanned by a single bridge, of which Lyly speaks enthusiastically in his “Euphues,” and which is described by the German traveller, Paul Hentzner, as “a bridge of stone, eight hundred feet in length, of wonderful work. It is supported,” this writer continues, “upon twenty piers of square stone, sixty feet high and thirty broad, joined by arches of about twenty feet diameter.” And he adds, touching in a brief sentence upon a characteristic of its structure which must seem particularly curious to modern readers: “The whole is covered on each side with houses, so disposed as to have the appearance of a continued street, not at all of a bridge.”

But if the difference between to-day and three centuries ago is striking enough within the city walls, still more striking does it become as we pass beyond the gates. Fleet Street, where Dr. Johnson was presently to enjoy watching the ceaseless ebb and flow of the great tide of human life, was still suburban; Chancery Lane, with its wide gardens on the eastern side and Lincoln’s Inn enclosure on the western, possessed only a few scattered houses at either end. The Strand—

“That goodly thoroughfare between
The court and city,”

as a Puritan poet called it—was a long country road flanked with noblemen’s houses (“a continual row of palaces, belonging to the chief nobility,” Hentzner says), the gardens of which on the one side ran down to the river, and on the other backed upon the fine open space of pasture-land called Covent (that is, Convent) Garden. At Charing there was an ancient cross, and beyond, wide fields known as the Haymarket, the quiet stretches of St. James’s Park, and the wide country road called Piccadilly, the regular highway to Reading and the west. St. Martin’s Lane ran up between hedgerows and meadows to Tottenham, or Totten Court. In the other direction, towards Westminster, there was the Court, with its Tiltyard, standing where the Horseguards now stand, and beyond this the city of Westminster, with its abbey and great hall, lying in the quiet fields. Just opposite, on the other bank, in an unbroken expanse of

country, stood Lambeth Palace, whence a long, lonely road led eastward, through Lambeth Marsh, to the city purlieus on the Surrey side of the water.

What we know as the suburbs of London were then separate villages, to reach which one had to make a tedious journey over open country and along desolate lanes. Finsbury Field was covered with windmills, and there the archers met for practice. Islington was famous, to quote Ben Jonson, for the citizens that went a-ducking—that is, duck-hunting—in its ponds. Pimlico and Holloway were favorite resorts of pleasure-seeking townsfolk on Sunday afternoons. Hoxton and Hampstead and Willesden lay far away in the country; Holborn was a rural highway running through the little village of St. Giles's towards Oxford; and the Edgeware Road took you away to Tyburn, the spot which has acquired such grim notoriety in the annals of crime. Highway robberies took place at Kentish Town and Hampstead; even the Queen's Majesty was mobbed by a handful of ruffians in the sequestered neighborhood of Islington, which stood alone among the hills to the north; while no man who valued his life would venture to walk after nightfall, unarmed or unprotected, as far into the country as Hyde Park Corner.

Let us now look a little more closely at the street life of the city which we have thus roughly sketched.

There was little of that never-ceasing bustle with which we are familiar—little of the eternal hurry, the intense strain, the rush and turmoil of our modern existence; but the buzz of commerce was everywhere to be heard, telling us that the world was not asleep. The streets were rough, ill-paved, and narrow, and the appearance of a vehicle in them was sufficiently rare an occurrence to attract attention; though the ostentation of the rich in making use of carriages on every possible occasion was already beginning to be satirized by the writers of the time—as, for instance, by Massinger in "The City Madam," and by Cooke in "Greene's Tu Quoque." There were the churches—six score or so of them, Lyly tells us, within the walls; the inns, with their wide hostleries; the private houses, built not in long uniform rows, but irregularly, as though they desired to preserve some traces of personal character. Their upper stories were frequently built out, and sometimes projected so far across the narrow streetway that Jonson pictures a lady and her lover exchanging confidences from the topmost windows of opposite

tenements—“arguing from different premises,” as Dr. Holmes would say. There, too, were the shops, looking more like booths in a fair, with their quaint and picturesque signs, and their merchandise exposed to public gaze on open stalls, while in front of them paced the young apprentices, besieging the ears of every passer-by with their ceaseless clamor of “What d’ye lack?” and their long-winded recommendations of the articles which they had for sale. In Middleton’s “Michaelmas Term” we have a scene before Quomodo’s shop, and Quomodo himself calling out to Easy and Shortyard: “Do you hear, sir? What lack you, gentlemen? See, good kerseys and broadcloths here—I pray you come near.” Many other passages of similar import might be added. Nor were these the only, or even the noisiest, symptoms of commercial enterprise. Itinerant vendors of the Autolycus tribe also patrolled the streets, murdering the Queen’s English, like their descendants of to-day, as in loud, hoarse voices they advertised their miscellaneous wares. There were fishwives, orange-women, and chimney-sweeps, broom-men, hawkers of meat pies and pepper, of rushes for the floor, of mats, oat-cakes, milk, and coal; and numerous Irish costermongers (of the kind Face refers to in “The Alchemist”) who trafficked in fruit and vegetables. In addition to all these, and to complete the confusion of the streets, there were mountebanks, jugglers, and ballad-singers, full of strange tricks and new songs, whereby to attract attention and pick up a few odd coins.

The daily round of existence in the city streets offered, therefore, no small amount of interest and variety; while from time to time the ordinary routine was broken in upon by fresh elements of excitement. Now it might be a splendid procession—perhaps of one of the great livery companies, purse-proud and ostentatious; perhaps of the newly-installed Lord Mayor, on his way back from Westminster; perhaps of the Virgin Queen and her retinue, coming cityward on some state occasion from Richmond or Whitehall. Now, again, it might be a procession of a very different kind—a mob following a thief who was going to be put into the pillory, or a woman of disreputable character who, meeting the fate dreaded by Doll Common, was carted through the streets to the accompaniment of a brass band, and amid the cries and hootings of the populace; or a group of felons who were led out of the city along Holborn to Tyburn, there to pay the last penalty of the law. Sometimes, too, there were large gatherings in St. Paul’s churchyard to hear some famous preacher—like Bishop Jewell—discourse from the steps of the

great cross; and sometimes there were street fights between retainers of rival houses, or bands of hot-tempered ’prentices belonging to the different city guilds—fights which generally ended in bloodshed and broken heads. The ’prentices of the city were indeed notoriously a turbulent tribe, and they figure in many a brawl and squabble in the plays of the time. “If he were in London, among the clubs, up went his heels for striking of a ’prentice,” says Gazet, in Massinger’s “Renegado,” referring in this phrase to the fact that clubs were habitually kept in the shops ready for use in the event of any affray. So that the London streets were not so dull as one might at first suppose; while for the rest there was plenty of quiet, steady activity from dawn till dusk. Though the struggle for wealth was not then so keen as it is to-day, and men on the whole took things more easily, life was full of earnestness and purpose, and commercial ambition shared the magnificent vigor and energy of the Elizabethan nature with the fever of adventure and a youthful, spontaneous, and unabashed delight in the pleasures of sense. Wide roads were open to the young man of brains and courage, roads which would lead to place and power. Fortunes were to be made, positions won; and the ’prentice, starting out in his career, had many examples of self-made and successful men to remind him that the world was all before him where to choose, and that the future largely depended upon himself. Thus, though the London of Shakspere’s time was far different from the London of to-day as regards its commerce, its activities, its habits and daily life, it was still a thriving city, the object of ambition, the dreamland of the aspiring youth, the great heart which set the blood pulsing and dancing through all the arteries of the land.

As for the shops themselves, we must dismiss them with a very few words. The modern difficulty—the importation of foreign wares, and the immigration of foreign dealers—was already to the front; and Italian, French, German, Spanish, and Flemish tradesmen were to be found in almost every street—each with his peculiar class of custom. Some writers of the time, like William Stafford, in his “Brief Conceit,” grow violent over the inroads of these aliens, and roundly proclaim, with Bishop Hall, that all the vice of the city was to be laid at their doors. But in the ordinary walks of business the Englishman, in spite of a good deal of characteristic bluster and grumbling, still held his ground. The apothecary sold love-charms and philters, tobacco, cane, and pudding, as well as drugs; but there were regular tobacco merchants, also, whose

shops were of unrivalled splendor. The immense vogue of this novel luxury is sufficiently shown by the statement made by Barnaby Riche in “The Honesty of this Age,” that seven thousand shops in London “vented” tobacco, and by the passing remark of Hentzner, that it was smoked (or “drunk,” as the phrase then went) everywhere. At the theatre and all such places of public resort, the pipe was the Englishman’s habitual companion, and from sundry passages in Jonson, Dekker, Marston, and other dramatists, we infer that it was sometimes carried even to church.

Among the most noteworthy of the tradesmen of the time were the barbers, who, be it remembered, were surgeons as well, and would cut your beard or bleed you, trim your hair or pull out your teeth, with absolute impartiality. Their shops were the favorite resorts of idlers, as they had been long since in the days of Lucian; and owing to the immense attention then paid to hair and beard, the more accomplished among them drove an enormous trade. Their garrulity was proverbial. “Oh, sir, you know I am a barber and cannot tittle-tattle,” says Dello, in Lyly’s “Midas,” in a scene which is full of curious information concerning the barbers of the time. The Cutbeard of Jonson’s “Silent Woman,” is another illustration in point. It may be mentioned, as an odd feature of their establishments, that a lute was commonly kept in readiness for the amusement of those who might have to wait for attention, as the newspapers and comic weeklies are kept to-day. “Barbers shall wear thee on their citterns,” says Rhetias to Coculus, in Ford’s “Lover’s Melancholy,” referring to the grotesque figureheads by which these instruments were often decorated.

In the matter of the relations of sellers and purchasers, we may note, as one of those little touches of nature which make the whole world kin, that customers, as we learn from more than one old play, often indulged in the quite modern practice of having half the goods in a shop laid out for inspection before buying the most trumpery article. Nor, on the other hand, were the dealers of the time much behind their descendants of to-day in what are known as the tricks of trade. Adulteration was a crying evil; some of the methods often employed, for example, for the “sophistication” of tobacco, will be recalled by all readers of “The Alchemist.” Another common practice among shopkeepers was that of darkening their stores to disguise the inferiority of their merchandise.

This is constantly referred to by contemporary writers. The sturdy Stubbs attacks the abuse in his “Display of Corruptions.” “They have their shops and places where they sell their cloth very dark and obscure,” he writes, referring to the mercers and drapers of his time, “of purpose to deceive buyers.” Webster, in “The Duchess of Malfi,” employs this familiar abuse in the turn of a compliment: “This darkening of your worth is not like that which tradesmen use in the city; their false lights are to rid bad wares off;” and Quomodo, in “Michaelmas Term,” boasts, humanly enough, that his shop is not “so dark as some of his neighbors’.” Again, Brome, in the “City Wit”: “What should the city do with honesty? Why are your wares gummed? Your shops dark?” In “Westward Ho” we read that the shop of a linen-draper was generally “as dark as a room in Bedlam,” and, not to multiply quotations, Middleton, in “Anything for a Quiet Life,” speaks of shopwares being habitually “set in deceiving lights.” Colliers, too, were so notorious for short measure and other crafty practices that Greene, in his “Notable Discovery of Cosenage,” includes a special “delightful discourse” on purpose to lay bare their knavery.

The houses were not yet numbered, and all trading establishments were known by their tokens—great signboards decorating every shop with strange mottoes and fantastic devices, which took the place of the advertising media of the present day. Milton, we remember, was born at the Spread Eagle, in Bread Street, and well on in the eighteenth century the imprints of publishers still refer to these customary signs; as in the case of the famous “left-legged Tonson,” who did business at “Shakespeare’s Head, over against Catherine Street, in the Strand.” Quotations illustrative of these trading tokens and the part they played in the commercial life of the time might be indefinitely multiplied; but we must content ourselves with a single bit of evidence from “The Alchemist.” Abel Drugger, the young tradesman, is opening a new shop, and comes to Subtle to take his advice about the choice of a suitable device. In the one suggested by Subtle, Jonson satirizes the wildly absurd combinations frequently employed, like the foolish advertisements of our own century, to attract or compel public attention:—

> “He shall have a bel, that’s Abel;
> And by it standing one whose name is Dee,
> In a rug gown, there’s D and Rug, that’s *drug*;
> And right anenst him a dog snarling Er—
> There’s Drugger, Abel Drugger—there’s his sign.”

It is hardly necessary to add that though these signs have practically disappeared from general use, they survive in trademarks and in the odd and often outlandish trading tokens still to be seen over the doors of English public houses and inns; though just why public houses should have kept up a practice otherwise almost universally abandoned since the numbering of houses came into vogue, it would be difficult to say.

But with the oncoming of the night, silence, for the most part, fell over the city and its surroundings. There was as yet no public lighting of the streets, but the good citizens were supposed to do their individual shares towards illuminating the dark thoroughfares, to insure which the watchmen, with lanterns and halberts, would pace their solemn rounds, hoarsely bawling at every doorway, “Lantern and a whole candle-light! Hang out your lights here!” Writing from Paris in 1620, and referring to the terrible condition of the streets in the French capital, Howell says: “This makes one think often of the excellent nocturnal government of our city of London, where one may pass and repass securely all hours of the night, if he gives good words to the watch.” Yet it is to be feared that this patriotic comment puts the matter in a somewhat too favorable way. The impression one derives from reading the plays and pamphlets of the time certainly is that the roads were always more or less dangerous after dark, and that good, law-abiding townsfolk were best off within doors, or, at all events, in the immediate neighborhood of their own houses. If they were forced to go farther afield, they would do well to take a link-boy with them to guide them with his light, unless they were like Falstaff, who, as we remember, once told Bardolph that he been saved a thousand marks in links and torches walking between tavern and tavern, owing to the fiery and luminous character of the said Bardolph’s nose. A stout ’prentice boy with a well-weighted club was a desirable companion, too, for those who valued purses and pates. For the streets

were infested by “roaring boys” and wild young bloods, whose principal amusement, besides fighting among themselves, was in persecuting quiet citizens, and who came into almost nightly conflict with the doting old Dogberry watchmen, who endeavored to cope with them, often with but very slight success. These are the fine fellows described in Shirley’s “Gamester,”—

> “that roar
>
> In brothels, and break windows, fright the streets,
>
> And sometimes set upon innocent bell-men to beget
>
> Discourse for a week’s diet,”

and whom Jonson’s Kastril looked up to with so much admiration and respect.

I could not hope by any series of thumbnail sketches to conjure up the manifold details of the daily life of Elizabethan London as one finds it portrayed in the plays of Jonson, Middleton, Dekker, Cooke, and the strange pamphlets of Nash and Greene. But we must not linger over these street scenes. It is ample time that we should pass on to consider a little the various classes which went to make up the population of the metropolis in the days of which we speak.

In the common relationships of class with class the age of Elizabeth differed widely from our own. Sociability was one of the main characteristics of the time, and this the guild life of the larger towns did much to foster. In the places of common resort—in the tavern, the theatre, at St. Paul’s Walk, or the Archery Ground at Finsbury, men daily met their neighbors and brother-citizens, and rubbed shoulders and chopped opinions with a warmth and open-heartedness which, if they had little of modern propriety, also knew little of modern restraint. Moreover, London was not then the vast, overgrown, incoherent city which it has since become, and its inhabitants still took that personal interest in one another’s doings, and felt, to some extent at any rate, that sense of family sympathy which, though they are common traits of provincial town life, are characteristic of the metropolis no longer.

Nevertheless, the classes remained absolutely distinct, cut off from one another by chasms of custom and interest, and even law, which were never, save with the rarest exceptions, bridged over. The enactments which had been promulgated at the beginning of the reign to fix with rigid certainty the special garbs of the various ranks of the community, are sufficient to show to what extent the caste system, with its attendant prejudices and conventions, was still rooted deep in English life. The young ’prentice might haply make a fortune, and reach a position of great civic distinction. This much was open to him; but for his helpmeet in life he looked no higher than his master’s daughter. The successful merchant might even reach the Lord Mayor’s bench, but he was still a citizen, and laid no claim to set his foot within the charmed circle of gentle life. This condition of things is illustrated again and again in the plays of the time, as in Middleton’s “City Madam” and Dekker’s “Shoemaker’s Holiday.” There was practically no overlapping of interests, no intermingling of class with class. Money could do much, but it could not, as it will at present, purchase an entrance into the most select society; nor, in the matrimonial market of that day, was a coronet ever knocked down for a dower. But this is only one side of the question. If there was little class sympathy, there was little class rivalry also. Society was more diffuse than it is to-day—held together less firmly, but with less of the friction which is a necessary preliminary to that readjustment of social arrangements which the industrial movements of the modern world are tending slowly to bring about. The classes touched externally, but that was all. In spirit they stood aloof—each content to go its own way, to live its own life, but each, for the most part, equally ready to let the others freely do the same.

Of the various classes which went to the making of the population of Shakspere’s London, two only will here demand attention—the gentry and the citizens. Of course, within both of these great groups there were many grades, but time will not allow us to subdivide. Of course, too, beyond and outside these altogether, lay the seething mass of miscellaneous humanity—the vast fringe of the population—which then, as now, formed so dark and so dangerous an unabsorbed element in the city’s general life. Threads from this dingy and tangled social frilling were sometimes caught up and woven for picturesque purposes into the pattern of the plays of the time. But the epic of the submerged tenth was

as yet undreamed of; and all this side of Elizabethan civilization must for the present be left out of view.

The citizens lived for the most part at their shops or places of business; the gentlefolk were more distributed. Some still had their habitations in the commercial portions of the city, and those of them who regularly lived in the country and came to town during term-time—which then constituted the London season,—were often content to find temporary lodging over some druggist's or barber's shop. But the exodus of the gentry and courtiers from the centres of trade and labor was already beginning, and the aristocratic neighborhoods were admittedly outside the walls. In "Greene's Tu Quoque" when Lionel Nash is knighted, he delivers up his store to his head 'prentice, and announces his intention of moving the next day into the Strand; which may be taken as showing that for the retired tradesman,—and still more, therefore, for the gentleman or courtier,—a residence well removed from the city was deemed the proper thing.

It is difficult to speak in general terms of the houses of the time, since, naturally enough, the comfort and luxury of the domestic arrangements varied considerably as one passed up or down the social scale. A few broad statements may, however, be made. In the average dwelling the ceilings were covered with plaster of Paris, and the inner walls wainscoted and tapestried; the tapestry being worked with landscapes and figures often of a very elaborate character. This explains Lyly's simile in "Midas"—"like arras, full of device." Enough space was left for any one to hide between the arras and the wall—a fact, it will be remembered, frequently made use of by the Elizabethan dramatists, as by Webster in "The Duchess of Malfi," where Cariola conceals herself behind the hanging to overhear what goes on between the Duchess and Antonio; and by Shakspere in "Henry the Fourth," where Falstaff goes to sleep and has his pocket picked; and even more notably in the famous rat-killing scene in "Hamlet." In addition, pictures were often used for decoration, and when valuable were protected by curtains. "I yet but draw the curtain; now to the picture," says Monticelso in Webster's "White Devil"; and, again, "We will draw the curtain and show you the picture," says Olivia in "Twelfth Night," as she removes her veil. The halls were lighted by candelabras or torch-bearers, and watch-lights, or night-lights, were in common use. At the foot of the master's bed, rolled

under during the day and drawn out at night, was a truckle-bed for his page. “Well, go thy ways for as sweet a breasted page as ever lay at his master’s feet in a truckle-bed,” says Dondolo in Middleton’s “More Dissemblers Besides Women.” The tables had flaps, and the floors were strewn with rushes, for carpets were as yet unknown. These rushes were renewed for fresh-comers. “Strangers have green rushes, while daily guests are not worth a rush,” says Lyly, in “Sapho and Phao”—a remark in which, by the way, we are reminded of the origin of one of our familiar phrases. Brick was costly, and the buildings were mostly of wood; but a new fashion was just coming in—that of employing well-constructed stoves in place of the open, smoky fireplaces hitherto general. The houses were now, too, provided with glass for the windows, which had not been the case a hundred years before, horn or wicker lattice-work having been used for the purpose. But this new notion was opposed by William Stafford, who saw in it the symptom of growing fondness for what he contemptuously called foreign nick-nacks. Chimneys, too, of which some years before there had been a few specimens only in every large town, were now general in the ordinary dwellings of the middle classes. The old wooden platters were giving way to pewter, which, though still rare, was gradually coming into use. Tin spoons also were making their appearance. China, gold, and silver plate were to be seen on the tables of the wealthy, and Venetian glass was sometimes employed, though, as this was very expensive, many people still drank from their mugs of burnt stone. Instead of the straw bundle and log on which people had formerly been content to sleep, proper sheets, pillows, and bolsters were now employed; not, however, without incurring the ridicule or the wrath of lovers of the good old times and moralists of severe complexion. “What makes us so weak as we now are?” demands Sir Lionel, in “Greene’s Tu Quoque,” abusing the new generation with all the vigor of a hale old man. “A feather bed! What so unapt for exercise? A feather bed! What breeds such pains and aches in our bones? Why, a feather bed!” Yet houses were so scantily furnished that uninvited or unexpected guests often used to bring their own stools with them, a practice referred to by Massinger in his “Unnatural Combat,” where he speaks of those who, “like unbidden guests, bring their own stools.” Many of the household arrangements, especially in the way of sanitation, were from our own point of view still crude and primitive enough. But the age of Elizabeth, as regards domestic economy

generally, was distinctly a period of progress, and we have only to compare the sixteenth century with the centuries which went before, to sympathize with old Harrison, when, dealing with this very matter, he exclaims in a kind of fervent rapture—“God be thankt for his good gifts!”

Turning from the houses themselves to the home life of the time, we may notice that in the establishments of the ancient nobility the arrangements were still on a large and almost regal scale, savoring yet, in spite of the slow movements conspicuous throughout society, of the feudalism which was now on the wane, and the old customs which, in an age of transition, were gradually being left behind. In the greater households a number of young gentlemen of good family, usually the younger sons of knights and esquires, continued to offer personal service as in former days. Beneath these were the retainers, so-called, who, not living in the house or being liable to any menial duty, attended their lord on occasions of public ceremony; while, in the third place, there were the servants proper, who formed actual portions of the establishment, and on whom its various duties devolved. These were headed by the steward, under whose control was the common herd of serving men and women and pages. With these must be reckoned the poor tutor, passing rich on five marks a year, who sat below the salt, and, as Hall’s satire shows, had to endure all kinds of indignity. And, finally, there was the jester, the privileged personage of the household, who could say and do things on which no one else would venture. “There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail,” says Olivia in “Twelfth Night”; while the melancholy Jaques, speaking of his desire to assume the motley dress, protests:—

> “I must have liberty
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> Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
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> To blow on whom I please; for so fools have.”

Thus the jester was able to find in his wit and position an excuse generally, though not invariably, sufficient to cover every freedom taken with master or guests. But in Shakspere’s time this ancient and long-famous appurtenance to the larger households was already passing out of

existence, a fact to which the dramatist himself makes reference in "As You Like It": "Since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes the greater show."

But when we pass from these huge and ostentatious establishments to the dwellings of the middle and trading classes, we find the transitional character of the period far more marked. Evidences of domestic development and improvement reveal themselves on every side. The essential traits of mediævalism were gradually disappearing; and with the steady realization on the part of the commercial elements in the community of their increasing importance in the complex life of the time, there went many significant changes, indicating the slow collapse of the old *régime* and the consolidation of society upon its modern foundations.

Nevertheless, in the internal policy and arrangement of the Elizabethan household there was still much that would strike a present-day observer as remarkable—for the older spirit still made itself felt, though ancient forms were passing away. For instance, the relations existing between the head of the house and those about him and dependent upon him, if no longer what they were a hundred years before, had not yet begun to assume their distinguishing modern characteristics. The position of servant, 'prentice, or journeyman still partook of a certain suggestion of servitude, which it has required many years of social evolution to wear partially away. Our nineteenth-century notion of contract based upon terms something like equal, at least in theory,—of so much money paid in return for such and such services rendered,—had not yet established itself; and while the understanding between employer and employed was gradually acquiring more and more of a commercial quality, it had not by any means lost all its personal implications. The 'prentices of the time, for example, were something more and something less than those occupying analogous positions in our own days. They belonged to the establishment, lived with their master, ate at his table, formed part of the family; yet at the same time wore coats of blue—the color which everywhere symbolized servitude, and even constituted, as we know from "The City Madam" and other plays, the livery of Bridewell. They not only were their master's assistants in the work of the shop; they furnished him also a kind of body-guard, or retinue,—for on occasions when he had to make excursions after dark they went with

him, bearing torches or lanterns to light the way, and stout clubs, for use in case of sudden assault. But the personal character of such relationships is perhaps most fully shown in the fact that masters and mistresses dealt out corporal punishment to their servants, a universal practice, which, as Chamberlayne tells us in his "Survey," was expressly sanctioned by law. In Heywood's "English Traveller," young Geraldine accounts for the circumstance that Bess, Mrs. Winscott's maid, tells slanderous stories about her, by the supposition that—

> "Perhaps her mistress
>
> Hath stirred her anger by some word or blow,
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> Which she would thus revenge."

In the establishments of the gentry, the porter's lodge was the recognized place for the corporal punishment of servants, male and female, a fact to which many references will be found in the contemporary drama; as, for instance, in Shirley's "Grateful Servant" and "Triumph of Peace," and Massinger's "Duke of Milan" and "The City Madam." Indeed, the whole domestic economy of the time still exhibited much of the semi-patriarchal character of former centuries, when those in authority not only exacted due service from the men and maidens beneath them, but held it also as part of their paternal responsibility to educate and chastise.

As for the children, they too were far differently situated from the boys and girls of the present day. There was as yet no talk of the rights of childhood, and household law was rigid and severe. At school the rudiments of knowledge were pounded into young brains by sheer force of arm; and when the children went from the schoolhouse to the home, they merely exchanged one form of despotism for another. In every well-ordered family, the young people habitually stood or knelt in the presence of their elders, not venturing to sit down without express permission; while correction by blows continued to be their lot so long as they remained under the parental roof and control. Even the children of the wealthiest and noblest families in the land were subjected to the same kind of treatment; and we know that in their early years Queen Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey had been pinched and cuffed and smacked like their

less famous sisters. All this has been changed now, and we have grown in some respects wiser, in others simply more sentimental. Yet, with whatever feelings we may look back at the harshness of the past, let us, at all events, have the candor to acknowledge that the discipline which produced men like Sidney and Raleigh and Spenser, and women like the two just referred to, cannot be pronounced altogether a failure.

And now a word or two about some of the every-day habits of the time. Among the middle classes, as a whole, the ancient doctrine of early to bed and early to rise, upon which Charles Lamb threw such well-merited ridicule, was currently accepted, and this almost of necessity. Artificial lights were as yet in little use, and being thus more dependent upon the natural alternations of day and night, the good folks under the Virgin Queen inevitably kept better hours than do the Londoners of the present time. In Dekker's "Shoemaker's Holiday," the master shoemaker is depicted roundly rating his wife and maids for their laziness in not having breakfast ready, and his anger seems at least a trifle excessive to the modern Cockney, since it subsequently turns out that it is not yet seven o'clock. In reading the old comedies, we are again and again struck by the complementary facts that the activities of life were well advanced while the day was still young, and that few scenes of a social character are laid in the evening time.

As regards eating, important as the subject doubtless is, we need not say much. Comparing the Elizabethan age with the immediate past, we may safely assert that men were more temperate now than they had been —that they fed less grossly, and spent less time at table. But the abstemiousness was, after all, only relative. It was still, from our point of view, a period of gluttony. The early breakfast of meat and ale; the morning luncheon, or bever; the twelve-o'clock dinner, with its exceedingly substantial fare; and, finally, in the evening, what Don Armado, in "Love's Labor's Lost," described as "the nourishment which is called supper,"—all these made up a series of gastronomic undertakings at which we can look back only with mingled amazement and disgust. The staple articles of diet were the various kinds of meat, which were partaken of in immense quantities, with but little bread and only a limited accompaniment of vegetables. But almost as important as

the meats was the pudding, for which the English had acquired so great a reputation that a contemporary foreigner fairly goes into a transport of enthusiasm about it. The worst feature of all was the enormous consumption of intoxicating liquors. Tea, coffee, and cocoa—those delightful cups that cheer but not inebriate, for which we moderns can hardly be too thankful—were as yet unknown in England; and, in their absence, every meal was washed down with mighty draughts of ale and sack. Testimony to the drunkenness of the English at this time is appalling, whether we turn to the plays themselves, or to the writings of professed moralists, such as Camden's "Elizabeth," Reeve's "God's Plea for Nineveh," Tryon's "Way to Health," Dekker's "Seven Deadly Sins," Wither's "Abuses Stript and Whipt," and Thomas Young's "England's Bane," which may be mentioned as specimens of a voluminous output of similar character. No wonder that, as Iago and Hamlet remind us, the English people had become a byword for inebriety among the nations of the continent.

It must, however, be added, as one favorable sign of the times, that table manners were, on the whole, distinctly improving. Bad as they still were in many important particulars, a change for the better was quite perceptible. For instance, people thought it incumbent on them now to wash before and after dinner, a ceremony all the more needful, as fingers were still commonly used where we use forks, "the laudable use" of which, as Jonson has it, came in towards the close of Shakspere's life; and generally a certain amount of delicacy in what Ouida has pronounced the essentially disgusting operation of eating, was for the first time beginning to be looked for, at any rate amongst those in the higher ranks of society.

Hardly less important in social economy than eating is dress, which in turn demands a share of our attention. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible in the small space here at our disposal to give any adequate idea of the extent, variety, and extravagance of the fashions prevalent during the period with which we are now dealing, and which form a curious offset to the crudities we have noticed in household furniture and appliances. Harrison, in his "Description of England," declares that the taste for change and novelty had simply run wild; and he and the outspoken Stubbs are never weary of declaring that while other nations have their own special extravagances, the English gather up and adopt

the follies of all the rest of Europe. Here is a passage from another contemporary writer, Thomas Becon, on the same subject: “I think no realm in the world, no, not among the Turks and Saracens, doth so much in the variety of their apparel as the Englishmen do at this present. Their coat must be made after the Italian fashion, their cloak after the use of the Spaniards, their gown after the manner of the Turks; their cap must be of the French fashion; and at the last their dagger must be Scottish with a Venetian tassel of silk. To whom may the Englishman be compared worthily, but to Esop’s crow? For as the crow decked himself with feathers of all kinds of birds, even so doth the vain Englishman…. He is an Englishman; but he is also an Italian, a Spaniard, a Turk, a Frenchman, a Scotch, a Venetian, and at last what not?”

This is only a sample; passages of similar import might be multiplied almost without number. The fashions of the day were indeed absurd and extravagant to the last degree. Richness and picturesqueness were the two things aimed at alike in male and in female costume; and in both cases the colors were as brilliant as the stuffs were costly. The following speech of Sir Glorious Tipto, in Jonson’s “New Inn,” will give some idea of the run of masculine modes, as seen by the vigorous old satirist:—

“I would put on
The Savoy chain about my neck, the ruff
And cuffs of Flanders; then the Naples hat
With the Rome hatband and the Florentine agate,
The Milan sword, the cloak of Genoa, set
With Brabant buttons—all my given pieces,
Except my gloves, the natives of Madrid.”

Over against such a strange human specimen as is thus pictured in the imagination, we may well set the women of the time, as painted, rouged, highly scented, bejewelled, bewigged, in French hoods, starched Cambric ruffs, close-fitting jerkins, and embroidered velvet gowns, they look down upon us from the walls of many an Elizabethan house, and fill the busy scene in many a contemporary play. Women, Lyly thought—so far had the artifices of the toilet carried them,—were in reality the least

part of themselves. Some of their freaks of fashion in particular drew down the ire alike of the playwright and of the more serious satirist. One was the habit of painting the face, so frequently referred to by Shakspere and others. A second was the very common practice of wearing false hair, treated at length, along with nearly all similar extravagances of the period, by the irrepressible Stubbs. Every reader of Shakspere will recall the passage from Bassanio’s moralizings on “outward shows,” in which this fashion is alluded to:—

“Look on beauty,

And you shall see ’tis purchased by the weight;

Which therein works a miracle in nature,

Making them lightest that wear most of it;

So are those crisped snaky golden locks

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,

Upon supposed fairness, often known

To be the dowry of a second head,

The skull that bred them in the sepulchre;”

and the parallel lines in the sixty-eighth sonnet, in which the same point is touched on, with striking similarity of phrasing. The “golden” color of the locks, here specially emphasized, it may be noted in passing, was particularly popular, on account of the reddish, or, as her flatterers would insist, the golden, hue of Queen Elizabeth’s head-gear. Finally, a great deal was said about the altogether needless and reprehensible extravagance shown in certain small details of dress. We may take the one item of foot-covering as an example. Herein all the worst taste of the day was illustrated; for shoes were made of the most expensive materials, and were frequently covered with artificial flowers and other kinds of decoration. Thus, Massinger, in “The City Madam,” speaks of rich “pantofles in ostentation shown, and roses worth a family”; while Stubbs, in his “Anatomy of Abuses,” refers to shoes “embroidered with gold and silver all over the foot.”

Yet, upon the whole, truth compels us to admit that, if we are to trust contemporary evidence, masculine fashions exceeded in wildness, absurdity, and monstrous barbarity those of the other sex. “Women are bad, but men are worse,”—such is the distinct judgment of Burton, in his “Anatomy of Melancholy”; and while we know from the speculative Jaques that “the city madam,” would sometimes bear “the cost of princes on unworthy shoulders,” Burton again is our authority for the statement that it was no uncommon thing for a man to put a thousand oxen into a suit of apparel, and to wear a whole manor on his back.

I mentioned incidentally just now that class distinctions were severely marked out by differences in costume. Certain sumptuary enactments promulgated about this time undertook to regulate down to the minutest details what should and what should not be worn by the various classes of the community, wealth and social standing being taken together as the basis on which to settle the problems of the toilet and personal adornment. But within the limits allowed by such regulations, and sometimes even irrespective of them (for grandmotherly legislation here as always stood foredoomed to failure) extravagance in fashion remained throughout one of the salient characteristics of the day. The dress of the citizen and his wife, if less elegant, was equally showy, and sometimes quite as expensive, as that of the man of mode and the woman of the court; and so it was through all grades of society, from the highest to the lowest, or, as Harrison put it in his vivid phrase, from the courtier to the carter.

While we are still concerned with this item of dress it is amusing to notice that three hundred years ago people were to be found worrying their tailors and abusing their dressmakers as it is the custom to do at the present day. We might quote illustrations from more than one comedy; but let us once more fall back upon Harrison. “How many times,” says this quaint old writer, “must a garment be sent back to him that made it? What chafing, what fretting, what reproachful language doth the poor workman bear away…. For we must puff and blow and sweat till we drop, that our clothes may stand well upon us.” As we read such a passage as this in its original strange old spelling (which, for the sake of uniformity, we have not here reproduced), we have surely to acknowledge—though it goes much against the grain to do so—that our manners have at bottom changed less than our orthography.

And now we must leave the ranks of the citizens and trading folks to deal for a moment or two with the more fashionable world.

The society of the time, to employ the word which in modern parlance has assumed a highly specialized meaning, was artificial to an absurd and almost inconceivable extent. Affectations, indeed, made up the larger part of life; and yet beneath them all were a core of sound reality and a healthy element of spontaneity. Euphuism and Italianism had for the time being taken full possession of the whole aristocratic world. Yet Euphuism and Italianism were but external crazes; and it was one mission of the age to show that men could be heroes in the foolishest dress, and do great deeds with the most ridiculous of phrases upon their lips. We could not here enter upon the task of analyzing the life and aims of the men and women who surrounded the Queen at her court; but as an offset to the steady-going middle classes of whom we have had much to say, we must try to present, if only in rapidly sketched outline, the typical Elizabethan gallant, or fashionable young man about town, as we find him portrayed for us in the plays and pamphlets of the time.

The accomplishments of the young man of this description were numerous and varied enough; but they were all in keeping with the character of the perfect gentleman as set forth by Castiglione in his "Cortegiano," a work which had been translated by Thomas Hoby in 1561, and had forthwith become a kind of text-book or Bible for the youthful fashionable world. He could dance, sing, and play the viol de gamba; fence, ride, and hunt; write verses, turn pretty compliments, and take his part in the exchange of witty repartees, stocking his memory with scraps of plays and stories, lest his own mother-sense should fail him. He could read the three languages of Portia's summary of requirements in which Falconbridge was lacking—Latin, French, and Italian,—and was perfectly at home in what Jonson calls the "perfumed terms of the day"; he had some acquaintance with the poets in vogue; played cards, tennis, and other fashionable games, as a matter of course; and, last but not least, was learned in all matters connected with the drama, etiquette, and dress.

These were not great qualifications; but such a young man had little need of great qualifications, since he had no great aims or ideals. Let us read over his every day's experiences and doings as we find them given

in Dekker's "Gull's Horn Book" and other similar productions, and this statement will call for no further commentary.

He was not an early riser—for, wearied with his overnight exertions, he scarcely ever left his couch till the plebeian Londoner was already thinking seriously about his midday meal. Then began the first important task of the day—the toilet, which was so elaborate a matter that Lyly, in his "Midas," speaks of its being almost "a whole day's work to dress." But when at length he stood erect in his scented doublet and gold-laced cloak, with the roses in his shoes, the bunch of toothpicks in his hat, the watch hung about his neck, his earrings, and his sword, he was ready to partake of a breakfast of meat and ale with such appetite as he could muster for the occasion, and then, jumping on his horse, with his page and horse-boy behind him, to sally forth upon the regular adventures of the day.

Curiously enough, as it may well seem to us, his first place of resort would very probably be St. Paul's Cathedral. One may well ask what object could possibly take him thither. The answer lies in the fact that St. Paul's Church in those days was the great place of rendezvous for all the gay and fashionable world. "Thus," says Dekker, "doth my middle aisle show like the Mediterranean Sea, in which as well the merchant hoists sails to purchase wealth honestly as the rover to light upon prize unjustly. Thus am I like a common mart, where all the commodities (both the good and the bad) are to be bought and sold. Thus, while devotion kneels at her prayers, doth profanation walk under her nose, in contempt of religion." Francis Osborne, writing as late as 1658, says that it was a fashion of the times for the principal gentry, lords, commons, and professions, to meet in St. Paul's Church by eleven, and walk in the middle aisle till twelve, and after dinner from three till six, "during which time some discourse of business, others of news." Many bustling scenes in the old comedies are laid in this same middle aisle, where, amid bills posted as advertisements, and crowds of servants looking out for places, of sharpers, like Jonson's Shift, with a keen eye for prey, and of loafers, with nothing else to do, all sorts of people strolled about, with their hats on, chatting, laughing, and discussing finance or politics or scandal, till the whole place was alive with the hum of voices, the rustle of raiment, and the jingle of spurs. "I walked in St. Paul's to see the fashions," remarks a character in one of Middleton's plays. There Face

threatened to advertise Subtle’s misdeeds; and it is a matter of common history that Falstaff picked Bardolph up in the same spot. It was thus its reputation as a place of general convenience, and one in which to see and to be seen, that gave St. Paul’s the importance it undoubtedly possessed in the social life of the time.

St. Paul’s Walk and its varied interests would keep our young man occupied till the hour of dinner, a meal of which he would probably partake in the bustle and excitement of the ordinary. The ordinary—the forerunner of the modern restaurant and *table d’hôte*—was then a novel institution, and as such enjoyed immense popularity among the gilded youth. Three grades were commonly recognized—the aristocratic ordinary, for which, to judge from a remark in Middleton’s “Trick to Catch the Old One,” about two shillings would be charged; the twelvepenny ordinary, frequented by tradesmen, professional people, and middle-class citizens; and the threepenny, to which flocked only the lowest and most questionable characters. The first-named of the three, Dekker tells us, was the great resort of all the court gallants. There friends and acquaintances met, ate, gossiped, laughed, and not infrequently quarrelled, together; there braggarts, like Lafeu in “All’s Well that Ends Well,” “made vent of their travel”; there the latest intelligence was circulated, the latest scandal discussed, the latest fads of fashion displayed in all their grotesqueness. A good picture of the ordinary during the dinner hour will be found in the twelfth chapter of Scott’s “Fortunes of Nigel”; but the genuine atmosphere is best caught in such a contemporary piece of writing as the “Gull’s Horn Book.”

Dinner over, with its customary game of primero, there were many ways in which our gallant could kill time. There was the theatre, with its more intellectual attractions; the bull-ring and the cockpit; the juggler’s booth and the tennis-court; the shops along Cheapside and about St. Paul’s, among which the connoisseur in letters, jewellery, and kickshaws would find it easy enough to while away an afternoon. But however he might pass the hours between dinner and supper, he would probably appear in full time for the latter meal, for which he might repair to “The Devil,” in Fleet Street, or “The Mitre,” in Cheap, or “The Mermaid,” in Bread Street; at which last-named place he might peradventure catch snatches of the conversation and laughter of a little group of men in one corner, among whom we should recognize, though he might not, the

burly form and surly face of rare old Ben, and the serene countenance and deep, clear eyes of one who is more to all of us to-day than any other Englishman who ever lived—Will Shakspere, playwright and actor. After that would not improbably follow the wildest episodes of the day, which likely enough would end in deep carousal behind the flaming red doors of a tavern, or at the gambling-table, or even in more doubtful places of resort. When in Heywood's "Wise Woman" old Chartley is looking for his son, he bids his servants "inquire about the taverns, ordinaries, bowl-alleys, tennis-courts, and gaming-houses, for there I fear he will be found," a direction which gives us a fair idea of the favorite haunts of the young men of the day. Gambling particularly, in all its forms, was one of the prevalent manias of the time, and was often carried to such an extent that men would stake their very clothes, and even their beards, which might be used to stuff tennis-balls. In "Greene's Tu Quoque" will be found a wonderfully realistic scene of a quarrel following a dispute over the cards and dice, and ending in a challenge for a duel. Then when the time came for him to reel homeward through the darkness with one sleepy page to light his way with a torch, our gallant would be either uproariously cheerful, or contentious, or maudlin, as his habit might be when in his cups. He would bellow out loose songs upon the night air, molest straggling by-passers, come sometimes into conflict with the watch, and once in a while, when luck went against him, might find himself lodged for the night in one of the prisons of the metropolis. So the day would end; and with it must close this part of our study. But, after all, very inadequate justice can be done to such a theme in so brief and rapid a sketch. We must go straight to the pages of Dekker, Greene, Nash, and Peele, if we would gain any adequate conception of the wilder aspects of Elizabethan social life.

In such a paper as the present, there is always danger lest the final impression left should be, if not a false, at any rate an inadequate one; for the temptation is strong to seize only the picturesque traits, and to pay such undue attention to grouping, color, and general effect, that we fail in preserving proper perspective, and throw portions of our description into unnatural relief. The risk of doing this is, of course, increased when, as in our own case, we take the point of view of the playwright and the popular writer, and study the world of men and affairs mainly through

the medium of their pages. I trust none the less, that we have not erred on the side of painting life in Shakspere's London in too bright or seductive colors. Yet, to tone down our picture, let us say a closing word about its darker aspects; for these were many, and they were very dark indeed.

As Mr. Swinburne has pointed out, one of the most difficult problems meeting the student of the Elizabethan drama, is that of reconciling the elements of lofty thought and gross passion, of high idealism and coarse savagery, which lie so close together, which are indeed bound up inextricably, in the very woof and texture of the plays of Shakspere's time. The literature of the stage shows us with startling distinctness how in the world of the playwright there frequently went, along with the deepest and most original thought a revolting ferocity of manners, and along with a lofty sense of the beautiful and the pure a crude love of violence, a revelling in blood, a thirst for wanton outrage and low excitement. All these diverse elements are, separately, prominent enough in modern letters, as in modern civilization; what seems so strange and puzzling in our great romantic drama is the way in which they constantly blend in the most intimate association.

Now, these extraordinary incongruities are not alone to be found in the world of the playwright; they penetrated the life of Elizabethan society. To some phases of the coarse brutalism which formed one aspect of the complex spirit of the English Renaissance incidental reference has more than once been made. Did space permit, we might here add much corroborative testimony. But as space does not permit, I will content myself with accentuating very briefly the difference in temper between the age of Elizabeth and our own, as exemplified in one very crucial matter—in the treatment of the large criminal class.

We who are privileged to live in an epoch of growing humanity may well be startled and shocked at many of the facts brought to light by even a casual inquiry in this direction. Executions, be it remembered, were almost invariably public, and formed, as we have seen, not infrequent distractions in the monotonous round of life. Felons were hanged, drawn, and quartered; pirates were hanged on the seashore at low water; and capital punishment was in use for an enormous number of petty offences, including even theft from the person above the value of one shilling. The mere circumstance that we read of seventy-four persons being sentenced to death in one county in a single year, itself speaks volumes. Indeed, the

severity of punishments was held something to boast of, and men were still of the opinion of Fortescue, who, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, had proudly proclaimed that “more men are hanged in England in one year than in France in seven, because the English have better parts.” Public malefactors of position were usually beheaded, and their heads exposed in prominent places, as on London Bridge or Temple Bar. On the tower of the former, Hentzner “counted above thirty” placed “on iron spikes.”[1] Witches were burnt alive; a horrible fate also reserved for women who killed their husbands, which crime stood on the statute-books not as murder, but as petty treason. Heretics, too, were frequently burnt. Perjury was punished by the pillory and branding, and rogues and vagabonds, irrespective of age and sex, were sent to the public stocks and whipping-post.

> “In London, and within a mile, I ween,
> There are of jails and prisons full eighteen,
> And sixty whipping-posts, and stocks, and cages,”

writes Taylor, the Water Poet. Scolds were ducked, and many minor offences were rewarded by burning the hand, cropping the ears, and similar mutilations. Finally, felons refusing to plead were subjected to the *peine forte et dure*, notwithstanding the proud and oft-repeated boast that torture has always been unknown to the English law.

Surely it is needless for us to go farther than all this, unless it be to add the striking fact that, despite such brutal severity in punishment, crimes and outrages of every description remained alarmingly common throughout the whole of the period with which we have been concerned. Enough has been said to throw in some of the heavier shadows necessary to complete the slight sketch we have been trying to furnish of the social life and every-day manners of Shakspere’s time.

With this as our last word, then, we take leave of “the spacious times of great Elizabeth,” and become once more denizens of our own century. And here it would be easy, of course, to fall into the cheap Macaulay-vein of moralizing; to strike a contrast between present and past, point

out all the manifold and magnificent achievements of modern civilization, and end with rhetorical rhapsodies over our “wondrous, wondrous age.” It would be easy, I say, to do this; and I doubt not that it would be effective. But when in my study of the literature of any bygone generation I make myself at home for a time among dead things and long-forgotten people, I do not, I must confess, find myself in any mood for brass-band celebrations. The feeling left with me is a vaguer and sadder one. For, as I turn back into our own world, I remember that this past was once verily and actually the present; that these dead things, these long-forgotten people, were once intensely alive; that the tragedy and the comedy of existence went on then as it goes on to-day; and that in the breasts of men and women fashioned like ourselves beat human hearts, after all, very like our own. Hope and disappointment, joy and despair; the memory of yesterday, the expectation of the morrow; the hunger and thirst of the spirit; the lust of the eye; the pride of life; the “ancient sorrow of man,”—all that goes to make up the sum total of our little earthly lot,—was their portion, too, as it will presently be the portion of the countless generations by which we in our turn shall be replaced. And thus, musing, I think of the nameless young men and maidens of that dim, far-off age, who repeated the sweet old story of love, as their fathers and mothers had done before them, as their distant descendants do to-day, while there was confusion in high places, and storm and struggle about the land. I think of the tears that were shed as gentle hearts broke in anguish; of the brave deeds wrought; of the tales of the faith of sturdy manhood and the trust of womanly devotion, which will never be retold. I think of the lives that ran their placid course; of the children that came as years went by, bringing “hope with them and forward-looking thoughts”; of mothers weeping over empty cradles; of tiny graves, long since obliterated, where many a bright promise found “its earthly close.” I think of lives that were successful, and of lives that were failures; of prophecies unfulfilled; of splendid ambitions realized only to bring the inevitable disillusion; of sordid aims accomplished; of vile things said and done. The whole dead world seems to take form and flesh in my imagination; the men and women start from the pages of the book I have been reading—a mad world, my masters, and a strange one; but behold, a world singularly, almost grotesquely, like our own. And then my thought takes a sudden spin; and this age of ours seems to slip some three centuries back into the past, and becomes weird, and

phantasmal, and unreal. And I find myself peering across the misty years into this throbbing world of multitudinous enterprise and activity from the standpoint of an era when you and I will be long since forgotten—when no one will know how we toiled and suffered and loved and died, when no one will care where we lie at rest. How curious to think of it all in this way! And with what tempered enthusiasms and sobered judgments must we needs go back to take up again the burden of life knowing that the deep, silent current of time is sweeping us slowly into the great darkness, and that hereafter the tale will be told of us as it has been told generation after generation since the world began: Lo, their glory endured but for a season, and the fashion of it has passed away forever!

Pepys and His Diary

Pepys and His Diary

I have undertaken to talk to you this evening about a singular book—a book that holds a place practically by itself on our library shelves,—the Diary of Samuel Pepys.[2] The writer of this book was not a great man, or a strong man, or in any way a man of transcendent mental or moral characteristics. The work itself has none of those qualities by virtue of which a piece of literature will, in the average of cases, be found to survive the lapse of time and the changes of fashions and tastes. With the acknowledged masterpieces of autobiographic narration—with the "Confessions" of St. Augustine or Rousseau, for example, or the "Memoirs" of Benvenuto Cellini or Gibbon, or the "Dichtung und Wahrheit" of Goethe, or the "Journal" of Amiel, we should never think of comparing it; for Pepys's garrulous pages have no eloquence, no literary quality, no magic of style—they record no intense spiritual struggles, reveal no deep upheavals of thought and feeling, flash no new light upon the dark places or into the mysterious recesses of motive and character. What, then, is the secret of Pepys's enduring fascination? Wherein lies the curious spell, the undeniable vitality of his work? Why do we continue to read this chaotic chronicle of his, when, in the pressure of modern affairs, so many books of the past—better books, wiser books, nobler books—are left to slumber in serenity in those vast mausoleums of genius, our public libraries, undisturbed, all but forgotten?

I say nothing now about the historic value of Pepys's journal—for historic value may have no kind of relationship with broad popular interest; and it is with the popular interest, and not with the special significance of the work before us, that we are at present concerned. And therefore my question, concretely put, is just this: How is it that you and I, who may care little or nothing for the information that Pepys gives us about the degraded politics and miserable court intrigues of the Restoration, may still find in his daily capricious jottings a charm which, as literature goes, is almost, if not absolutely, unique?

For any one who has ever dipped into the Diary at all, the answer to this question is not far to seek. Pepys's memoranda have lasting interest

for us on account of their naïve frankness, their plain and simple spontaneity, their transparent honesty of self-expression. As we read, we realize that, for once at least, we are brought into the closest, the most vital contact with a living man, and that this man speaks to us, who, by the irony of fate, chance to overhear his unconsidered utterances, without disguise, without reticence or reserve, of the things which stand nearest to his heart. The reader of Pepys's Diary knows Pepys himself better than his acquaintances knew him at the office, in the coffee-house, at the street-corner; better than his friends knew him at the social board, spite of the truth that there is in wine; better even than his wife knew him in the intercourse of the home. To us he lays bare without sophistication or guile thoughts and impulses, desires and disappointments, concealed from them beneath the conventional wrappings of daily manners and life—personal criticisms and private experiences which, living, he confided to none. Does this strike you as a small matter? Then, pause for a moment and ask yourselves of what other man whose written words have ever come into the fierce white glare of publication such statements as these could truthfully be made? Autobiographies, memoirs, journals, confessions, letters we have, of course, without number, and the value of these as human documents may in most cases be great, in some cases inestimable. But do we, after all, accept literature of this character as the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth? Do we not rather know that, as a matter of course, such literature must almost always be, in varying degrees, forced, unreal, overwrought, theatrical? The moment a man begins to talk about himself, the dramatic instinct inevitably comes into play; the least vain of mortals colors his own experiences, the least self-conscious manipulates his motives and transfigures his feelings. That which we ought to know best—our own heart—is precisely that which of set purpose we are forever debarred from describing with more than an approximation to the stern and solid fact. You remember the famous words in which Rousseau announced his intention of writing the plain, unvarnished story of his life: "I enter upon an undertaking which never had an example, the execution of which will never have an imitation. I desire to show my fellow-creatures a man in all the truth of his nature—and this man will be myself." And with this rhetorical exordium, the great sentimentalist proceeds, as Mr. Lowell happily phrased it, to throw "open his waistcoat, and make us the confidants of his dirty linen." The very condition of deliberate self-revelation places an embargo on perfect

candor and unconsciousness; an autobiographer, as George Sand said, always makes himself the hero of his own novel, even if he be a hero of the dirty vagabond type, as in the case just referred to. Here, then, is the ultimate secret of Pepys's peculiar charm. Beside him, Rousseau is a mere *poseur*, and the rest are nowhere. "Is not," asks Mr. Lowell, "is not old Samuel Pepys, after all, the only man who spoke to himself of himself with perfect simplicity, frankness, and unconsciousness?" That he should have done this is no trifling thing. He remains, seemingly for all time, "a creature unique as the dodo, a solitary specimen, to show that it was possible for nature once in the centuries to indulge in so odd a whimsey."

In speaking of the difficulties inherent in autobiographical writing, I lay stress, it will be observed, on the set purpose, the deliberate intention, generally characterizing it. No small part of the secret of Pepys's success as a diarist is to be found in the simple fact that with him the set purpose, the deliberate intention, and the resultant disturbing self-consciousness are almost entirely absent. Pepys did not write for the public eye, or for any glance save his own; he recorded his impressions and enterprises, his pleasures, anxieties, ambitions, aims, and passing fancies because he found satisfaction in thus summing up "the actions of the day each night before he slept"; and not at all because he proposed to draw a full-length portrait of himself for the benefit of his contemporaries or the amusement of posterity. It has been suggested by one of the wiseacres who can never leave a simple fact alone, that Pepys regarded his Diary as material towards a fully developed autobiography. Possibly so. But we may be certain that had such autobiography ever been written, the self-delineation of its pages would have differed in many important particulars—in details put in, and even more seriously in details left out—from that contained in the journal itself. As it is, we have an odd and uncomfortable sense, when we first open the Diary, of intruding where we have no proper business, of breaking in upon the privacy of a man's life, and surprising him in the undress which he might wear for himself, but in which he would not willingly be caught by even his closest friend. For remember that the six small volumes which contain the manuscript diary are filled with densely packed short-hand, peppered with occasional words and phrases from the French, Spanish, Latin, and Greek; and that it was only after immense labor that the script was transliterated, and the secrets which poor Pepys had, as he fondly

supposed, buried there forever, given to an impertinent and unsympathetic world.[3] Writing thus for himself, and for himself alone, and guarding himself by every means within his power against the possibility of exposure, our chronicler was enabled to make his narrative the luminous, because free and spontaneous, expression of his innermost life. A man may be honest with himself in cipher for whom long-hand, to say nothing of the thought of subsequent publication, would bring the inevitable and fatal temptations to sophistication. Could Pepys have foreseen the ultimate fate of his journal, it is safe to say that it would never have been written, or, once written, would have been discreetly burned. Poor fellow! His sense of complete security, of inviolable self-concealment, made possible such confidences as otherwise would never have been committed to paper.

But this is not all. Pepys's unreserved frankness is to be partially accounted for by the fact that he had no fear lest any one but himself should ever read what he found such curious pleasure in writing down. Yet allowance must at the same time be made for a deeper cause, to be sought in an analysis of the character of the man himself. Plenty of people who can write short-hand and appreciate the usefulness of a diary, contrive none the less to go through life without finding themselves under the imperative necessity of recording the minute happenings, the petty annoyances and satisfactions, the casual meetings, conversations, comings and goings of the common routine of existence. They may enjoy their dinner without feeling impelled at the end of the day to make a solemn note of the fact and add the bill of fare; they may fall asleep during a sermon, and yet allow the astonishing circumstance to pass unrecorded; they may say and do a dozen foolish, hasty, and unnecessary things, and see no cause to dwell upon them, and perpetuate them, when the evening accounts are made up. But the little things of life were great to Pepys, its trifles singularly, grotesquely significant. He was a man, it is clear, of a curiously naïve and garrulous temper, a born lover of gossip, even when he was gossiping only of and to himself, and when some of the matters he found to talk about did not by any means redound to his credit.

Mr. Lowell somewhere speaks of the unconscious humor of the Diary. This unconscious humor is, I think, to be referred very largely to this extraordinary naïveté; to the irresponsible loquacity, the love of

commonplace and frivolous detail, which seem to have been among Pepys's most salient characteristics, and to his amazing lack of any sense of perspective—in other words, to his congenital inability to disentangle the momentous from the trivial in the complex occurrences of life. An interview with the King, a discussion with the naval authorities, the manning of a ship, the arrangements for a war, were serious matters to him; but so, too, were the purchase of a new periwig, the sight of a pretty face in the theatre, a specially succulent joint of meat at the midday repast, a game of billiards or ninepins. It is needful to lay stress on these personal qualities, because they are of the very essence of the man, of the very essence of the Diary. That it should have seemed to him worth while to place on record, if only for his own perusal, so many things that most of us would give no second thought to—that is the point to be noted, as one only a little less astonishing than the diarist's odd plainness of dealing with himself. I have said that the use of a cipher which none of your family or acquaintances can read, is in itself a premium upon veracity. Yet Pepys's singular, remorseless honesty of self-expression remains still in the last degree surprising. The Diary is full of confessions which, I venture to think, you and I would hardly feel called upon to make, even to ourselves, so strong, so irresistible does the dramatic tendency become in most of us the moment we begin to touch our own lives. If we are fond of reading, it would be natural to us, I suppose, to jot down the names of the books we buy or dip into, and any criticism we may have to make upon them; but I wonder how many of us would think it incumbent upon us to commit ourselves to such an entry as this?—"To the Strand, to my bookseller's, and there bought an idle, roguish French book, 'L'Escholle des Filles,' which I have bought in plain binding, avoiding the buying of it better bound, because I resolved, as soon as I have read it, to burn it, that it may not stand in the list of my books, nor among them, to disgrace them if it should be found." A declaration like this may strike us as absurdly familiar when we light upon it, but it takes a Pepys to make it, after all; and we therefore feel that in the solemnity and precision with which such an experience is recorded, rather perhaps than in the experience itself, which is neither very important, nor very creditable, nor very singular, is to be found the key to much that is most interesting and significant in the pages of the Diary. Pepys, for instance, quarrels with a captain in the army, and goes about in mortal dread of possible consequences. Thousands of men, I dare say, have found

themselves in just such a predicament; but Pepys makes a note of the fact, plainly, straightforwardly, with no pretence at apology or self-deception, with no tendency towards heroics. Again, he lies awake one night quaking in fear of robbers, and starting at every sound. You and I may have done the same; but I do not imagine that our journals, if searched, would contain any indication of the fact. Take such an entry as the following: "After we had dined came Mr. Mallard, and I brought down my viol…. He played some very fine things of his own, but I was afraid to enter too far into their commendation, for fear he should offer to copy them for me out, and so I be forced to give or lend him something,"—and I wonder how many of us could lay our hands on our hearts and honestly say that this presentation of motive strikes us as remote, unfamiliar, alien. But while we would hardly dare to look a bit of conduct of this kind squarely in the face, Pepys does so, and unflinchingly sets down the not over-flattering results of his observation. And he does this not because he has the modern man's morbid love of self-analysis, or any of the grim desire of many a recent writer to show himself up as a sorry fellow, but simply because it is his habit all through to report frankly and unreservedly the various circumstances of his life, withholding nothing, adding nothing, disguising nothing.

All this helps to bring the essential naïveté of Pepys's character into high relief. He tears his new cloak on the latch of a door, and is greatly troubled, though the darning is successfully done; he rejoices when Mr. Pierce's little girl draws him for her valentine, because a present to her will cost him less than one to a grown-up person; he drinks large quantities of milk and beer, and gets pains in consequence; he acts the sycophant and the tuft-hunter towards those in power, swallowing his own opinions and rejoicing in the success of his diplomacy; his appetite for supper is taken away by the sight of his aunt's dirty hands; he makes up his mind to try how eating fish will suit him, before vowing to diet himself in Lent;—and down all such matters go pell-mell in the Diary. He wrangles with his mother; breaks an oath never to go to see a play without his wife; gets a headache by drinking overmuch wine; thinks he sees a ghost; rejoices to find himself addressed as Esquire;—and down go all these things, too. He puts his thumb out of joint boxing his footboy's ears; in a fit of anger he tweaks Mrs. Pepys's pretty nose; is "vext to the heart" when Sir William Pen's page chances to catch him kicking his cook-maid, "because I know he will be telling their family of

it";—and all these occurrences, once again, are given due record and chronicle. Finally,—not to multiply, as one might do indefinitely, such illustrations of our writer's singular simplicity and artlessness,—he even notes being "mightily troubled" with snoring in his sleep, a statement which I have reserved as a kind of climax, since I find the allegation of snoring to be about the last that sensitive humanity is willing to bear. Charge a man with theft, if you will; but, as you value your life, do not suggest that he snores.

To this brief analysis of some of the personal peculiarities upon which the curious charm of Pepys's Diary so largely depends, it would be unfair to the writer not to add mention of a characteristic of a somewhat different order. If a diarist, like a poet, is rather born than made, then justice compels us to acknowledge that Pepys was a born diarist—a man who, by reason of his strength and his weakness alike, was an almost ideal chronicler of daily affairs and small beer. For he possessed something more than the native garrulousness, the itch to chatter and to tattle, of which we have already said enough. His, too, was another rare quality of equal importance for the success of his chosen undertaking—a keen, immense, tireless interest in "men, women, and things in general." He was, in the fullest sense of the term, a *viveur*—a man who made it his business to get the most possible out of existence, and who, as matters went in his day, touched the world at an amazing variety of points. Immersed as he was in practical responsibilities, fond as he was of money and affairs, he nevertheless threw himself with the utmost avidity and ardor into the life of his time, an unheroic Ulysses, forever setting forth upon a voyage of new discovery and fresh adventure. He loved, after his own fashion, literature and painting; he was a devotee of music and an amateur of the drama; and he had the shrewdest eye for character, the largest appreciation of the picturesqueness resulting from the clash of motives, the contests of opinion and feeling, and outworkings of ambitions and passions in the tragedy and comedy of men's every-day social world. He was indeed, as Sir Walter Scott said of him, a man of the "most undiscriminating, unsatiable, and miscellaneous curiosity." Although "exceptionally busy and diligent in his attendance at the office," this same writer continues, "he finds time to go to every play and every execution, to every procession, fire, concert, riot, trial, review, city feast, public dissection, or picture-gallery that he can hear of. Nay, there seems scarcely to have

been a school examination, a wedding, christening, charity sermon, bull-baiting, philosophic meeting, or private merrymaking in his neighborhood at which he was not sure to make his appearance, and mindful to record all the particulars.” He had an unbounded love of pleasure, a craving for new sensations, an indefatigable courage in the pursuit of experience, a versatility of enthusiasm simply amazing, an industry in multitudinous enterprises which makes us breathless as we read. “He is the first to hear all the court scandal, and all the public news; to observe the changes of fashions, and the downfall of parties; to pick up family gossip, and retail philosophical intelligence; to criticise every new house or carriage that is built, every new book or new beauty that appears, every measure the King adopts, and every mistress he discards.” In one sentence he will report a debate in Parliament—in the next, carefully itemize the points in a lady’s dress; now he is deeply concerned over the problems of the navy, and anon is to be found mourning the death of a canary, or the ruin of his fine bands, which he has carelessly slobbered with chocolate. Accounts of state crises, details of court profligacy, particulars of his own matrimonial misunderstandings, literary criticisms, headings of sermons, accounts of plays, disquisitions on music and finance, on dinners and dancing, and a thousand other matters, important and petty, are jumbled together in bewildering confusion in his pages, along with sketches of character, bits of the frankest self-delineation, scraps of wisdom and folly, keen judgments of men and circumstances, and those notes of success and failure, of aspiration, achievement, disappointment, of penitence, and sometimes of remorse, which belong to the true story of his inner life. Such is Pepys’s Diary—the record of the daily doings and feelings of a busy, restless, vain, easy-tempered, pleasure-loving, ambitious, shrewd, yet often fatuous, man of the world; take it for all in all, a book without an equal, almost without a rival, in its class.

The author of this extraordinary book, despite some rather aristocratic connections, was the son of a not very successful tailor, and was born, perhaps in London, perhaps in Brampton, Huntingdonshire, (the point remains unsettled,) on 23d February, 1632. He seems to have been at one time at school in Huntingdon; but he afterwards entered regularly as a scholar of St. Paul’s, London, passing thence, in 1650, to

the University of Cambridge. Of his college career we know little; but we have the record of one incident, interesting as foreshadowing the convivial tendencies which come out so often and so strongly in the pages of the Diary. In the Regents’ Book of Magdalene College appears the following highly suggestive entry:—

“Oct 21, 1653. Mem. That Peapys and Hind were solemnly admonished by myself and Mr. Hill for having been scandalously overserved with drink ye night before. This was done in the presence of all the fellows then resident, in Mr. Hill’s chamber.

“[Signed] John Wood, Registrar.”

Yet, notwithstanding this episode, and whatever it may be taken to stand for as an exemplification of Pepys’s way of life, as an undergraduate he became the good friend of some of the most industrious of his contemporaries, and, we have reason to believe, acquitted himself in his own studies, if not brilliantly, still with a very fair measure of success. At all events, he took his bachelor’s degree, in 1653—the very year, it will be observed, of his bacchanalian misadventure,—and received his mastership seven years later. Meanwhile, as we learn from a passing note in the Diary, made a long while after, he dabbled in literary composition to the extent of beginning a romance, called “Love a Cheat.” The manuscript of this he tore up and destroyed on 30th January, 1663, adding to his chronicle of the event: “I liked it very well, and wondered a little at myself, at my vein at that time, when I wrote it, doubting that I cannot do so well now if I would try.” Pepys may not have shown himself in every emergency of life a strong man or a brave; but thus to sacrifice the first heir of his invention, even on finding it, after all, rather better than he had imagined—let us recognize here resolution and courage not by any means to be sneered at.

Pepys was but twenty-three when he married Elizabeth St. Michel, an exceedingly pretty girl of fifteen, the daughter of a Huguenot who had come to England with Elizabeth Maria on her union with Charles the First. Of the relations of husband and wife we shall have something to say by and by. Poor St. Michel was a man of countless resources and infinite ingenuity, and in consequence was frequently both a burden to himself and a tax upon his friends. He had the genius for inventing things

without, it would appear, the talent for turning his inventions to much practical account. He obtained a patent for curing smoky chimneys, and another for cleaning muddy pools; evolved plans for the raising of submerged ships; and in a moment of special illumination actually discovered the whereabouts of King Solomon's gold and silver mines—in this respect anticipating the interesting performance of Mr. Rider Haggard. In view of these facts, it is hardly necessary to add that, Micawber-like, he was always in an impecunious condition, and, pending the establishment of the said mines on a modern working basis, was fain to support himself and wife on the offerings of his daughter's husband, with an additional four shillings a week contributed out of the charitable fund of the French church in London. To one so keenly alive to the meaning and value of money, and so cautious and economical in the management of his own affairs, as Mr. Pepys, the visions and vagaries of such a father-in-law must have given constant cause for dissatisfaction and alarm.

Mrs. Pepys thus brought her husband no fortune but her beauty, and as, at the time of their marriage, Pepys himself had obtained no settled position, the early years of their wedded life were rendered picturesque (from an artistic point of view) by financial difficulties, and often harassed by the ancient problem of how to make one shilling do the work of two. The young couple, however, seem to have put a brave face on the matter, and to have kept faith in each other, and in the coming of better days. At this period, it must be remembered, the Diary had not been started, and direct information, therefore, fails us. But in after years, as wealth grew, and his prosperity became firmly established, Pepys would often cast a back-glance at these early times of anxiety and struggle, indulging, after his manner, in many quaint expressions of thankfulness to God over the change, and frequent prayers for strength and courage in case of sudden fall.

On the first page of his Diary he notes that, though "esteemed rich", he was in reality "very poor,"—a combination of circumstances which is apt at times to be trying even to the most philosophical. His salary was then only fifty pounds a year, and the straitened character of his domestic conditions is shown by the fact that, when the curtain rises on the journal, we discover Mr. and Mrs. Pepys dining in the garret on the remains of a turkey—in the preparation of which, be it mentioned as

matter of history, poor Mrs. Pepys burned her hand. But changes were pending. Chosen secretary to Sir Edward Montague on his taking command of the fleet sent to bring Charles the Second to England, Pepys was shortly afterwards made clerk to the King's ships, a position in which, through his industry and astuteness, he was presently to be of great service to the country in very critical times. This appointment was not, however, secured without complications and difficulties. The actual incumbent of the coveted office—one Barlow—was a rival in the field, with personal prestige and influence strong enough to fill poor Pepys with dismal misgivings concerning his own chances of success. Matters at length were amicably settled between the candidates on the basis of a rather singular compromise. Pepys was inducted into the position on undertaking to pay the said Mr. Barlow fifty pounds a year so long as his (Pepys's) salary was not increased, and one hundred pounds a year when it was raised to three hundred and fifty pounds or more. The tax seems a heavy one, but Pepys was willing to accept the responsibility on observing, as he duly notes in the Diary, that Mr. Barlow was "an old consumptive man," and therefore, assumably, not one likely to call for many annual payments. The old consumptive man lived till 1665, and the entry made by Pepys on hearing of his decease is too characteristic not to be reproduced in full:—

"9 Feb., 1665. Sir William Petty tells me that Mr. Barlow is dead; for which, God knows my heart, I would be as sorry as it is possible for one to be for a stranger, by whose death he gets £100 per annum."

While still a young man, Pepys was made Clerk of the Privy Seal, and a justice of the peace, the latter appointment "mightily" pleasing him, though he notes the somewhat unfortunate circumstance that he was "wholly ignorant" of the duties of the post. Little by little he rose to be the most important and influential of the naval officials, with a steadily improving financial condition, the record of which is given, year by year, in great detail in the Diary. Trouble came presently in the shape of failing eyesight, and by and by he lost his wife; but material fortune continued to attend him through years which were fraught, for the world of English politics, with vast fluctuation and change. At length reverses came. In 1679-80, he was imprisoned for alleged complicity in the famous Popish Plot. After his release he was made Secretary to the Admiralty, and was for two consecutive years President of the Royal Society. In 1690, he was

again imprisoned, this time on the charge of Jacobinism. With this occurrence, Pepys's active life may be said to have come to a close. His constitution had long been undermined by a malady which had been intensified by his sedentary existence, and in 1700 he was persuaded by his physicians to leave his house in York Buildings and take up his abode at the home of his old friend and servant, William Hewer, at Clapham. There he died on 26th May, 1703, having just passed the Scriptural term of life.

Pepys's only acknowledged piece of literary work was "The Memoirs of the Royal Navy," published in 1690, though a small volume entitled "Relation of the Troubles in the Court of Portugal." and bearing the initials, S. P., is sometimes ascribed to him by bibliographers. Apart from the Diary, however,—the peculiar qualities of which, it will be understood, remove it altogether from the region of comparison—Pepys's most useful and lasting achievement was the foundation of the famous library at Cambridge, which still bears his name—a collection of manuscript naval memoirs, prints, old English ballads, and curious miscellanea, which, by the judgment of high authorities, remains to-day one of the richest of its class. The visitor to Magdalene College, Cambridge, may still inspect this library as it stands in Pepys's original book-presses; and if he be a student of the journal, and withal a man of any imaginative power, he will hardly fail to recall with what true bibliomaniac delight the old collector gathered these treasures about him in his own home, with what twinges of conscience he sometimes laid out larger sums than he felt he could well afford in their acquisition, with what enthusiasm he pored over their pages, with what satisfaction and pride he arranged and rearranged them on many a dull and tedious day.

I have sketched in brief the external history of Pepys's life, but you must not be under the impression that the whole, or even the larger part of his career, is covered by the voluminous Diary. This daily record comprises some ten years only, extending from 1st January, 1659-60, when the writer was nearly twenty-seven, to May, 1669, when he had recently completed his thirty-seventh year. Just how and why he came to open his secret chronicle, he nowhere tells us; but he makes it very clear that he closed it at length, not because he had grown weary of it, or

ceased to find satisfaction in its composition, but simply on account of the failure of eyesight, above referred to. Very pathetic is the final entry:—

“And thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my journal, I not being able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand; and, therefore, whatever comes of it, I must forbear; and, therefore, resolve from this time forward to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know; or if there be anything, I must endeavor to keep a margin in my book open, to add here and there a note in short-hand with my own hand. And so I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave; for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me.” May 31, 1669. S. P.

Few readers probably will rise from the perusal of the Diary, dismissing it with such an entry as this as the closing note, without regretting that the end should have come just when it did; for we would well have liked to know how Pepys responded to some of his later experiences, and especially in what spirit he accepted the tragic accidents which presently forced his manhood to the test. About these matters we can now only speculate, with the feeling that had the journal been continued for even a few years longer, we should perhaps have been brought into contact with a deeper, stronger, more earnest side of the writer’s character than actually makes itself apparent in the narrative. We little guess what resources of courage and power lie somewhere mysteriously stored up in men and women seemingly the least heroic, to be drawn upon only when the great and decisive moments of a lifetime come; and it might well give us, we fancy, a certain sense of satisfaction if we could follow the vain and garrulous Pepys through his season of growing wealth and prosperity onward to the time when he fell on evil days, and watch him in the enveloping darkness, bowing his head amid reverses of fortune, or standing face to face with death beside his wife’s open grave. But it is useless to indulge in hypothesis. We must accept the Diary as it is, and be thankful that the years covered by it were so full of matters of private interest and public importance.

And if we only think for a moment of all that happened in a public way during these ten critical years, and remember that Pepys, by virtue of his official position, was often drawn into very close relations with some of the moving forces and figures of the time—"names that in their motion were full-welling fountain-heads of change,"—we can realize at once that on the historical side this Diary has immense value. I do not dwell upon this side now, for time is limited, and there are other matters, not so frequently dealt with, to which I want to direct attention. Yet it is necessary just to say that, as documentary evidence concerning the inner life of the court and society, the inconceivable, the unutterable profligacy of the King and his followers, the irresponsibility of those in charge of public affairs, the complete demoralization of the upper classes during the early years of the Restoration, Pepys's chronicle furnishes a record that we cannot afford to overlook. His simplicity, insouciance, and habitual self-possession are often more telling than the most eloquent descriptions of historians, the most fervid denunciations of moralists. An accidental word of his will often lay bare a condition of things which lengthy analysis, supported by innumerable references to authorities will hardly make us realize, a few passing sentences, penned *au jour le jour*, having frequently the power of throwing some circumstance, otherwise almost incredible, into sudden and lurid relief. Indeed, the mere fact that the temper of moral indignation is not one to which Pepys often or easily gives way, itself lends added force to all he writes, and intensifies the meaning of his rare exclamations of horror or protest. If Pepys had any political convictions at all, they were of the most flexible kind; he did not cultivate the sort of conscience which has the troublesome faculty of interfering at unexpected times with its owner's chances of worldly advancement and success. Brought up under the Commonwealth, and, for a time at least, marked by Roundhead proclivities, he readily and rapidly transferred his allegiance to the new *régime*, his only anxiety being, it would seem, lest his earlier opinions should be resuscitated, with unpleasant practical results. Oddly enough, though the Diary opens in the midst of a great political crisis—when Monk was marching from Scotland, and English affairs were hanging poised in the balance of fate, —it nowhere contains any utterance of strong party feeling, any distinctly enunciated wish, either for the restoration of the Stuarts or for the preservation of the Commonwealth. When the Merry Monarch was settled upon the throne, Pepys quietly accepted the fact—along with the

very desirable office in the Admiralty secured thereby. You say that the spirit thus shown is not a manly, not a noble one. Alas! no. Pepys, I am afraid, had but one firmly rooted political principle—the principle proverbially associated with the celebrated Vicar of Bray, of looking out for himself and his own welfare. Here, of course, we are strongly tempted to indulge by the way in a little conventional moralizing, and to congratulate ourselves that in our own days, in enlightened America, the low aims and sordid ambitions of poor old Pepys are quite unknown. But I restrain my eloquence, having other matters on hand. The point I want to dwell on for the moment is, that testimony to the political and social corruption following the Restoration, coming from such a man as this, is testimony of almost unique value, on account of the very character of the witness. To lead you through the miry places of the Diary is no part of my present plan; but let me just say that when such a man, albeit unused to the chiding mood, bursts out with the exclamation, “So they are all mad!—and thus the kingdom is governed!”—when, as sometimes happens, he speaks with genuine sorrow of what he has heard, or perhaps seen, in the high places of the land; when he scatters among his small talk and frivolous details sentences full of dismal apprehension concerning the country’s position and outlook,—then things must have come to a pretty pass indeed. Pepys was professionally committed to the Stuart dynasty; yet, as has been well said, a splendid eulogy of Cromwell could be gathered from the *obiter dicta* of his pages. Certainly, we need hardly travel outside the Diary itself, if we seek only to understand and estimate the iniquities and political short-sightedness of those who succeeded Cromwell in place and power.

But now we will descend from the dignity of history—if these things belong to the dignity of history—to the plane of common every-day life. Abandoning our quest for edification, we will wander for a little while about the Diary, for no other purpose than that of deriving what amusement we may from its personal banalities and social tittle-tattle. Pepys tempts us to be as unsystematic and inconsequential as himself. We will assume, therefore, the privilege which, according to Hazlitt, Coleridge so constantly abused in his conversational monologues—that of beginning nowhere in particular, and ending, if we see fit, in the same place.

It has been said that in Pepys's ten years' record there are more than five hundred references to dress and personal decoration. I have not checked the statement, but I can easily believe it. This gives, roughly speaking, an average of one such notice to each week covered by the journal. Dress and the affairs of the toilet were indeed for Pepys always matters of serious importance, not to be disregarded in the midst of the greatest strain of public events. We learn that at times Mrs. Pepys's feminine desire for a new gown or some expensive bit of finery gave rise to domestic bickering and husbandly reproof, and that the money laid out on tailoring and haberdashery occasionally caused an uneasy hour. Yet, with all his thrift, Pepys seems to have had a remarkably free hand when questions of this kind stood in the way. He reports, without remorse, the payment of twenty-four pounds for a single suit—the best, he adds, "that I ever wore in my life"; and later on, notes the spending of eighty pounds for a necklace for his wife—though in this case he has misgivings. It is sad to relate that, on the whole, our diarist was much less concerned about his own personal extravagances than about the extravagances of his better-half—a fact which shows us that husbands, like other conveniences of life, have been improved by the course of civilization. At any rate, once noting, to his great sorrow and alarm, a month's outlay of seventy-seven pounds on dress and its accompaniments, he adds that about twelve pounds of this had gone for his wife, and the small remaining balance—some fifty-five pounds—for himself. Charity begins at home; but economy, like justice, often starts next door. Pepys's marital parsimoniousness frequently manifests itself in very petty ways; as when, for example, under date 14th February, 1666-7, he writes—"I am also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me £5; *but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines*."

Once upon a time, Mr. and Mrs. Pepys went to the theatre together, and there they saw "Mrs. Stewart, very fine, with her locks done up with puffs, as my wife calls them, and several other great ladies had their hair so, though I do not like it; but my wife do mightily; but it is only because she sees it is the fashion." This is all very well as a piece of superior masculine judgment; but unfortunately our moralist betrays no such scruples when social opinion prescribes a new departure in his own accoutrement. We notice with interest in the jottings of the journal the first appearance, or early reappearance, of several curious customs in dress. Patches were used by Mrs. Pepys, for the first time "since we were

married," on 30th August, 1660; and on 12th June, 1663, after observing the growth of the practice then indulged in by ladies, of wearing vizards, or masks, at the theatre—a practice we can understand better as we come to know more of the character of the performances given on the Restoration stage,—Mr. Pepys goes forthwith to the Exchange "to buy things with my wife; among others, a vizard for herself." On 3d November, in this same year, he reports the adoption by himself of the new mode of wearing a periwig in place of the natural hair. It went a little to his heart, we find, to part with his own head-gear. However, he was somewhat reassured when, causing all his maids to look upon him, he observed their satisfaction with the result; though he notes intense self-consciousness and some embarrassment when, the next day, he went abroad for the first time in his new guise. About the same period he begins to shave himself—a performance which pleases him "mightily," as promising to save both time and money. "Up betimes and shaved myself," so runs a later entry, "after a week's growth; but Lord! how ugly I was yesterday, and how fine to-day."

One is sorely tempted here to reproduce a few of the many passages in which the vain old chronicler gloats over his handsome clothing, and the imposing figure cut by him at the theatre, or on the promenade, or in church. But one or two must suffice as specimens:—

"July 10, 1660. This day I put on my new silk suit, the first that ever I wore in my life."

"Feb. 3, 1661, (Lord's Day). This day I first begun [sic] to go forth in my coat and sword, as the manner now among gentlemen is."

"April 22, 1661. Up early, and made myself as fine as I could."

"Oct 19, 1662, (Lord's Day). Put on my first new lace-band; and so neat it is, that I am resolved my great expense shall be lace-bands, and it will set off anything else the more."

"May 17, 1668, (Lord's Day). Up and put on my new stuff suit, with a shoulder belt, according to the new fashion, and the bands of my vest and tunique laced with silk lace of the colour of my suit; and so very handsome to church."

Alas, poor Pepys! Where be your lace-bands now? your shoulder-belts? your rich silk vests?

The prominence of dress in the Diary may well surprise us, but we are scarcely less astonished by the amount of space given by our busy man of affairs to the most various kinds of pleasure and simple merrymaking. Amongst the games in which Mr. Secretary Pepys seems to have found special satisfaction, tennis, ninepins, and billiards hold high place; but these, after all, never yielded him a tithe of the pure enjoyment that he derived from his more intellectual pastimes, reading and music. Pepys was a genuine musician; and we get the impression from the journal that his love of music reached the proportions of a real passion—the only passion, indeed, of his life. On the other hand, he was not a systematic scholar, though he devoured books with avidity, keeping in touch with the literary output of his day, and at least tasting all sorts of things, from Cicero, the Hebrew grammar, and Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," downward to Audley's "Way to be Rich," and the last-published comedy of the popular playwrights of his time. Here are a couple of sample entries:—

"Feb. 10, 1661-2. To Paul's Churchyard, and there I met with Dr. Fuller's 'England's Worthys,' the first time that ever I saw it; and so I sat down reading in it; being much troubled that (though he had some discourse with me about my family and arms) he says nothing at all, nor mentions us either in Cambridgeshire or Norfolke. But I believe, indeed, our family were never considerable."

"July 1, 1666. … Walked to Woolwich, reading 'The Rivall Ladys'[4] all the way, and find it a most pleasant and fine writ play."

Pepys's passing opinions have not much critical value, but they are his own, which is more than can be said of many literary *dicta* far more pretentious than his. It is rather instructive to follow some of his fluctuations in taste. We notice—to take a single illustration only—that when the first part of "Hudibras" was issued, he bought a copy for half a crown, having heard it much cried up for its pungent wit; but was so much disappointed when he came to dip into it, that he sold it again the same afternoon for eighteen-pence. Still every one talked of the poem, and Pepys began to wonder whether he had given it a fair trial. So a few days later he purchased another copy, resolved on closer study. Now, I will venture to say that in this emergency poor Pepys kept himself by no means free from the sham admiration and cuckoo-criticism which is the bane of our drawing-rooms, and, for that matter, of some of our college

classrooms, at the present day. Had you met him in social gatherings, and had the talk turned on “Hudibras,” as it would almost certainly have done, then, doubtless, you would have found that Pepys, fearful of appearing deficient in acumen or taste, would have little or nothing to say about his adverse judgment, and might even consent to laugh perfunctorily at jokes he really did not think funny, and at doggerel rhymes which in his heart of hearts he held to be simply stupid. Meanwhile, he confides to his Diary the expression of his honest opinion, promising himself that, on the appearance of the second part of the poem, he will borrow it from some friend, and buy it only if, on inspection, it should turn out to be better than the first part. All this is surely edifying.

Here we ought perhaps to add that, in an ill-advised moment, Mr. Pepys undertook to learn to dance. “The truth is, I think it a thing very useful for a gentleman, and sometimes I may have occasion of using it, and though it cost me what I am heartily sorry it should,” (he deeply deplores the payment of ten shillings entrance fee to the class,) “yet I am resolved to get it up some other way…. So, though it be against my stomach, yet I will try it for a little while.” The subsequent introduction of a dancing-master, whose name was Pemberton, turned out, however, to be the introduction of a serpent into Pepys’s matrimonial Paradise. Mrs. Pepys, crazy over the new accomplishment, insisted on his coming twice a day, which, as Mr. Pepys properly protested, was “a folly.” Moreover, he by and by grew jealous of his wife’s attention to the said Pemberton, and some heartache and much petulance were the result. Pepys gives us one graphic description of himself, too angry to join his wife at her lesson, yet walking up and down in his own chamber, “listening to hear whether they danced or no.” But he presently became an adept in the art, and danced his own part, infinitely to his satisfaction, in many a corranto and jig.

For Pepys, as we have said, was a highly convivial person, and abandoned himself to the pleasure of the moment with an ardor and whole-heartedness which fill the grimly serious modern reader with something like amazement. The thought of the morrow rarely for him disturbed the enjoyment of to-day, though with the coming of the morrow he sometimes found that he had applied himself to the good things of this life not wisely but too well. Accounts of suppers, of social

festivities kept up until ever so much o'clock in the morning, of mirthmaking of the most boisterous kind, abound in his pages, mixed up with matters of more serious import in quite a bewildering way. Pepys will often round off some such detailed report with a characteristic comment expressive of deep satisfaction; as, for example, "mighty merry," or "so home, mighty pleased with this day's sport." *Carpe diem* was evidently his counsel of perfection. There is something charming about the man's juvenile capacity for enjoyment, though we are frequently inclined to wonder how he managed in certain emergencies to keep his clear head and his steady hand. Yet only occasionally does the journal record any marked reaction from even the most roistering overnight carousal. Here, however, is just one case in point. On 14th August, 1666,—in the midst, be it noted, of a good deal of mental disturbance caused by a misunderstanding between himself and Lord Peterborough,—Pepys describes at length an evening of wild frolic and buffoonery. After dinner, with his wife and wife's maid, Mercer (who played a rather prominent part in subsequent domestic unpleasantnesses), he takes a turn at the Bear Garden, where there is much wine-drinking.

"Then we supped at home, and very merry. And then about 9 o'clock to Mrs. Mercer's gate, where the fire and boys expected us, and her son had provided abundance of serpents and rockets; and there mighty merry (my Lady Pen and Pegg going thither with us, and Nan Wright) till about 12 at night, flinging our fireworks and burning one another and the people over the way. At last our businesses being most spent, we into Mrs. Mercer's, and there mighty merry, smutting one another with candle-grease and soot, till most of us were like devils. And that being done, then we broke up, and to my house, and there I made them drink; and upstairs we went, and there fell into dancing (W. Batelier dancing well), and dressing him and I and one Mr. Banister … like women; and Mercer put on a suit of Tom's like a boy, and mighty mirth we had; and Mercer danced a jig, and Nan Wright and my wife and Pegg Pen put on periwigs. Thus we spent till three or four in the morning, mighty merry; and then parted and to bed."

Do we wonder that the next day's entry should significantly open —"Mighty sleepy; slept till past eight of the clock"?

As wine-bibbing, and even downright drunkenness, occupy so large a space in our record, it may be proper to note indications contained in it of

the rise of domestic forces destined to do much in a quiet way towards the gradual improvement of general manners in this particular respect. From the point of view of social history, there is much to interest us in Pepys's occasional references to tea, coffee, and chocolate. These three beverages found their way into England within a few years of one another, about the middle of the seventeenth century, cocoa leading the way, and tea bringing up the rear. We have seen that on one occasion our diarist spoilt his bands by spilling chocolate upon them. The coffee-house was an accomplished fact in his time. There he often met distinguished men on business; there he passed many a chatty hour; there he once reports seeing "Dryden the poet … and all the wits of the town." For tea he never seems to have acquired special fondness. I have marked but two references to it in the Diary. Once, on 28th September, 1660, he notes: "I did send for a cup of tea (a China drink), of which I never had drank before,"—and unfortunately, for a wonder, he does not tell us how he liked it. And again, on 28th June, 1667, he chronicles returning home to find his wife "making of tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling, the Potticary, tells her is good for her cold." Tea, by the way, was enormously dear in those days, and was supposed to possess astonishing and mysterious medicinal properties, concerning which we may read much in a broadside issued by Thomas Garway, the coffee-man of Change Alley,—a rare and curious document, a copy of which is still preserved in the British Museum.

It does not, of course, surprise us to learn that this pleasure-loving man of the town was a regular attendant at all the public amusements of his time. He visited the cockpit, the bear-garden, the gambling-room, the prize-ring; though, much to his credit, he found little pleasure in these places of popular resort—a fact which makes it harder for us to understand his frequent presence at public executions, in witnessing which, as many entries serve to show, he found a curious kind of satisfaction. On the other hand, his enthusiasm for everything connected with the theatre was simply unbounded; his Diary remaining to-day an important source of first-hand information on all matters pertaining to the drama of the Restoration. From his miscellaneous jottings we gain a wonderfully vivid impression of the manners and customs of the playhouse of the period, together with a sense of life in things otherwise dead beyond recall. For Pepys saw the great Betterton in all his glory, and was bewitched by the beautiful and fascinating Nell Gwynne. When

his record opens, boys were still playing female parts, as they had done in Shakspere's time, and the introduction of women to the English stage is duly registered by him as an event. He details, after his manner, all the odds and ends of scandal concerning prominent theatrical people; was himself on very friendly terms—somewhat too friendly at times for domestic peace—with various pretty actresses; and was an occasional visitor to that mysterious realm which lies behind the scenes. Once in a while, however, he acknowledges the disillusion caused by such excursions. The extremely human proportions into which the heroes and heroines of that magic stage-land dwindled when seen at close quarters,—the dust, noise, confusion, paint, powder, and general dinginess of the dressing-rooms and coulisses,—these are subjects of frequent remark. Perhaps his most disenchanting experience was one connected with Nell Gwynne—"pretty, witty Nelly," as he fondly calls her,—(we will not forget that the Diary was written in cipher). He finds her once behind the curtain,—alas, that we should have to repeat it!—swearing like a trooper because of the smallness of the audience. Now, a small house is a trial sufficient to tax the philosophy of any actress; but we are sorry that pretty, witty Nelly, should have behaved herself in this way. Pepys confesses that on this occasion he went home a sadder and a wiser man.

Let us not imagine that Pepys followed his career of pleasure without twinges of conscience and occasional remorse. The expense involved frequently worried him, and again and again he reproved himself for wasting valuable time. It saddened him once in a while, too, to realize that he could not say "No" when temptation came in his way,—"a very great fault of mine which I must amend in." Sometimes he argued the matter out to a logical issue; as, for instance, when, on 9th March, 1665, he writes:—

"The truth is I do indulge myself a little more in pleasure, knowing that this is the proper age of my life to do it; and out of my observation that most men that do thrive in the world do forget to take pleasure during the time they are getting their estate, but reserve that till they have got one, and then it is too late for them to enjoy it."

This eminently philosophical generalization appears to have given him a good deal of relief. Still, the qualms would come, philosophy notwithstanding. The thought of neglected business is like a death's head at the feast when he dines once with Lady Batten and Madame Williams;

and when, on another memorable occasion, he goes to the playhouse when he knows well enough that he should have been elsewhere, he is so thoroughly ashamed of himself that he sneaks in and takes a back place—only to be immediately singled out by an acquaintance, who spies him out from afar, and, much to his mortification, insists on sitting beside him. Incidents of this kind are numerous enough to show us that the way of the transgressor was sometimes hard.

Pepys, however, managed upon occasion to get even with himself in these delicate matters by a very curious device. He registered solemn vows,—as, for instance, not to drink wine for a specified period, or not to go to the play till after a certain date,—inflicting various penalties upon himself for infraction. These penalties habitually took financial forms—payments to charities and the like; and we note that in cases of infraction—and these were sufficiently frequent—Pepys was more deeply concerned about the spent money than about the broken vow. Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that some fine casuistry is now and then shown by him in the way in which he manages to elude the sense of an obligation while technically fulfilling its letter. Under pledge not to touch wine, he consumes hypocras, a mixture of red and white wine with sugar and spices, and comforts himself with the extraordinary theory that this is, "to the best of my personal judgment, … only a mixed compound drink, and not any wine." Equally dubious are some of his theatrical doings. Once he congratulates himself that he has kept his vow because he arrives at the playhouse too late to make it worth his while to go in—a really magnificent confusion of intention with result. Once again, he allows an acquaintance to pay for him, and exonerates himself on the ground that he was taken to the performance, and did not, so to speak, take himself—did not, in other words, go as a free agent, and of his own impulse and will. And on yet another occasion,—such is his subtlety,—he gets Mr. Creed to treat him in this way, actually lending the said Mr. Creed the money necessary for the purpose. This, however, he felt to be going rather too far, even for an ethical theorist. In reporting the incident, he adds that this "is a fallacy that I have found now once, to avoid my vow with, but never to be more practised, I swear."

I said that in this part of my lecture I should make no attempt to maintain logical consistency. This must be my excuse for leading you by an abrupt transition from the stage to the pulpit. Pepys occasionally

stayed at home on Sundays to work up his accounts, or look over his papers, and once (but he was sick that day) to read plays; but he was, on the whole, a faithful church-goer, and, as we have had occasion to observe, made special use of the Lord's Day for a display of his new clothes and finery, a practice which to modern readers must needs seem both strange and reprehensible. His notes of discourses heard by him are sometimes extremely interesting; while his criticisms—and he was evidently by no means easy to satisfy in the matter of sermons—are often as pungent and incisive as they are quaint and characteristic. "A lazy, poor sermon," he writes, after hearing Dr. Fuller. Once he reports "an unnecessary sermon upon original sin, neither understood" by the preacher himself "nor the people"; and another time he hears a young man "play the fool upon the doctrine of Purgatory." Considerable space is given in his jottings to a certain poor young Scotchman, who had a perfect genius for preaching "most tediously," and who becomes for Pepys a sort of type and standard of dulness and nebulosity. Poor little Scot, thus to be pilloried to the end of time! Pepys had, however,—let us put it euphemistically,—a wonderful power of withdrawing into himself, when the exercises of the pulpit became unusually trying—when, to adapt the phrase of Madame de Sévigné, a preacher abused the privilege preachers have of being long-winded and tiresome. Over and over again he chronicles sleeping soundly through a sermon, and waking refreshed, if not edified, at the close. "After dinner, to church again, where the young Scot preaching, I slept all the while."—"So up and to church, where Mr. Mills preached, but I know not how; I slept most of the sermon."—"So to church, and slept all the sermon, the Scot, to whose voice I am not to be reconciled [one would suppose that he had become pretty well reconciled to it, judging by its soporific influences] preaching." I pick these at random, as specimen entries. There were seasons, however, when, the sermon being bad, and himself unable to achieve the benign relief of slumber, Pepys confesses to killing time in less innocent ways. Susceptible to an extreme degree to feminine charms and graces, he often passed the hour of exhortation in looking out for pretty women, and in studying carefully their various styles of beauty and of dress. Here are a few instances to the point. "To church, where, God forgive me! I spent most of my time in looking on my new Morena [brunette] at the other side of the church." So runs one of his confidences. And again: "After dinner, I by water alone to Westminster to

the parish church, and there did entertain myself with my perspective-glass up and down the church, by which I had the great pleasure of seeing and gazing at a great many very fine women; and what with that and sleeping, I passed away the time till the sermon was done.” He even reports that once, at St. Dunstan’s, in the midst too of an “able sermon,” he found himself beside a “pretty, modest maid,” whom “I did labor to take by the hand, but she would not, but got further and further from me; and at last I could perceive her to take pins out of her pocket, to prick me if I should touch her again, which seeing I did forbear, and was glad I did spy her design. And then I fell to gaze upon another pretty maid in a pew close to me, and she on me; and I did go about to take her by the hand, which she suffered a little, and then withdrew. So the sermon ended, and the church broke up, and my amours ended also.”

This time, by a transition strictly logical, we are led to speak for a moment about the most intimate side of Pepys’s domestic existence—his relations with his wife. The subject is a difficult and delicate one; it is, moreover, too complicated to be dealt with in any detail here. A few general words must suffice.

Their marriage had been one of love, and it can hardly be called, on the whole, an unfortunate one, in spite of many unhappy episodes and a good deal of misunderstanding; for even in the white glare of the Diary, where every fleck shows, their home life often comes out in a very pleasant light. Still there were unquestionably, even from the very beginning, little rifts within the lute, and these rifts widen terribly, we notice, as the journal runs its course. To the outside world, very probably, such rifts were not often apparent; but we are privileged to see matters close at hand, and from the inside; and this undercurrent of tragedy, beneath the broad stream of prosperity and success, becomes at times painfully manifest as we read.

I suppose it can hardly be said that in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Pepys’s various matrimonial difficulties, the entire blame rested on either pair of shoulders. Mrs. Pepys was extremely pretty and attractive, and her husband admired her thoroughly, and was after his own rather singular fashion, devotedly attached to her. Yet she was evidently whimsical, somewhat capricious, apt to get into what Pepys calls “fusty” humors, and at times exceedingly trying to the nerves. Many a little crisis, not serious perhaps, but distinctly unpleasant, seems to have been

brought about by a word unnecessarily spoken, a look or a phrase interpreted amiss. But, after all, we fear that the main burden of responsibility rested with Pepys himself. Why would he undertake to teach the poor young woman astronomy and arithmetic, when, admittedly, she had neither taste nor talent for such subjects? Why was he so much upset on finding that her ear for music was not nearly as good as he thought it should have been? Why did he cut her short so peremptorily on one most unfortunate occasion when she was telling that long-winded story of hers from "The Grand Cyrus"? Why was he petulant with her, at another time, for no better reason, as he himself confesses, than that he was hungry, and she had dressed herself, as she not infrequently did, in a manner that displeased him? Why, finally, when she was berating him rather roundly about her deficient wardrobe, did he fall to reading Boyle's "Hydrostatics" aloud, "and let her talk till she was tired, and vexed that I would not hear her"? It is surely, to say the least of it, far from tactful in a husband to declaim from a treatise on hydrostatics, when his wife is determined to discuss more serious matters. These may be trifles; but such trifles are important things, when viewed from the standpoint of domestic peace. But all this touches merely the fringe of the problem. The really serious troubles were generally, if not always, caused by poor Mr. Pepys's fatal over-sensibility —that characteristic weakness of his, to which he himself from time to time became only too keenly alive. The simple fact of the matter is, that our diarist had a fondness for the society of pretty women; that his wife, naturally enough, grew jealous; and that all sorts of unpleasantness, deepening sometimes into genuine domestic tragedy, was the inevitable result. I have not time now to go into the ins and outs of what is really a very long story, to follow the rapid fluctuations of feeling, or mark out the converging lines of approach to the unavoidable catastrophe. But I cannot resist the temptation of recounting one curious episode—that of a neat joke once played by Mrs. Pepys on her susceptible better-half. Pepys, early in the period of the Diary, had fallen in with his wife's desire to have a girl to live with them—a kind of companion and lady's maid. He did not like the expense incurred; but as long as the young lady was sufficiently well-favored to be a pleasant object to look on, he saw but little other cause for complaint—though cause for complaint, and good cause too, Mrs. Pepys was presently to find. Well, on one occasion his wife told him she had engaged a new maid—a girl so pretty and

winsome, she went on to say, that positively she was already jealous. Mr. Pepys was a little uneasy about all this. However, he concluded that she "meant it merrily," and awaited with a good deal of ill-repressed excitement the coming of the domestic beauty. In due season, Hebe arrived; and judge his astonishment and disgust, when he found, as he plaintively reports, that she was not pretty at all, but a very ordinary wench! For once, at all events, the laugh was on Mrs. Pepys's side.

Towards the latter part of the Diary the conjugal misunderstandings pass into a very acute stage, and for a time a break-up of the Pepys establishment seems imminent. But we are glad to be able to record that the crisis was a comparatively brief one. Mr. Pepys, sorrow-smitten and full of remorse over his recent ill-doings, undertakes to mend his ways, and sets manfully, though with some misgivings and much difficulty, about the task of so doing. And thus the curtain falls upon what promises to be a complete reconciliation; and we close the Diary with the hope that the new peace lasted for the few brief years that were destined to elapse before the life of poor Elizabeth Pepys was brought to its untimely end. There is one odd commentary on matrimony, which I must needs add for its characteristic strain. Pepys, going to church one day, happens by accident to witness a wedding, and is much interested in what Thackeray described as "the happy couple, as the saying is." In chronicling this incident, he makes the following extraordinary remark: "Strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition, every man and woman gazing and smiling upon them."

There is much still on the purely personal side of the Diary about which I should well have liked to speak; and, in particular, I had hoped to dwell for a little on Pepys's notices of the Great Plague (which are much more interesting, as well as accurate, than Defoe's well-known romancing book), and on his graphic account of the fire of London, which forms an admirable commentary on the second half of Dryden's famous, if somewhat unmanageable, poem, "Annus Mirabilis." But these matters, and many other such, cannot now be even touched upon. Meanwhile, in bringing these rambling memoranda to a close, I do not feel inclined to apologize for what may seem the frivolous character of my material. The unique charm of Pepys's Diary, as I said at the outset, lies very largely in the frankness, the naïveté, the unsophisticated

directness of its record; it is, as I insisted, really and truly what other chronicles of the kind have been simply in name, a *journal intime*. Something of this frankness, this naïveté, it has been my aim to illustrate, and to show you at the same time how quaint and startling are some of the results. And let me ask you not to judge too harshly of the man into whose existence we have thus ventured to pry. Remember that we have been privileged in his case to push aside the curtain which men habitually keep carefully drawn across the penetralia of their lives; that we have caught him often enough at unfair advantage, and in a light fiercer than that which, Tennyson says, beats upon a throne, blackening each blot. At any rate, I, for my own part, see no reason why, as we lay his Diary aside, we should indulge in platitudes of criticism—still less, why we should console ourselves with the flattering thought of moral superiority. Pepys was not a great man, it is true: he was often weak, often foolish; the temptations of the world again and again proved too much for him; at many important points, his theory and practice of life were alike unsound. But it might be well perhaps, before we undertake to throw stones at his glass house, to look a little carefully into the vitreous mansion in which we ourselves dwell. And if you and I were forced to lay bare, as he has done for himself, the secret thoughts and feelings, the passing fancies, the unspoken desires, the foibles and failures of our every-day existence, I wonder how many of us would see reason to be proud of the revelation so made. O my brothers, let us be humble and charitable! Humility and charity are excellent things; and humility and charity, I confess, I find constantly forced upon me whenever I dip, for an hour’s genuine amusement, into the Diary of old Samuel Pepys.

Two Novelists of the English Restoration.

Two Novelists of the English Restoration.

It is the object of this brief paper to introduce the good-natured reader, who, as a well-organized human being, is undoubtedly possessed of a proper love of fiction, to two women who had much to do with settling the English novel into its true line of development. I confess I could wish that the ladies in question were, socially and morally, a trifle more presentable. I can well remember the time when I myself made their acquaintance in the library of the British Museum, and how I was almost ashamed of myself, despite the fact that I had the definite purposes of a student to support me, when I thought of the hours I had been fain to spend in their singularly unedifying company. But in the study of literary evolution, as in that of the history of the world at large, it is not always possible to be over-fastidious. When we are interested in a thing done, we must consider, as cheerfully as may be, the doer and the doing of it, though we may have fault enough to find sometimes with the character of the former and the manner of the latter.

The women to whose personalities and writings we are presently to turn—Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley—stand out among the least attractive products of an age of low ideals and scandalous living. But they none the less remain figures of some permanent attractiveness to those of us who care to investigate the beginnings of our great modern prose fiction; and it is on account of their relative or historic importance that I have undertaken to say something about them in this place.

In order, however, to make such historic importance clear, we must go back a little in our inquiry.

The titanic imaginative energy of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods had found its principal outlet in the drama. It was on the stage and through the literature of the stage that, during the most brilliant era of its intellectual activity, the genius of the English people, for the most part, sought expression. The drama thus became the representative and the embodiment of all that was strongest and most characteristic in the

national life. In it we find the great mental and moral movements of the time gathered up and made vocal; to it we turn for the fullest and richest manifestation of the national mind. As Mr. Symonds truly said: “The drama, its own original creation, stood to the English nation in the place of all the other arts. England … needed no æsthetic outlet but the drama.”

But little by little the close connection between the stage and the national life was severed; and cut off from its sources of deepest impulse and inspiration, the drama fell gradually into a condition of decrepitude and decay. For many years before the Revolution the breach between theatre and people had been a slowly widening one; and by the time the Restoration once more gave free rein to dramatic art, the separation had become complete. No longer making catholic appeal to the whole community, no longer absorbing into itself, by way of nourishment and stimulation, the broad and generous interests of a varied social life, the drama now became the mouthpiece and the mirror of one class only—of the aristocratic class, which had brought foreign fashions, tastes, morality, with it from abroad. The theatre of Shakspere and his contemporaries had been, as it were, the flower and fruitage of a period of intense national vigor and excitement; the theatre of Congreve and Wycherley was little more than the passing amusement of the idle and demoralized fashionable world. Harassed by Puritan austerity on the one hand, and more seriously perverted by Royalist profligacy upon the other, the drama was forced into a relationship with the larger mass of the people at once unnatural and most disastrous; and thus the plays of the time, in spite of all their pungency of wit and glitter of dialogue, lack that breadth of horizon, earnestness of purpose, and firm grasp of life, without which no body of literature—and no body of dramatic literature especially—can lay claim to permanent value and significance.

Meanwhile a new taste was growing up, and with it a fresh channel was opened for imaginative activity. While the drama, sapped at its foundations, was sinking deeper and deeper into corruption, and before as yet any effort had been put forth to save it from its fate, the first noteworthy experiments were being made towards the development of a class of literature which has since acquired unrivalled popularity, and every year continues to fill a larger and larger place in public estimation, as well as upon our library shelves. The causes which combined to bring

about the decline of the drama and the rise of the modern novel were so varied in character and intricate in their outworkings, that even the briefest discussion of them here would commit us to an unwarrantable digression; though it should be said, and said emphatically, that the change is not to be regarded as a mere matter of shifting literary taste, since it was unquestionably related, in the most direct and intimate way, with some of the largest and deepest movements of the time in society, manners, and general thought.[5] Suffice it for us now to remark the simple fact that, while the dramatists of the Restoration were engaged upon works which, fortunately for English society and letters, left but little permanent mark upon the history of the theatre, the foundations were being slowly but firmly laid upon which the vast superstructure of modern fiction was presently to be reared.

So thoroughly absorbed had men been in the drama, and so natural had it seemed for those of imaginative power to turn directly to the stage, that hitherto prose fiction, though by no means neglected, had done little towards making a decisive start. Some popular stories, then long current, had been gathered up and circulated in chap-books, and had in sundry cases furnished materials for contemporary playwrights; translations had been made from several foreign languages, and in this way "Don Quixote," and the works of Rabelais, Boccaccio, Montemayor, and others, introduced to English readers; while such collections of versions and adaptations as those of Painter and Turbervile might have been found, it is said, so great had been their temporary vogue, on almost every London bookstall. Moreover, the form of fiction had been occasionally employed by philosophers for broaching new theories of life and government; as by More, in his "Utopia," and Bacon, in his "New Atlantis." And, far more important than any such sporadic efforts as these, there were the romances produced by some of the early dramatists—Lyly, and his most famous followers, Lodge and Greene, in particular. To these have to be added the chivalrous pastoral of Sir Philip Sidney, "warbler of poetic prose"; and in a very different category, the stories and sketches of Thomas Nash, Dekker, and Chettle, whose work, apart altogether from any question of absolute merit, is of supreme significance to the student of English fiction, because in it we find the crude beginnings of the picaresque novel of later times.

Lumped together in this way—and the above paragraph makes no pretence at completeness of statement,—the amount of prose fiction of one and another kind produced in England under Elizabeth and James the First may seem to be considerable, and certainly no student of the evolution of literature, or of the many-sided intellectual activity of the Shaksperian age, would to-day think of underrating it. Yet it is possible perhaps to go to the other extreme, and to exaggerate its historic importance. To trace the connection between the tentative output of the ’prentice-writers just referred to and the fully grown fiction of the eighteenth century—to indicate, for example, the lines along which Nash leads us through Defoe to Smollett and Fielding, and the points of unexpected contact between Sidney and Richardson is an inquiry full of curious interest for the special student. But too much might easily be made of the results brought to light thereby. After duly allowing for the isolated productions of the Elizabethan period, which undoubtedly broke ground in many directions, we come back still to the broad fact, that it was not until after the Restoration, and largely as a result of what was then undertaken and accomplished, that the novel firmly established itself as a well-defined form of literary art. With the Restoration, therefore, it may fairly be said that we open a new chapter in the history of English fiction.

The new era, however, began badly enough, in the midst of a byway of most absurd experiment, which could not, in the nature of things, lead to any permanent achievement. For along with so much else that was French in manners, fashions, morals, turns of speech, there had already been imported into England a taste for the peculiar form of romance—the *roman à longue haleine*—which was just then enjoying amazing popularity in the country of its birth, on the other side of the Channel. As we turn back to the dull and monstrous productions of the class now in question, we find it difficult enough to conceive that in any place, under any possible circumstances, there should have been men and women able to derive not simply enjoyment, but passionate and continuous enjoyment, from their pages. But the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet had set its mark upon them, and in the well-prepared country of the “Arcadia,” they realized instant and complete success, not only among

the ultra-fashionables of a Gallicized society, but also in the more general reading world.

We must glance for a moment at one or two of the most salient characteristics of the school of fiction which thus became for a time so widely influential, that we may at once appreciate its stultifying tendencies, and bring into clear perspective what we shall presently have to say about the work of Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Behn. In doing this we need go no farther than the examples furnished by the three most prominent French leaders of polite taste—Gomberville, La Calprenède, and Mlle. de Scudéri.

In the first place, the would-be student of the so-called classical-heroic romances of these once celebrated writers is staggered by their tremendous bulk and inordinate prolixity. The modern reader shudders at Richardson, and takes his “Pamela” and “Sir Charles Grandison” in condensed editions. But Richardson is brevity itself compared with these earlier indefatigable laborers in the field of the novel. Gomberville’s “Polexandre” began in four volumes quarto, and in its later editions comprised some six thousand pages; the “Cléopâtre” of La Calprenède, when finished, filled twelve octavo volumes; “Pharamond,” written partly by the same author, and partly by Pierre d’Ortigue de Vaumorière, reached nearly the same length; while the “Clélie” and “Le Grand Cyrus” of Mlle. de Scudéri—who in the matter of resolute long-windedness was, naturally enough, more than a match for her masculine rivals—extended respectively to some eight thousand and fifteen thousand octavo pages.[6] These, and such as these, were the works that Pope was ridiculing when in “The Rape of the Lock” he built out of them an altar for the due celebration of the “adventurous baron’s” religious rites; and he was surely justified in describing them as “huge French romances.” It makes us feel how little of permanence and stability there is in any matter of taste, when we remember that these colossal productions, over which the most patient reader of to-day would soon catch himself yawning, were once awaited with interest and devoured with avidity.

But even more important, from the standpoint of literary history, than the mere size of these overgrown absurdities were their structural principles and peculiarities of style. An offshoot apparently from the chivalrous and pastoral romances of earlier date, with the addition of what it pleased writers and readers alike to regard as an “historical”

blend of interest, the classical-heroic romance proper presents a bewildering jumble of the most far-sought and incongruous materials. In fine disregard of anachronism and inconsistency, their authors carry us hither and thither about the world, introducing us to Greeks and Romans, Egyptians and Persians, Knights of the Round Table, Paladins of Charlemagne, shepherds and shepherdesses of nowhere in particular, and even Peruvian Incas. The main plot, as a rule deceptively simple, is complicated from first to last by enormous and intricate ramifications of secondary actions; a characteristic due to the fact that every fresh individual introduced, whether in the central narrative, or in some excrescence from it, persists in recounting his own adventures at tremendous length. Thus we have story within story, wheel within wheel, till the reader completely loses his hold upon the tangled threads of intrigue, and collapses into a condition of dazed despair.[7] But this is not the worst. The characters seem to be totally unable to tell their experiences in a straightforward fashion and have done with it. They linger by the way—time being of no importance to any of them—to indulge in everlasting conversations and soliloquies, discourse learnedly on delicate questions of gallantry and honor, quote, criticise, sentimentalize, pour out page after page of inflated rhapsody, and cavil remorselessly on the ninth part of a hair. Thus the so-called "historic" element in these romances, is nominal only. The heroes and heroines, of whatever race, clime, or era, are only masquerading men and women of seventeenth-century France, with the ridiculous jargon of the Hôtel de Rambouillet incessantly upon their lips.

It will be seen from this brief description that the classical-heroic romance was absolutely artificial and unreal; that it had, and pretended to have, no touch or contact with the things of solid existence. Characters, incidents, sentiments, speech were all of a world apart—Utopia, Arcadia, No-Man's-Land. Life was not distorted, as it is in the writings of many romantic novelists and most of our modern realists. It was simply not considered at all.

At the time when these ponderous and vapid productions reached the climax of their popularity on their native soil, French was well understood by the educated classes in England; and it was in their original tongue, therefore, that they made their way at first among the fellow-countrymen of Milton. But translations soon followed with a

rapidity that bore startling testimony to the strength of the new taste. “Polexandre” appeared in an English version as early as 1647; “Ibrahim,” “Cassandra,” and “Cléopâtre” in 1652; while “Clélie,” “Astrée,” “Scipion,” “Le Grand Cyrus,” “Zelinda,” and “Almahide” were all translated and published between the latter date and 1677. On the heels of these regular translations soon came sundry imitations which, after the manner of imitations in general, reproduced with scrupulous fidelity all the worst features of the original works. “Eliana,” issued in 1661, reads almost like a burlesque of the heroic style, and abounds in long-drawn descriptive passages of the most florid and fantastic kind. Running this very close in overwrought extravagance of theme and language, the “Pandion and Amphigenia” of Crowne the dramatist saw the light four years later. But the most celebrated of the English specimens of this exotic school is a somewhat earlier work—the “Parthenissa” of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery; a production left incomplete after reaching more than eight hundred folio pages. This is pronounced by Dunlop, whose industry and patience in reading the romances of this period must have been little short of superhuman, to be the best English specimen of its class; and most of us will probably be more ready to accept his judgment than to undertake its verification.[8]

Both “Eliana” and “Parthenissa” were broken off abruptly, the latter in the middle of one of its most interesting situations; and Dunlop is probably right in regarding this fact as evidence of the gradual decline of the taste out of which they had grown and to which they had appealed. Indeed, so far as England was concerned, the classical-heroic romance could not have been otherwise than ephemeral. It had no real hold upon English society, and was fundamentally out of harmony with the spirit of an age in which chivalry had degenerated into empty gallantry, and playing at pastoral simplicity had ceased to be an aristocratic amusement. The temper of which it was one manifestation for a time made its influence deeply felt in almost every department of literature; it invaded even poetry; and directly inspired that extraordinary form of drama, so familiar to the student of Davenant and Dryden—the heroic play. But the prose fiction to which it gave existence carried in its essential qualities the seeds of early decay. It is true that in certain quarters it retained a faint and shadowy kind of reputation longer than might have been expected.[9] But the rise of a totally different school of novelists in the

last decades of the seventeenth century, practically marks the close of its career; and dying, it left no issue.

We are now at length prepared to appreciate the historic significance and interest of what, in a rather loose way, is commonly called the prose fiction of the Restoration.

Says Mrs. Manley, in the introductory address to the reader in her “Secret History of Queen Zarah”:—

“Romances in France have for a long time been the diversion and amusement of the whole world; the people … have read these works with a most surprising greediness; but that fury is very much abated, and they are all fallen off from this distraction. The little histories of this kind have taken place [sic] of romances, whose prodigious number of volumes were sufficient to tire and satiate such whose heads were most filled with these notions…. These little pieces which have banished romances are much more agreeable to the brisk and impetuous humor of the English, who have naturally no taste for long-winded performances; for they have no sooner begun a book than they desire to see the end of it.”

These remarks will doubtless strike some readers as curious, and we may well wonder what the followers of Taine, particularly, would make of the “brisk and impetuous humor” here alleged to characterize the English people. But they are valuable to us, irrespective of their psychology, because they enable us to understand how the new fiction—the fiction in which, despite all adventitious differences, we can clearly recognize the beginnings of the modern novel—arose to take the place of the Anglo-French romance. The “little histories” to which Mrs. Manley refers grew up by the most natural process of reaction against the “prodigious number of volumes” into which, as we have noted, the older narratives had run. Nor was it in measure only that a change was initiated. As we shall presently see, the novel of the Restoration, broadly so-called, differed from its predecessors not merely in length, but also in the more important qualities of subject-matter, treatment, and style. The old Arcadia was finally forsaken for the solid earth, and lengthy descriptions, multifarious episodes, wearisome soliloquies, and needless tortuosities of plot were at the same time left behind. Real life now

formed the basis of the story, and, despite occasional reminiscences of the older manner, crispness of narration became one of the writers' principal aims.

We have here undertaken to consider a little this healthy and significant change from the romance to the novel in the writings of two of its representative exponents—Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley. It should be understood, however, that in adopting this course we have no intention of throwing their work into undue prominence. They were but part-factors in a general movement, and must be contented to share its honors with a number of their contemporaries. Nevertheless, they possess a special interest for the student of English literature, for two very good reasons. In the first place, taken together, they illustrate with remarkable clearness those broader characteristics of the new fiction which it is our principal concern in this little essay to bring to light; and, secondly, there is the fact that they were women. It is surely in itself instructive to find that while the great Elizabethan drama can adduce no example of a woman-writer, it is in the productions of a couple of women that we can study to the best advantage some of the rudimentary developments of the modern novel.[10]

It will be convenient for us to ignore the strict demands of chronology and begin with the work of Mrs. Manley, which, though somewhat later in date than Mrs. Behn's, may properly be taken first, since it is at once cruder in form and historically of minor importance.

Mrs. De la Riviere Manley—"poor Mrs. Manley," as Swift calls her, in the "Journal to Stella"—enjoyed anything but a peaceful life. It seems to be an accepted tradition among biographers of men and women of letters to begin their narratives by protesting that the lives of authors seldom furnish exciting materials, and then to go on to add that their particular heroes or heroines are exceptions to the general rule. Certainly Mrs. Manley was an exception, if rule indeed it be, which I think open to question. She herself has given us some account of her adventures and misfortunes in different portions of her "New Atalantis," and more particularly in "The History of Rivella"—an autobiography and *apologia pro vitâ sua*—published in 1714, under the pseudonym of Sir Charles Lovemore. There is no need for us to follow her through all her varied experiences, the record of which, though often lively enough, is seldom

of a very improving character. It will be sufficient to give the briefest outline of her career.

She was born in Guernsey about the year 1677, her father, Sir Roger Manley, being, as is generally stated, governor, or, as seems more probable, deputy governor, of that island. According to her own account, she grew up into a sharp-witted, impressionable girl, who, receiving rather more than an average education, early gave signs of an intelligence beyond what, at that time, was considered the fair endowment of her sex. Her tribulations, too, began early. Her parents died when she was still very young, and she fell into the hands of a male cousin, who unfortunately became enamored of her. The man was known to be married already, but he asserted that his wife was dead; and Rivella, deceived by his protestations, entered into a secret marriage with him. The theme of one of her most unsavory stories seems to have been directly suggested by this tragic episode in her own life. After a while, of course, the truth came out. Then her scoundrelly husband abandoned her, and she was left to shift for herself as best she might. About this time she gained the patronage of the famous Duchess of Cleveland, one of Charles the Second’s mistresses, in attendance upon whom she remained during some six months. But the Duchess was a woman of fickle temper. She soon grew tired of Mrs. Manley; and, by pretending that she had discovered her in an intrigue with her son (and there may possibly have been more ground than poor Rivella admits for the allegation), found an excuse for dismissing her from her service. It was now that Mrs. Manley appears to have taken up her pen in earnest—and a very reckless and caustic pen it by and by turned out to be. Her tragedy, “The Royal Mistress,” acted in 1696, proved so successful that she found herself courted by all the dandies and witlings of the day; and for some years, as a consequence, she spent her time principally in getting out of one intrigue into another. Nevertheless, she found leisure, amid all her excitements, to write and produce her “Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, from the New Atalantis”—a work which, under the most thinly disguised names, attacked in an extremely violent and outspoken manner the men who had been mainly instrumental in bringing about the Revolution. In virtue of this production Mrs. Manley may be said to have secured the doubtful honor of being the first political woman-writer in England. So successful was the satire in reaching those for whom it was intended, that the printer was straightway apprehended;

but Mrs. Manley—who, as Swift contemptuously put it, “had generous principles for one of her sort”—would not allow him to suffer in her behalf. She appeared before the Court of King’s Bench, and declared herself solely responsible for the entire undertaking, maintaining, moreover, “with unaltered constancy, that the whole work was mere invention, without any cynical allusion to real characters.”[11] Mrs. Manley, indeed, seems to have cared a great deal more about getting her printer out of a scrape than about sticking too solemnly to the simple truth; since, apart altogether from the manifestly satirical intention of the book, we know that she made its publication the basis of a personal application to the ministry. In the “Journal to Stella,” Swift tells us how he afterwards met Mrs. Manley at the house of Lord Peterborough, and adds that she was there “soliciting him to get some pension or reward for her service in the cause, by writing her ‘Atalantis.’” Still we must frankly admit that her loyalty to the printer in such a crisis throws her character into a rather favorable light.

However, after a short period of confinement, and sundry appearances before the court, Mrs. Manley was allowed to go free, and the matter dropped. After this adventure, she produced several dramatic pieces, wrote some pamphlets of a political kind, and for a time conducted “The Examiner,” which had then been relinquished by Swift. Indeed, she appears to have remained in the full swing of activity to the close of her life. She died, aged about forty-seven, in 1724, at the house of one John Barber, an alderman of the City of London, with whom it is supposed she had for some time past been living.

In person, as she herself very candidly tells us, Mrs. Manley was fat, and her face had been early marked by that terrible scourge of the age, the smallpox; notwithstanding which defects, her fascination of manner and conversation was so great, that she was always popular with the other sex. Of her moral character, perhaps, the less said the better. Circumstances had not been kind to Rivella; and at this distance of time, and with all the intrigues in which she was involved, it is not always easy to say how far she was sinned against, and how far sinning, or whether her own statement came anywhere near the facts of the case when she boldly declared that “her virtues” were “her own, her vices occasioned by her misfortunes.” Still we must admit the truth of the words which she has put into the mouth of d’Aumont in the “History of Rivella”: “If she

have but half so much of the practice as the theory, in the way of love, she must certainly be a most accomplished person.” And a most accomplished person, after her own fashion, she evidently seems to have been.

The most famous of her writings—if the word *famous* can properly be used, when they have all passed into oblivion—is, of course, the “New Atalantis”—that veritable “cornucopia of scandal,” as Swift dubbed it. This work swept its author into temporary notoriety, and for a few years was perhaps as much talked of and discussed as any publication of the time. But the life has long since gone out of its personalities and topical allusions, and the ordinary reader of English literature, if he recall it even by name, is likely to remember it only for the use Pope makes of it in a well-known passage in “The Rape of the Lock”:—

> “Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine!
> (The victor cried); the glorious prize is mine!
> While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
> Or in a coach and six the British fair;
> As long as Atalantis shall be read,
> Or the small pillow grace a lady’s bed;
> While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
> When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze;
> While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
> So long my honor, name, and praise shall live!”

But though this book, as we shall hereafter find, is not without its significance for the student of the English novel, it is less interesting and important from our point of view than “The Power of Love: In Seven Examples,” to which for the present we will confine our attention.

As the title indicates, this volume consists of seven separate stories—“The Fair Hypocrite,” “The Physician’s Stratagem,” “The Wife’s Resentment,” “The Husband’s Resentment” (in two examples), “The

Happy Fugitives," and "The Perjured Beauty." The keynote of the whole collection is clearly struck in the following passage from the first-mentioned of the tales:—

"Of all those passions which may be said to tyrannize over the heart of man, love is not only the most violent, but the most persuasive…. A lover esteems nothing difficult in the pursuit of his desires. It is then that fame, honor, chastity, and glory have no longer their due estimation, even in the most virtuous breast. When love truly seizes the heart, it is like a malignant fever which thence disperses itself through all the sensible parts; the poison preys upon the vitals, and is only extinguished by death; or by as fatal a cure, the accomplishment of its own desires."

The "love" shadowed forth in these sentences is that which dominates each of the seven "Examples" in this little book, which are thus only variations on a single persistent theme. It is the merest animal passion—passion unrefined by sentiment, uncolored by emotion; the love of Etheridge and Wycherley. Upon the gratification of this in a licit, or, as frequently happens, in an illicit way, the plot is, with the monotony of a modern French novel, everywhere made to turn. The heroes of her stories are all, like Mr. Slye, in the author's rather amusing sketch, the "Stage-Coach Journey to Exeter," "naturally amorous"; her heroines, like the Fair Princess in "The Happy Fugitives," are one and all "born under an amorous constellation," and like her, are forever "floating on the tempestuous sea of passion, guided by a master who is too often pleased with the shipwreck of those whom he conducts." So violent are the experiences portrayed that we can hardly avoid the thought that Mrs. Manley must have adhered in practice to the maxim of "Astrophel and Stella"—"Look in thy heart, and write,"—and must have gone straight to some of the stormiest episodes of her own career for the pictures which she gives us. Passion and gratification—these, then, are the regular ingredients of her stories. Of the larger and finer influence of love; of its strengthening and ennobling power; of the way in which its subtle mastery will work through life,—

“Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words,
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man,”—

of all these things, familiar enough, fortunately, to the reader of modern fiction, we have scarcely a trace. So far as the influence of love is shown at all, it is consistently shown as a debasing influence. This point, clearly set forth in the quotation already made, may be illustrated from the record of the writer’s own life. In the “History of Rivella,” she tells us that, when quite a girl, she was infatuated with a handsome young soldier who, when the gaming-tables were brought out, found, to his embarrassment, that he had no money to play with. Noticing this, Rivella went to her father’s drawer, stole some money, and gave it to him. Now, mark the author’s commentary upon the action: “Being perfectly just,” she says, “by nature, principle, and education, nothing but love, and that in a high degree, could have made her otherwise.” Here we have, then, a fair expression of the kind of love which is presented to us in these “Examples.” A despotic animal appetite, unchecked in its fierce, impulsive play by any nobler considerations whatever, it drives human nature downward, captive and slave to the “fury passions” which civilization has been struggling to bring under partial control.

These seven stories, therefore, are anything but pleasant reading, unless they be, like certain incidents referred to in the “New Atalantis,” “pleasant … to the ears of the vicious.” It is not only that they are repulsive because of the undisguised licentiousness that everywhere prevails in them; they are occasionally disgusting on account of the large part played by the merely horrible. So intimately related are unemotionalized passion and utter brutality, that, as might be expected, here, where the one is so conspicuous, the other has considerable place. The revenge taken by the woman upon her worthless husband in “The Wife’s Resentment” (Did recollection of her own wrongs add bitterness to Rivella’s pen, we may well wonder?) may be cited as an example of this. Don Roderigo, a Spanish gentleman, after trying for fifteen months to seduce a poor girl named Violenta, marries her in a moment of

thoughtlessness, but keeps the marriage a secret from his friends. Before long he is forced by his family into a second and public union with a wealthy heiress. The news of his inconstancy fills Violenta with delirious passion; and nothing will appease her but revenge, sudden and complete. She decoys Roderigo into her apartment, murders him while he is asleep, and, not contented with this, deliberately tears out his eyes and mangles "his body all over with an infinite number of gashes" before throwing it out into the street. And what is particularly noteworthy is, that the narrator herself does not seem to be in the least impressed by the loathsome details accumulated in her description. She reports the incident as though it were a matter of course, and quietly tells us that when Violenta was brought to justice for her crime, the duke, the magistrates, and all the spectators were amazed "at the courage and magnanimity of the maid, and that one of so little rank should have so great a sense of her dishonor."

Unquestionably the most pleasing of all these stories, alike from a literary and from a moral standpoint, is "The Happy Fugitives," a simple tale, containing comparatively little to which exception could be taken. The plots of "The Physician's Stratagem" and "The Perjured Beauty," on the other hand, are too hideous to be reproduced. As a whole, the book is desperately dull and tiresome; for the pornographic horrors of its pages are unredeemed by any excellencies of style. Its only interest for us here, therefore, is an historic one; and about this side of the matter, we shall have a general word or two to say later on.

If, morally considered, she is equally open to stricture, our second woman-novelist, Mrs. Behn, at least bulks out as a more considerable figure in the annals of English letters. Highly eulogized by some of the most distinguished of her contemporaries—Dryden, Otway, and Southerne among the number,—she must still be spoken of with the respect due to her undoubted talents, versatility, industry, and courage. That she is to be regarded as "an honor and glory" to her sex, as one of her enthusiastic admirers roundly declared, it would now, for many reasons, be out of the question to maintain. But the one fact that she was the first woman of her country to support herself entirely by the pen,

itself establishes her right to a certain place in the long line of female writers who have since her day done so much for literature.

Aphra (or Aphara) Johnson, afterwards Behn, (known as the "Divine Astræa" in the exuberant language of the time,[12] and long commonly referred to as an "extraordinary woman,"[13]) was born towards the end of the reign of Charles the First. While still a girl, she was taken to the West Indies by her father, who had been appointed lieutenant-general of Surinam.[14] Johnson himself "died at sea, and never arrived to possess the honor designed him." But the family settled in the colony—a "land flowing with milk and honey," they are said to have found it,—and continued to reside there till about 1653. A high-colored description of her life abroad is given in her best-known work, as it was during this period that she made her hero's acquaintance, and became interested in the story of his love and tragic fate. It is characteristic of the tendencies of the age that her biographer should feel it necessary to pause at this point in her narrative to contradict some current town gossip about the kind of relationship which had existed between Astræa and the African prince. Returning to England, she married a man named Behn, who seems to have been "a merchant in the city, tho' of Dutch extraction," but concerning whom our information is of the most meagre sort. Of him we hear little or nothing in connection with Aphra's subsequent adventurous career; and she was a widow before 1666. Attached to the court of Charles the Second, she attracted so much attention, we are told, by her keenness of intellect, alertness, and wit, that she was employed by the Merry Monarch in some delicate diplomatic affairs during the Dutch war. These took her to Antwerp in the character of a spy, in which capacity she succeeded so well that in course of time, and by means principally of her innumerable love intrigues, she obtained possession of some secrets of considerable value. "They are mistaken who imagine that a *Dutchman* can't love," remarks her biographer, in commenting upon these incidents; "for tho' they are generally more phlegmatic than other men, yet it sometimes happens that love does penetrate their lump and dispense an enlivening fire,"—now and then with disastrous results, as we perceive. Her information, however, was neglected by the English Government, and in disgust the patriotic lady threw up politics and diplomacy altogether, and presently returned to London, narrowly escaping death by shipwreck on the way.

Once more in London, Mrs. Behn, now thrown entirely upon her own resources, turned to her pen for the means of support, and thenceforth continued to occupy herself with literature and pleasure till her death, in 1689. Say what one may about the general quality of her work, its total amount remains remarkable, especially when one takes into consideration the conditions of poverty, failing health, and many harassing distractions under which it was produced. For a number of years, with unabated industry but varying success, she poured out plays which were calculated, in style and morality, to hit the prevailing taste; and so boldly did she meet her masculine rivals on the common ground of licentiousness, that she earned for herself the highly significant nickname of “the female Wycherley.” Miscellaneous tracts and translations kept her busy in the intervals of dramatic activity, during which time she also threw off a couple of very curious treatises, the characters of which are perhaps sufficiently indicated by their titles —“The Lover’s Watch; or, The Art of Making Love,” and “The Lady’s Looking-Glass to Dress Herself by; or, The Whole Art of Charming All Mankind.” As manuals of conduct, it is to be feared that these lucubrations hardly tend to edification.

Finally, to leave out for the moment what is, of course, for us now the most important item, her experiments in fiction, which we will deal with by themselves, Mrs. Behn also managed to write and publish a good deal of verse. As work actually done, this must be mentioned, because it swells her account; but it may be said at once that most of it—and particularly her one ambitious effort, the allegorical “Voyage to the Isle of Love,”—is without value or interest. Here and there in her plays, however, she touches a true poetic note, as in the really fine song in “Abdelazer,” for which—though it is doubtless familiar to readers of the anthologies—space may be found here:—

“Love in fantastic triumph sate,
Whilst bleeding hearts about him flowed,
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he showed;
From thy bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in space he hurled;
But ’twas from mine he took desires
Enough to undo the amorous world.
“From me he took his sighs and tears,
From thee his pride and cruelty,
From me his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from thee;
Thus thou and I the god have armed,
And set him up a deity,
But my poor heart alone is harmed,
While thine the victor is, and free.”

Her biographer tells us that Mrs. Behn “was a woman of sense, and by consequence [mark the consequence!] a lover of pleasure; as indeed,” it is added, “all, both men and women, are,” though “some would be thought above the conditions of humanity, and place their chief pleasure in a proud, vain hypocrisy.” It needs hardly to be said here that I am not at all concerned to defend the character of Astræa’s life or the tone of her writings; and at this time of day any denunciation of the one or the other would surely be a work of supererogation. But we should at least try to be fair in our judgments; and if the very flattering description given “by one of the fair sex” who “knew her intimately” is even approximately correct, she must have been generous, frank, and thoroughly good-hearted. These are not bad qualities in a world which in practice knows only too little about them, though we might hesitate to add, with her anonymous friend, that, being thus endowed, “she was, I’m satisfied, a

greater honor to our sex than all the canting tribe of dissemblers that die with the false reputation of saints.” So far as her writings themselves are concerned, it has only to be said that when she found herself dependent for a livelihood upon her talents and industry, she took what seemed to be the shortest and easiest way open to success, and undertook to produce just what the reading public of her day was most willing to pay for—and the reading public of her day was unfortunately ready to pay highest for the most wanton and scandalous things. Herein she was neither better nor worse than the majority of her contemporaries who, like her, wielded the professional pen, though the fact that she was a woman undoubtedly adds heinousness to her offences against the ordinary decencies of life. “Let any one of common sense and reason,” she says in her own defence—and the circumstance that, like Dryden and others, she was driven into explanation and apology is noteworthy, —“read one of my comedies, and compare it with others of this age; and if they can find one word which can offend the chastest ear, I will submit to all their peevish cavils.” This is the familiar argument—However bad I may be, my neighbors are a trifle worse. I should be very sorry, for Mrs. Behn’s sake, to take up her challenge; sorrier for my own to have it supposed that what has been said above was said in the way of palliation or excuse. Mrs. Behn wrote foully; and this for most of us, and very properly, is an end of the whole discussion. But it is as idle in these matters of sentiment, taste, expression, as it is elsewhere, to ignore in any final judgment the subtle but profound influence of the time-spirit; and though we may regret that such a distinction should have to be made, we must still, in common fairness, remember that Mrs. Behn was a woman of the seventeenth century, and not of our own generation.[15]

But we must now turn to her novels—her “incomparable novels,” as they used to be called. The collected edition of 1705, containing, according to its own statement, “All the Histories and Novels Written by the Late Ingenious Mrs. Behn,” includes, besides the two treatises to which reference has been made, the following stories: “The History of Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave,” “The Fair Jilt,” “The Nun,” “Agnes de Castro,” “The Lucky Mistake,” “Memoirs of the Court of the King of Bantam,” and “The Adventure of the Black Lady.”

The first-mentioned of these—“Oroonoko,” the novel with which Mrs. Behn’s name is to-day almost exclusively associated—is from

every point of view by far the most interesting of her works. It represents the first really noteworthy experiment in the fiction of the time to descend from the misty realms of the old romance to the plain ground of actual life. The history—which, as Miss Kavanagh has said, “is the only one of her tales that, spite of all its defects, can still be read with entertainment”[16]—was written at the special request of Charles the Second, to whom Mrs. Behn, on her return from the West Indies, had given “so pleasant and rational an account of his affairs there, and particularly of the misfortunes of *Oroonoko*, that he desired her to deliver them publicly to the world.” The narrative is, indeed, represented by the author as a direct transcript from her own experiences. “I was,” she says, “myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will here find set down; and what I could not be witness of, I received from the mouth of the chief actor in this history, the hero himself.”

The motive of the story is the tragedy of Oroonoko’s life, and this is worked out simply, but with a good deal of power. The grandson of an African king, and a youth of great strength, courage, and intelligence, Oroonoko early becomes enamored of Imoinda—“a beauty, that to describe her truly, one need only say she was female to the noble male,”—but to whom, unfortunately, his grandfather also takes a fancy. The young people are secretly married; notwithstanding which, the old king has the girl carried to his palace and placed among his mistresses. In desperation, the husband makes his way by night to Imoinda’s chamber. Here he is discovered by the king’s guards; Imoinda is sold into slavery; and after a while Oroonoko shares the same fate—“a lion taken in a toil.” By a remarkable coincidence, they are brought at length to the same place—the colony where Aphra and her family were then living. Thus unexpectedly reunited to the woman he had deemed lost to him forever, Oroonoko is for a time contented with his lot; but presently, growing weary of captivity, he plans a revolt among the slaves, upon the suppression of which he is brutally punished. After this he escapes to the woods with his young wife, whose fidelity and never-failing devotion are very touchingly set forth. Then comes the final tragedy. Dreading that she may fall into the hands of the whites, he deliberately and with her full consent, murders her; and after remaining for several days half-insensible beside her corpse, he is again taken by the colonists, and hacked to pieces limb by limb. With his death, the simple story ends.

Now, in the first and casual reading of this novel, we may very probably be struck rather by its points of similarity to the older romances than by its qualities of essential difference from them. For Mrs. Behn frequently adopts the heroic, or “big bow-wow” strain, especially in her sentimental situations, and where she desires to be particularly effective. Her language is often stilted and conventional, and there are occasions when we are more than half-convinced that Surinam is, after all, only another way of spelling Arcadia. But further study of the work will convince us that we must not attach too much importance to what are really superficial characteristics. In the deeper matters of substance and purpose, the story belongs not to the old school of fiction, but to the new; and that Mrs. Behn herself understood what she was about, is, I think, made clear by what she says in the opening paragraph:—

“I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this royal slave, to entertain my reader with the adventures of a feigned hero, whose life and fortunes fancy may manage at the poet’s pleasure; nor in relating the truth, design to adorn it with any accidents, but such as arrived in earnest to him. And it shall come simply into the world, recommended by its own proper merits and natural intrigues; there being enough of reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention.”

Two points, then, are noticeable in this work. In the first place, it depends for its interest not on astonishing adventures, high-flown diction, or extravagant play of fancy, but simply on the sterling humanity of the narrative. The unfortunate hero and his wife are, of course, drawn upon the heroic scale, but they still possess the solid traits of real manhood and womanhood, and, applying the supreme test in all such cases, we find that we can believe in them. The chasm which separates such an achievement as this from the windy sentimentalities of the Anglo-French romance is a very wide one, and Mrs. Behn’s boldness of innovation was, therefore, the more remarkable. In the second place, “Oroonoko” is written with a well-defined didactic aim. It is a novel with a purpose—the remote forerunner of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” and the whole modern school of ethical fiction. Thus, together with a marked tendency towards realism, Mrs. Behn’s book exhibits a no less marked bias in the direction of practical teaching. Its historic significance is therefore twofold.[17]

Mrs. Behn's other tales show less originality, and are neither so attractive nor so valuable. They are short love-stories which, though not so radically and aggressively impure as her plays, are still tainted through and through by the prevailing grossness of the time. Like Mrs. Manley, Mrs. Behn makes mere physical appetite—the passion which "rages beyond the inspirations of *a god all soft and gentle*, and reigns more like *a fury from hell*"[18]—the turning-point of all her plots; like Mrs. Manley, she centres the entire interest of her narratives in the gratification, not in the influences, of this passion. Like Mrs. Manley, too,—and here the severest judgment might well pass unprotested,—she is as harsh and free-spoken as the most profligate of male cynics regarding the foibles of her own sex. Vain, selfish, salacious, intriguing, spiteful, her female figures, as a whole, are simply repulsive in their unqualified animality; and as we read of their lives and their doings, we no longer wonder at the open savagery of a Wycherley, or the undisguised contempt of a Congreve, in an age when a woman could thus write of women, without fear, almost without reproach. Finally, like Mrs. Manley, Mrs. Behn is ready at times to indulge not only in scenes of the utmost coarseness, but also in pictures of the most revolting brutality. An instance of this might be given from "The Fair Jilt", where the unskilful execution of Tarquin is detailed with horrible minuteness. The best of these shorter stories is "The Lucky Mistake," a tale written throughout with comparatively good taste. They are nearly all based on fact—many on direct observation; and this renders them, from a student's point of view, interesting. But there is a great sameness in the incidents described, and on the side of characterization they are very weak indeed. The plots are all made up out of the same classes of material; and the men and women of any one story are hardly to be distinguished otherwise than by name from those of any other.

And now, in returning to the question of the historic significance of the two writers into whose books—habitually allowed to stand undisturbed upon the library shelf—we have here rather rashly ventured to pry, we shall find, if I mistake not, that little remains to be said. Brief as our analysis of the heroic romances and the tales of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley has necessarily been, it will, if it does not fail entirely of its purpose, suffice to mark the points of fundamental contrast between

them. The nature and importance of the changes exemplified in these story-tellers of the Restoration will thus be made clear.

Hitherto, as we have seen, fiction had made little or no attempt to deal frankly with life. In other words, it had not as yet found its proper sphere. Purely a thing of the imagination, it had sought its subjects afar, proudly ignoring the common matters of the world—the joys and sorrows, the hopes and struggles of every-day humanity. The words which the author of a life of Sidney, prefixed to one of the early editions of the "Arcadia," applies to that work, we might with equal fairness apply to almost the entire mass of fiction thus far written. "The invention is wholly spun out of the fancy," he says. The scene was laid in some far-away dreamland, not the less remote and visionary because occasionally called by a familiar earthly name; the characters were swollen out to superhuman proportions, and were endowed with qualities that no mortal being has ever been known to possess; their adventures were on the face of them impossible; they thought, acted, talked as no man or woman had thought, acted, talked since the world began. Life and fiction stood entirely apart. The real world of tangible flesh and blood found for the time its only expression in the drama. In fiction there was as yet no human interest whatever.

With Mrs. Behn commenced the tendency to deal with life—to make the novel in some sense a reproduction of actual experience. We may regret that the special phases of the human comedy that she deliberately chose to write about, were only too often phases the least worthy of attention; that her interests were narrowed down, and her work crippled, by considerations of the most cramping and disastrous kinds; that she knew nothing of proportion and perspective, and little of the higher and finer developments of motive and character; that she could not see life steadily, and did not see it whole. But all this must not stand in the way of our insisting that she was one of the first writers of prose fiction—perhaps the first in England—to substitute the solid stuff of reality for the flimsy material of the imagination. Crude and partial as her observations were, she at least observed; sorry as are most of the results of her study of the world, she did study it at first hand—did hold the mirror up to nature. What she accomplished in thus opening up the field of the modern novel, what Mrs. Manley accomplished in following her lead, are matters, therefore, of sufficient importance to call for distinct

recognition. We do not claim for the books of these two women any individual merit or interest. But when we lay aside one of their stories, bearing in mind the conditions of the time at which it was written, we realize that, artistically, if not always morally, they represent a step in advance; that it was by such work as this—poor and hopelessly dull as it may seem to us to-day—that the folios of La Calprenède and De Scudéri were overthrown, the way made clear for Defoe and Richardson, and the foundations of modern fiction firmly laid.

But now let us notice the suggestive circumstance that, like nearly all innovators, these first realists seriously overstepped the mark. In their early attempts to exchange Fairy Land for the actual world, we find too large a place given to fact, in the most hard and circumscribed sense of the word. In place of pure fancy, they sought to give absolute and undiluted reality; in place of a picture without existing counterpart, they strove to secure the detailed verisimilitude of a photograph. Indeed, for a time the aims and methods of fiction were almost entirely lost sight of. And it is easy to see how this unfortunate result was brought about. Weary of the conventionalities of the old romances, and of the shadowy heroes and heroines with whose tedious adventures and even more tedious disquisitions their pages were filled, the novelists of the Restoration made a bold endeavor to get back to the life with which they were familiar, and to deal with the world as they knew it to exist. But for the moment, there seemed only one way of doing this. Instead of fancy, they must have fact; instead of wandering off into the impossible, they must limit themselves to the things which had actually happened—which had really, in Charles Reade’s witty phrase, gone through the formality of taking place. Hence, for the present, the constructive work of the imagination—which some of us, in these days of so-called Naturalism, are still old-fashioned enough to hold essentially important—was almost entirely neglected. Nearly every story was statedly “founded on fact”; and the business of the novelist was practically reduced to the task of presenting, with but slight embellishment or rearrangement, specific occurrences in life. Thus we have an early example of the tendency, just now so conspicuous, towards what M. Brunetière has happily called “reportage” in literature. In the reaction against the school of heroic romance, the new story-writers, therefore, went to the other extreme. To take the materials of familiar existence and to reorganize them, thus producing a work of art which is at once all compact of truth and

imagination, was for the time being beyond their ken. To their limited view, realism meant slavish reality.

It was only after this mistake had been made that the possibility of avoiding the airy unrealities of old romance, without being bound down to the skeleton facts of life, gradually became apparent. The discovery that a writer could be true to experience and human nature without necessarily reproducing actual events or photographing individual men and women, was the outcome of many experiments and much failure, and was at length hit upon in a half-blind and fortuitous way. It was only little by little that the element of acknowledged fiction was allowed to encroach upon the domain of truth; only little by little that people began to understand that the art of fiction and the art of lying are not one and the same, and that the boldest play of imagination in the treatment of life is not always to be associated with the distortion of reality. In the works of Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Behn we see the English novel stumbling painfully towards the comprehension of its own objects. We have reached firm ground, and that is a great achievement; for only when we move on firm ground is the novel possible. But the dead weight of the actual is too heavy for us; we cannot synthesize the results of experience; we gather observations, but we are unable to make artistic productions out of them. Thus, we have a “New Atalantis” (and the book is historically significant just for this reason) which is little more than a jumble of personal scandal, filled in with occasional false incidents and mendacious details; an “Oroonoko,” which is rather a fanciful biography than a tale; we have a “Wife’s Resentment,” a “Fair Jilt,” a “Lucky Mistake,”—stories all of which are based more or less exclusively on historic occurrences or on events that had come under the direct observation of the relaters.[19] Even where there is a lack of truth, the appearance of truth is still carefully preserved. Things which have not actually happened are nevertheless related as facts; real characters are put through unreal incidents; the novel is supposed to give history; fiction and falsehood are as yet confused.

With this brief summary of the qualities and shortcomings of our two women-novelists, this little paper might properly close. But it may be interesting if, having carried our inquiry thus far, we add a paragraph

about the way in which the rigid reality of the works at which we have been glancing grew gradually out into the genuine realism of the later novel.

Properly to understand this tendency towards an equilibrium between fact and imagination, we should turn aside to examine the profound influence exerted over the fiction of the time of the "Tatler" and the "Spectator." But for our present purposes we shall find the movement forward clearly enough exemplified in the work of one man—the author of "Robinson Crusoe," whose writings, therefore, we will take as our clue.

Beginning with the production of history, or semi-history, in which real characters, slightly exaggerated, move through real scenes, or through scenes to but small extent imaginary, Defoe proceeded little by little to import more of fiction into his narrative, to the detriment of the small substratum of truth still retained. By and by, he did no more than preserve the mere frame-work of history—as in "The Journal of the Plague Year" and the "Memoirs of a Cavalier," in which most of the characters and many of the incidents are purely fictitious. After this, the remaining element of truth was gradually eliminated, and he reached the production of narratives of fictitious characters in fictitious settings and among fictitious scenes. "From writing biographies with real names attached to them," says Professor Minto, in his Life of Defoe, "it was but a short step to writing biographies with fictitious names." Even when that short step was taken, the artifices resorted to by him to preserve the apparent truthfulness of his narrations show us that he was by no means satisfied that it would be desirable to let matters of fact slip out of his work entirely. Though what he wrote was false, he still tried to palm it off upon the world as true. This makes the writing of Defoe more like lying than fiction, and goes far to explain the extraordinary minuteness of the circumstantial method adopted by him. But it marks, also, the transitional quality of his work. As Mr. Leslie Stephen has neatly put it, "Defoe's novels are simply history *minus* the facts." Only in his latest works do we find this pseudo-history making way for fiction proper; and then we recognize in Defoe the distinct forerunner of the great novelists of the eighteenth century.

But to follow this matter farther would take us beyond the due bounds, already somewhat transgressed, of our present study. As we may

now see, the story of English fiction from the period of the Anglo-French romance to the time of Fielding and Smollett, is a long one, and we have undertaken to deal with only one chapter here—the chapter which tells of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley, of what they did, and of what they failed to do. That finished, our task is at an end.

A Glimpse of Bohemia

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The Bohemia with which the following pages are concerned is not that inland country of Europe which Greene and Shakspere, to the indignation of all right-minded commentators, so generously endowed with a sea-coast. We must at once dismiss from our minds all thought of Prague and the Czechs; for the country into which we are about to offer a personally conducted excursion finds no place on our maps and no mention in our geographies. Our Bohemia is, in a word, none other than the Bohemia of Paris.

The confines and landmarks of this strange country have, fortunately for us, been authoritatively established. Bohemia, according to the painter Marcel, of whom we shall hear more anon, and who certainly knew well what he was talking about, is "bounded on the north by hope, work, and gayety; on the south by necessity and courage; on the west and east by calumny and the hospital."[20] Yet it is just possible that these cryptic phrases may fail to convey to some readers any very definite geographical information; since even Rodolphe, to whom they were first addressed, is reported to have shrugged his shoulders and responded with a simple "Je ne comprends pas." Hence, it may be well at the outset to attempt to describe, as succinctly as possible, the limits of that seductive land through which our road is now to lie.

This is far from being an easy task, however. Often as the word *Bohemia* is used, in the broad sense here attached to it, so many writers have colored it with so many different shades of meaning, that, though we may understand vaguely its general significance, it seems well-nigh impossible to bring it satisfactorily within the terms of a strict definition. "Vive la Bohème!" cries George Sand, at the end of her novel, "La Dernière Aldini"; and "Vive la Bohème!" has found many an echo and re-echo in the pages of French literature, down to the present day, when it would seem that, as a free and independent country, Bohemia is practically disappearing from the face of the earth. But each one of the many explorers of this dark and mysterious corner of our modern world, has brought back with him his own report of the territory and its inhabitants; and these travellers' stories by no means tally one with another. To some it has seemed to be peopled by

the lowest classes of those who, as the phrase goes, live upon their wits; by beggars, petty swindlers of all descriptions, and men and women who, through idleness or misfortune, are unable to obtain a livelihood, we will not say in honest ways, but in any way that society chooses to recognize as honest. To others the population has appeared to be composed of those who follow undignified and precarious careers, as cheap-jacks, circus-riders, street-conjurers, acrobats, bear-trainers, sword-swallowers, and itinerant mountebanks of kindred descriptions. A third class of writers has made Bohemia a regular sink of society, the receptacle of all such outcasts and human abominations as Eugène Sue and his followers loved to depict; villains of the deepest dye—vitriol-throwers, house-breakers, assassins. While to a fourth group this same domain has been the land of literature and the arts, where philosophy and beer, music and debt, painting and hunger, criticism and tobacco-smoke, combine to make life picturesque and inspiring; a land the denizens of which either die of penury in the streets or the hospital, uncared for, unknown, or, living, at last take their rightful places in the front rank, among the painters, composers, and writers of their time.

Wherein these various critics agree, is in describing Bohemia as a country lying on the outskirts of ordinary society, and inhabited by those who cannot, or will not, yield to that society's conventions—the failures or the incompatibles of decent modern civilization. It is hardly worth while to try to decide as to what particular portion of this vast and complex community has the best right to a name which has thus been used with great elasticity of meaning. It will be sufficient if we say at once that the phase of Bohemian life with which we here purpose to deal is not that reflected in the romances of Xavier de Montépin, Féval, or Sue. Our Bohemia is the Bohemia of art and letters; and, as our guide through this romantic region, we will take the man who has drawn its life for us with such marvellous power and vividness—Henri Murger, himself the representative Bohemian, alike in the struggles and lurid contradictions of his career, and alas! in his early and tragic death.

"To-day, as of old, every man who devotes himself to art, with no other means of subsistence than art itself, will be forced to tread the pathways of Bohemia. The majority of our contemporaries who display the most beautiful heraldry of art have been Bohemians; and, in their calm and prosperous glory, they often recall, sometimes perhaps with regret, the time when, climbing the green slopes of youth, they had no other fortune, in the sunshine of their twenty years, than courage, which is the virtue of the

young, and hope, which is the fortune of the poor. For the uneasy reader, for the timorous bourgeois, for all those who can never have too many dots on the *i*'s of a definition, we will repeat in the form of an axiom: Bohemia is the probation of artistic life; it is the preface to the academy, the hospital, or the morgue."

Thus writes Murger, in the preface to his immortal "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème," and the words will be found to furnish a startling commentary about the kind of life with which his volume deals—a life made up of extraordinary contrasts; of dazzling dreams and the most sordid of realities; of hope alternating with despair; of high talents ruined by reckless excesses; of splendid promises defeated by the Fates; of brilliant careers cut short by premature death. "The true Bohemians," continues this writer, who, more than any other, speaks as their accredited mouthpiece and historian, "are really the called of art, and stand a chance of being also the chosen." But the country of their adoption literally "bristles with dangers. Chasms yawn on either side—misery and doubt. Yet between these two chasms, there is at least a road, leading to a goal, which the Bohemians can already reach with their eyes, while awaiting the time when they shall touch it with their hands." But till such time shall come, even if it ever comes at all, the young enthusiast must turn a brave face upon all the troubles, the anxieties, the privations, the fears, the petty worries and distractions, by which his self-chosen career will be everywhere begirt. For those who have once set their feet in the alluring but perilous pathway, which will lead to fame or misery, to immortality or death, there must be no trembling, no hesitation, no looking backward with regretful eyes to the safe, though humble, beaten tracks which they have left below. They have dared to devote themselves, brain and soul, to art, in a world which cannot understand their aims, which sneers at their aspirations, which is very likely to leave them to starve, and will at best yield them only a grudging and tardy welcome. Hence, every day's existence becomes for them "a work of genius, an ever-recurring problem."[21] Nor is it surprising that, in the haphazard life which they are thus forced to lead, they should inevitably acquire those habits of carelessness, that easy-going morality, and often enough that want of settled purpose, which make them the black sheep of respectable society.

"If a little good fortune falls into their hands, they forthwith begin to pursue the most ruinous fancies … not finding windows enough to throw their money out of; and then, when the last écu is dead and buried, they begin again to dine at the table d'hôte of chance, where their cover is

always laid; and to chase, from morning till night, that ferocious beast, the hundred-sous-piece."[22]

Such is the tenor of their way; certainly not a noiseless one, nor one running through the cool, sequestered vale of life. Little wonder, then, that with all the frivolities and uncertainties of their journey, with all its physical hardships and moral perils, so few should survive their pilgrimage through Bohemia, or, when they finally reach a quieter resting-place, should have the heart to recount, with frankness and simplicity, their varied experiences in the probationary land.

Yet the Bohemians are a great race, and may boast a proud extraction. The founder of their illustrious family was none other than the great father of Western song, who, "living by chance from day to day, wandered about the fertile country of Ionia, eating the bread of charity, and stopped at eventide to hang beside the hearth of hospitality, the harmonious lyre that had chanted the loves of Helen and the fall of Troy."[23] Descending the centuries to modern times, the Bohemian reckons his ancestors among the prominent figures of every great literary epoch. In the middle ages, the great family tradition is perpetuated among the minstrels and ballad-makers, the devotees of the gay science, the whole tribe of the melodious vagabonds of Touraine; while, as we pass from the days of chivalry to the dawn of the Renaissance, we find "Bohemia still strolling about all the highways of the kingdom, and already invading the streets of Paris itself." Who does not know of Pierre Gringoire, friend of vagrants and foe to fasting? Who cannot picture him as "he beats the pavements of the town, nose in air, like a dog's, sniffing the odors of the kitchens and the cook-shops"; and "jingling in imagination—alas, not in his pockets!—the ten crowns, which the aldermen have promised him for the very pious and devout farce he has written for their theatre in the hall of the Palais de Justice"? Who, again, does not recall Master François Villon, "poet and vagabond, *par excellence*," whose ballads to-day may still make us forget the ruffian, the vagabond, the debauchee? These are names with strange power still over the imagination. And, when we come to the splendid outburst of the Renaissance, is it not to find ourselves face to face with men in whose veins the rich old blood was fierce and strong, with Clément Marot, and the ill-starred Tasso, with Jean Goujon, Pierre Ronsard, Mathurin Regnier, and who shall say how many more? Shakspere, and Molière, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and d'Alembert—these, too, the historian of Bohemia must include in his annals, to say nothing of the long line of great writers in England (whom Murger does not

even allude to), by whom the name of Grub Street was made illustrious in the chronicles of the eighteenth century.

Two groups of Bohemians in Paris—where perhaps alone to-day artistic Bohemianism is still possible—have within more recent years made their voices heard and their influence felt in the literature and art of their time. The first was that which gathered about poor Gérard Labrunie, better known as Gérard de Nerval, the unfortunate young writer whose works have yet to reap their due appreciation, but whose translation of "Faust," as Goethe told Eckermann, made the great German proud "to find such an interpreter." That group was composed of such men as Corot, Chesseriau, Arsène Houssaye, Théophile Gautier, Jules Janin, and Stadler; the mere recital of whose names is enough. Shortly after this band was broken up—some, like Nerval, dying tragically and long before their time; others reaching high rank in the world of French letters—another famous *cénacle* arose, the central figure of which was the prince of modern Bohemia, Henri Murger himself. Among those who toiled and suffered with him, we may make passing mention of Auguste Vitu, Schaune, and Alfred Delvau; but there were, of course, others, whose names are less familiar to the reading public of to-day, especially in this country. The romance of this second Bohemia has been written for us by Murger in the "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème"; and it is to the pages of this fascinating book that we purpose presently to turn. But to understand these aright, to appreciate their pathos and their comedy, to realize their intensity of meaning, we must first of all know something of the writer's personality and career. I do not mean that it will be necessary for us to retell in detail the whole sad story of Murger's life. But so much of his character and experiences find embodiment in this book of his, that we should miss half its charm and more than half its significance, if we did not, to begin with, make ourselves acquainted with at least the larger facts of his existence.

Henri Murger was born in 1822. His father, a Savoyard, moved to Paris either just before or just after his son's birth; obtained a situation as janitor; and while attending to the demands of this position, carried on at the same time his trade as a tailor. Murger *père* was a hard, severe, unsympathetic man, totally unable to understand his son's early-developed literary propensities, and with no higher ambition in life than that of making a decent income by the exercise of his craft. His intention from the beginning was to bring young Henri up as an adept at shears and thimble, so that he

might by-and-by turn out a hard-working, thrifty ninth part of a man, like himself. But Henri rebelled; and as his mother sided with him, having, as it would seem, some faith in the child’s talents, or perhaps only a womanly yearning to make a gentleman of him, the long struggle with paternal authority finally closed, though not without the breeding of bitterness, in his favor. The original scheme of training him to manual labor was abandoned, and he received such education as his parents could afford, which, after all, was poor enough.

While still a mere boy he entered the practical business of life through the narrow and dingy portals of a lawyer’s office; but like many another youth under similar conditions, the itch for verse was too strong for him, and he relieved with the inditing of stanzas the dry technicalities of the legal routine. Meanwhile, an academician, M. de Jouy, had taken a fancy to him; and through his influence, at the age of sixteen, he obtained an appointment as secretary to Count Tolstoï, a Russian diplomatist then resident in Paris. Forty francs a month represented the material advantages of this position; not a lordly remuneration, certainly, but acceptable enough, none the less; more especially as the duties, anything but cumbersome at the start, dwindled considerably with lapse of time and presently became almost nominal. With a small definite income to fall back upon, and plenty of leisure on his hands, Murger now began to give free scope to his literary impulses, passing his hours in the study of the poets, and making a humble start in his own productive career. But his good fortune was destined to be of short duration; for through a rather ludicrous misadventure his connection with Tolstoï was after a while brought to a sudden close. At that time he was engaged to furnish a certain amount of daily copy to one of the Parisian papers. It so chanced that during the Revolution of 1848 Tolstoï found it necessary to put his secretarial services once more into active requisition; and, what with getting off his daily supply of matter for the press and preparing dispatches for the Czar of all the Russias, the young man unexpectedly found his energies taxed to the full. One memorable day the functions of diplomatist and author unfortunately became entangled, and in his hurry and excitement he sent off his *feuilleton* to the Russian Court and his dispatch to the “Corsaire.” With this ill-timed performance, Murger’s political career ignominiously ended, and—what was by far the most serious part of the matter—the monthly recompense of forty francs, which had seemed to him a veritable Peruvian gold-mine, ended also. Nor was this all. Ere this his mother had died, and with the cessation of her mediatorial influence, the feud between himself and his father had broken

out afresh. Thus Murger was thrown entirely on his own resources, with nothing but his pen to look to for the means of support. His father peremptorily refused to have anything to do with him. “He contents himself with giving me advice,” wrote Henri to a friend, in a season of special tribulation, “and with insulting me whenever we meet.” And it is well known that one cannot live on advice, while insults, though more stimulating, are not a whit more nutritious.

It was at this point, then, that Henri Murger became a dweller in Bohemia. He was now one of those who, in his own words, have no other means of subsistence beyond that afforded by art itself; one of those described by Balzac, “whose religion is hope, whose code is faith in oneself, whose budget is charity.” Through nearly all the varied experiences of which he was afterwards to write with such wonderfully sustained graphic power, the young man himself now passed; through the days of careless idleness or strenuous exertion; through the nights of homeless wandering or furious dissipation; through all the grim poverty and suffering, all the doubt and restlessness, all the fierce fluctuations of assurance and despair, which presently went to the making of his book. Even while he had still been in receipt of Count Tolstoï’s allowance, things had sometimes gone hardly enough with him; for, needless to state, he was not of the thrifty or frugal kind, “Your friend,” he writes in a letter, as early as 1841, “has found the means of swallowing forty francs in a fortnight; but happily for him there are still forty sous left to carry him to the end of the month. His existence, then, has been during the past fortnight diversified with beefsteaks … and Havana cigars”; while for the remaining two ill-omened weeks, recourse must be had to that “table d’hôte of chance” already referred to. With the discontinuance of this tiny but periodic dropping from the great Cornucopia of Providence, the beefsteaks and Havana cigars became less and less frequent apparitions in his life, and the famous inn which bears the “Belle Etoile” as its sign and trading token, found in him a pretty constant guest. To make his shoes last more than six months, and his debts forever, now became an urgent problem for him. Sometimes fortune would pay him a flying visit, and on such occasions he describes himself as being temporarily in possession of more money than he knows what to do with; but libraries, tailors, restaurants, cafés, theatres, Turkish tobacco-pipes, and friends, combined to help him over this perplexing difficulty with extraordinary ease and rapidity. Once, in the intense excitement of a sudden windfall, he went to bed and dreamed that he was the Emperor of Morocco and was marrying the Bank of France. But such seasons of miraculous

plenty were few and far between, and visions of this extraordinary kind, when they came at all, were less likely to arise from repletion than from an empty stomach; for sometimes he was brought face to face with actual starvation. Now, he reports borrowing right and left from any acquaintance who had a franc to lend; now, again, "S—— is paying me the thirty francs he owes me, fourteen sous at a time." So from month to month he struggled on, without seeming to get any nearer to the goal he had in view, or, in point of fact, to any goal at all; often tortured with physical pain and privation; often driven half-wild with despair; but, after the fashion of the true Bohemian, keeping always a brave heart, and a ready jest for the good friends who stuck close to him through all, and who would have been only too willing to help him in his need, but for the single unfortunate circumstance that they were as badly off as himself.

Unhappily, Murger was, in one important respect, particularly ill-adapted for the kind of life into which he was thus driven. A man who trusts to his pen for daily bread should at least be a facile and ready writer, able to turn off indefinite quantities of copy in a given time, and willing to undertake the writing up of any subject upon which public interest may be temporarily aroused, and an article required. When literature becomes a business, the higher ambition to produce only good work must almost inevitably be subordinated to the lower and more practical aim of making the thing pay. Now, the difficulty with Murger was, that although literature was his livelihood, his regular trade and calling, he persistently refused to regard it mainly in that light—refused to sacrifice artistic excellence to temporary advantage, and to debase a sacred mission into mere routine work, the immediate, if not indeed the sole, object of which was to turn so much intellectual labor into so much food and clothing. He himself has remarked concerning one of his characters that, after the fashion of genius—a generalization which may or may not be partially true,—he had a tendency to be lazy. Murger was not exactly lazy; but he was whimsical and uncertain; his energies were not always under command; and he did not, with Anthony Trollope, put firmer faith in a piece of beeswax on the seat of his chair than in all the promptings of the divine afflatus. Like Goldsmith, he recognized that the conditions of his life rendered it impossible for him to pay court to the "draggle-tail Muses"; they would simply have left him to starve outright. So he turned to prose; but with prose things were nearly as bad. There were times when he could not and would not write—when the spirit was not upon him; and when he could not work as an artist, he would not work as a day-laborer or publisher's drudge. And even when he was in

full swing, his delicate taste, his almost morbid care in composition, his constant desire to do his best, prevented him from ever producing with the rapidity necessary to make the results really remunerative. Never, even under the greatest stress of circumstances, would he consent to write hastily, or allow his manuscript to leave his hands without what he conceived to be its proper share of thought and revision. Money to him was always the secondary consideration; even hunger had to wait, that the artistic sense might be satisfied. Rather than prove traitor to his lofty ideals, he would live for weeks on dry bread.

Thus he had more than the usual difficulty in making ends meet. But the misfortune did not stop there. A slow and exceedingly painstaking writer, he could produce but little in the normal hours of work; hence, the limit had to be frequently extended; and, for this purpose, recourse was had to the perilous aid of artificial stimulants. We now touch the saddest part of Murger's sad story. He wrote at night, and generally in bed—a practice which he had probably adopted in days when fuel was a luxury beyond his reach;[24] and his work was almost invariably done with the assistance of strong and incessant potations of coffee. When the house was perfectly quiet, when darkness and silence had fallen over the city, then Murger, like Balzac, commenced the labors of the day. With these desperate measures, there can be little doubt that he began very early to undermine a constitution which had never been robust. The story of the habits thus formed, and of the tyranny they acquired over him, is a terribly tragic one, and might furnish a fearful warning to many a jaded brain-worker, did we not know that it is the everlasting law of human nature that no one shall profit by any one else's experiences. "I am literally killing myself," he writes to a friend. "You must break me of coffee. I count on you." "There are nights," he declares at another time, "when I have consumed as much as six ounces of coffee, and only end by convincing myself more than ever of my lack of power—and this, yes, this has lasted three months. So that at present I am broken down by the application of these Mochas…. And here I am still passing my nights drinking coffee like Voltaire, and smoking like Jean Bart." As a direct consequence of these suicidal habits, he gradually contracted a terrible disease—known to medicine as "purpura"—which took him again and again to the hospital. Once, when the hand of sickness had smitten him with more than usual severity, he made a determined attempt to reform. He banished his coffee, and strove, by closing the shutters and lighting the candles, to trick himself into working, not of course by daylight, but simply during the day. But it was too late to inaugurate so radical a change. Ere

long his nocturnal instincts reasserted themselves, and continued in full force to the end of his career. Doubtless, it is in the pathological conditions thus brought about, that we have to seek the explanation of the fearful restlessness which presently came to characterize him, and which earned for him the nickname of the Wandering Christian.

It was only after his constitution had been shattered, and he had grown prematurely old, that Murger found his way out of Bohemia. The path into that land of glamour and enchantments had been easy enough, like the road to Avernus; the passage back again into the common world was in his case, as in the case of so many others, a steep and difficult one. But after months and years of toil and waiting, success came at last, and little by little he was able to break with tenacious old associations, and settle down to a more steady and regular routine of life. He established a connection with the "Revue des Deux Mondes"; and with a position now practically assured, took up his abode at Marlotte, near Fontainebleau. Here he had every chance of restoring his enfeebled health, and starting his career anew upon a different and a wiser plan. But the hour had gone by. A brief period of work and quiet happiness was brought to a close in January, 1861, when Henri Murger breathed his last in the house where he had already spent so many weeks of suffering—in the Hôpital St. Louis. He had not completed his thirty-ninth year.

Of the general work of Murger, this is not the place to speak. It is considerable in quantity, and much of it has substantial claim to critical attention; for his prose is finely wrought, and his lyrics—instance the superb "Chanson de Musette," so highly but justly praised by Gautier,—are sometimes of rare purity and sweetness. But it is by the "Scenes of Bohemian Life," and by these alone, after all, that Murger keeps his hold to-day upon the broader reading public. It has been said that he only wrote at his best when he was writing straight out of his own life. This is perhaps at bottom the reason why this one singular book possesses vitality far in excess of all his other productions. These may still be read with enjoyment, though in the tremendous stress of modern affairs, and with the ceaseless activity of the printing-press, they are more likely to be ignored by all but special students. But the "Scenes of Bohemian Life," as Mr. Saintsbury has rightly insisted, take a permanent place in the literature of humanity. Here we may notice one more illustration of the curiously distorted judgments which authors often pass upon their own works. In later years he was

accustomed to speak slightingly and almost petulantly of the volume which has carried his name over into a new generation; even, it is said, going so far as to affirm that "that devil of a book will hinder me from ever crossing the Pont des Arts"—that is, from entering the Academy, which was one of the unfulfilled ambitions of his life. But, in another and finer sense, it has placed his name among those of the Immortals.

We may now pass from the author to his volume, on the title-page of which he might well have written the famous *quorum pars magna fui* of Virgil's hero. "Murger, c'est la Bohème, comme la Bohème fut Murger," was the declaration of one of his personal friends; and the stuff of his wonderful scenes, with all their extravagance and rollicking absurdity, with all their poignant pathos and whimsical humor, is, as we have said, stuff furnished by close observation and intimate experience, though the crude material is transmuted into gold by the secret alchemy of genius. It has been said that many of Murger's chapters were actually written—in the French phrase, for which we have no satisfactory equivalent—*au jour le jour*; that he made the scenes of his Bohemian life into literature, so to speak, while they were still being enacted. To this effect Théophile de Banville reported that "that which was done by Rodolphe"—who, as we shall presently see, is generally to be identified with Murger himself—"during the month when he was Mademoiselle Mimi's neighbor, has perhaps had no parallel since letters began. His days he passed in composing verses, sketching plots of plays, and covering Mimi's hands with kisses as with a glove; but his daily bread was his *feuilleton* for the 'Corsaire,' and as Rodolphe had neither money nor books to invent anything but his own life, each evening he wrote as a *feuilleton* for the 'Corsaire' the life of that day, and each day he lived the *feuilleton* for the next. It was thus that the morrow of I know not what quarrel, after the fashion of the lovers of Horace, Mimi, leaning on her lover's arm, was bowed to in the Luxembourg by the poet of the 'Feuilles d'Automne,' and returned home quite proud to the *Rue des Canettes*; and that same evening Rodolphe wrote on this theme one of his most delightful chapters."[25] This account of the connection between Murger's book and his daily life, probably overstates the matter, or is to be accepted as approximately true only in regard to exceptional occurrences, like the one directly referred to. But that the substance of the volume was throughout furnished by experience is certain. The principal characters, and even some of the minor ones, have long since been traced back to their archetypes; the spots rendered famous by many a memorable scene—such as the Café Momus and the shop of the old Jewish bric-a-brac dealer, Father Médicis—

are known to have actually existed in the old Latin Quarter, though in the evolution of modern Paris the historic landmarks have been swept away; while there is no question that in most of his stories Murger either drew immediately upon actual circumstances, or at least built his superstructure of fancy upon a very solid foundation of fact.

The heroes of the "Scenes of Bohemian Life" are four in number. To each member of the strange group—the "Quatuor Murger," as it came to be called—we will yield the honor of a separate paragraph or two of characterization.

First we have Alexandre Schaunard, who, though he cultivates "the two liberal arts of painting and music," devotes the larger part of his attention to the latter, and is indeed particularly engaged at the time when we make his acquaintance, in the composition of an elaborate symbolic symphony which might almost be said to anticipate some of the crazy theories of more recent doctrinaires, representing as it does "the influence of blue in the arts." This strange production had a real existence, and its originator in the book has been identified with Alexandre Schaune, who also drove an artistic tandem with much enthusiasm for a season, though he subsequently forsook Bohemia and adopted a more profitable career in the toy-making business. He and Murger became acquainted in 1841, lived together at one time in the closest intimacy in the Rue de la Harpe, and remained friends till the latter's death. Schaune survived among "new faces, other minds," till 1887, and only a short time before he died published some memoirs which contain many matters of interest for the Murger student. He bore among his companions the nickname of Schannard-sauvage, and in Murger's original manuscript the name was so written—Schannard. By a printer's error, however, the first *n* was turned into a *u*, and the historian thought well, in reading the proof, to let the blunder pass.

Schaunard in the book is specially distinguished among his acquaintances for having raised borrowing to the level of a fine art. By dint of many careful observations and delicate experiments he has discovered the days when each one of his friends is accustomed to receive money, and thus, following the periodic ebb and flow of the financial tide, spares himself the trouble and annoyance of appealing to the generosity of those who, at the given moment, are likely to be in as low water as himself. Having, furthermore, "learned the way to borrow five francs in all the languages of the globe," the painter-musician is able, as a rule, to keep

pretty firmly on his feet. By a critical friend he was once described as "passing one half of his time in looking for money to pay his creditors, and the other half in eluding his creditors when the money has been found."[26] But it should be remembered that this calls for some discount as a friend's judgment, and likely, therefore, to be a trifle over-colored; and it is but doing justice to Schaunard to say that, towards the immediate companions who had come to his rescue from time to time, he behaved upon a more honorable plan. To facilitate, and at the same time to equalize so far as possible, the "taxes" which he levied, he "had drawn up, in order of districts and streets, an alphabetical list containing the names of all his friends and acquaintances. Opposite each name was inscribed the maximum sum which, having regard to their state of fortune, he might borrow from them, the times when they were in funds, their dinner-hour, and the ordinary bill of fare of the house. Beside this list, Schaunard kept in perfect order a little ledger, in which he entered the amounts lent to him, down to the minutest fractions; for he would never go beyond a certain figure, which was within the fortune of a Norman uncle whose heir he was.[27] As soon as he owed twenty francs to an individual, he closed the account, and liquidated it at a single payment, even if for the purpose he had to borrow from others to whom he owed less. In this way he always kept up a certain credit, which he called his floating debt, and as people knew that he was accustomed to pay when his personal resources permitted, they willingly obliged him when they could."

Schaunard plays his part to the amusement, if not always to the edification, of the reader in many delightful episodes in the "Scenes." It is through his misadventures with his landlord that the establishment of the club is largely, though indirectly, brought about; it is he who paints the provincial Blancheron's portrait in fancy dressing-gown, while Marcel goes off to dine with a deputy in his—the said Blancheron's—coat; it is he, again, who is hired by an Englishman to play the piano from morning till night, as a means of getting even with an actress living near by, whose parrot and shrill declamation combined, have proved rather too much for even British nerves,—a transaction out of which, we need scarcely add, the *virtuoso* made a good deal more money than he did from his famous symphony. On the whole, however, of the four friends with whose doings our volume is mainly occupied, Schaunard is by far the least attractive figure. He is coarse and morose; has a harsh, rasping voice; is apt to be put out about trifles; sometimes treats his male friends with scant courtesy; and has an unpleasant habit of employing, with his more intimate associates of

the other sex, Captain Marryatt's *argumentum ad feminam*—in other words, of conversing with them occasionally through the medium of a stout cane. Poor Phémie—the melancholy Phémie—had every right more than once or twice to complain of the strength and efficacy of his logic; nor were matters made very much better for her, we may opine, when, after one of their quarrels, he gave her in grim joke, and as a keepsake, the stick with which he had addressed to her so many telling remarks.

After Schaunard comes Marcel the painter, a character of more amiable type, who appears to be a compound portrait of the two artists, Tabar and Lazare. He is essentially a good fellow, bright, enthusiastic, happy-go-lucky, and shiftless; and though, after the fashion of the world in which he lives, he has an "insolent confidence in luck," he is manly enough, upon occasion, to "give fortune a helping hand." He is the hero of many amazing and some very ludicrous adventures, of which we can find space here only for a single specimen. Like Schaunard, he is devoting as much of his time and energy as he can save from the manufacture of pot-boilers and the consideration of the "terrible daily problem of how to get breakfast," to the composition of one great work, which is to be his *open sesame* to fame—"The Passage of the Red Sea."[28] Was ever so much labor expended with such little practical result, one may wonder, by any artist whatsoever—painter, musician, or poet? For five or six years Marcel had worked away at his canvas with unflagging diligence and courage, and "for five or six years this masterpiece of color had been obstinately refused by the jury"; so that, by dint of going and returning from the artist's studio to the exhibition, and from the exhibition back to the studio, the picture had come to know the way so well, that, had it been set on wheels, it could have gone to the Louvre by itself. Marcel, of course, attributed the policy of the jury to the personal spite of its members, and persisted, in the teeth of all discouragement, in regarding his production as the pendant to "The Marriage in Cana." Hence, nothing daunted, he returned again and again to his vast design, after indulging in a sufficient amount of abuse to relieve his ruffled temper. At length, under conviction that the child of this world might possibly succeed where the child of light had failed, he began to seek for means whereby, without altering the general plan of his gigantic undertaking, he might deceive the jury in supposing it to be an entirely fresh and hitherto unexamined work. Thus, one year he turned Pharaoh into Cæsar, and the "Passage of the Red Sea" became "The Passage of the Rubicon." This ruse failing, he covered, as by miracle, the Red Sea with snow, planted a fir-tree in one corner thereof, dressed an Egyptian in the costume of the Imperial Guard, and sent

forth his canvas as “The Passage of the Beresina.” But, unfortunately, the jury had wiped its glasses that day and was not to be duped. It recognized the inexorable picture by dint of a multi-colored horse—his “synoptic table of fine colors,” Marcel privately called this astonishing steed—that went prancing about on the top of a wave of the Red Sea; and again the masterpiece was churlishly blackballed. “Till my dying day I will send my picture to the judges,” vowed Marcel, after this new repulse; “it shall be engraved on their memories.”—“The surest way of ever getting it engraved,” remarked Colline, who chanced to be near by. And so the poor painter might have been left to try further and still wilder experiments, but for the kindly intervention of Daddy Médicis, an old Jew who had constant dealings with the Bohemians, and often managed to do them a friendly turn without, as may be imagined, sacrificing himself overmuch in the transaction. This singular individual, coming one evening to Marcel’s room, offered to purchase the famous picture “for the collection of a rich amateur,” and proposed one hundred and fifty francs as a fair price. At first, the artist grumbled; there was at least a hundred and fifty francs’ worth of cobalt in the dress of Pharaoh alone, he protested. But the Jew stood firm, and at last the painter yielded; whereupon Daddy Médicis gave the Bohemians a dinner, at which “the lobster ceased to be a myth for Schaunard, who contracted for this amphibious creature a passion bordering on madness.” As for Marcel himself, his intoxication came near upon having deplorable results. Passing his tailor’s shop, at two o’clock in the morning, he actually wanted to wake up his creditor, and give him on account the hundred and fifty francs he had just received. A ray of reason, which still flitted in the mind of Colline, stopped the artist on the brink of this precipice.

And now for the sequel of the story.

“A week after these festivities, Marcel found out the gallery in which his picture had been placed. In passing through the Faubourg St. Honoré, he stopped in the midst of a group which seemed to be watching with curious interest a sign that was being placed over a shop. This sign was neither more nor less than Marcel’s picture, which had been sold by Médicis to a grocer. Only, ‘The Passage of the Red Sea’ had undergone one more change, and bore a new name. A steamboat had been added, and it was now called ‘The Harbor of Marseilles.’ The curious onlookers, when they saw the picture, burst out in a flattering ovation; and Marcel returned home in ecstasy over the triumph, murmuring—‘The voice of the people is the voice of God.’”

What part the synoptic charger was now called on to fill, unfortunately we cannot say.

The third member of our quartet is Gustave Colline, student of "hyperphysical philosophy," and inveterate perpetrator of alarming puns. He too is a composite character, the principal ingredients of his make-up being furnished by two of Murger's old associates—Jean Walton and Trapadoux, both of whom were men of immense and curious erudition and many eccentricities. Colline himself, of a somewhat more steady way of life than his companions, gains a fairly regular income by teaching mathematics, botany, Arabic, and various other subjects, as occasion demands, and spends the greater part of it in the accumulation of second-hand books. "What he did with all these volumes," remarks the historian, "so numerous that the life of a man would never have sufficed to read them, no one knew—he least of all." But still he goes on adding tome to tome, and when he chances to return to his lodgings at night without bringing a new specimen to his store, he feels that, like the good Titus, he has wasted his day. Thus his strange, shapeless mouth, pouting lips, double chin, shaggy light hair, and threadbare, hazel-colored overcoat, are well known upon the quays and wherever ancient volumes are exposed for sale. His tastes are catholic in the extreme; for he will buy anything and everything that is to be bought, provided only it is rare, out of the way, and for all practical purposes useless. Some idea of the range and versatility of his interests may be given by reference to a single episode in his history. When, in company with Marcel, Rodolphe gave that famous Christmas entertainment, whereof the record is to be found in its proper place in the annals of Bohemia, he insisted on borrowing for the occasion the philosopher's famous swallowtail coat. Now, this coat, as the chronicler justly suggests, deserves a word or two. By courtesy it was held to be black by candle-light, though it was really of a decided blue. It was also cut upon a wild and startling plan, very short in the waist and exceedingly long in the tails. But its most astonishing features were the pockets—"positive gulfs, in which Colline was accustomed to lodge some thirty of the volumes which he everlastingly carried about with him; which caused his friends to say that during the times when the libraries were closed scientists and men of letters could always seek information in the skirts of Colline's coat—a library always open to readers." Well, on this particular day, strange to relate, the great swallowtail apparently harbored only a quarto volume of Bayle, a treatise in three volumes on the hyperphysical faculties, a volume of Condillac, two of Swedenborg, and Pope's "Essay on Man." "Hullo!" exclaimed Rodolphe,

when the philosopher had turned out this odd collection and allowed the other to don the imposing habit; “the left pocket still feels very heavy; there is still something in it.”—“Ah!” replied Colline, “that is true; I forgot to empty the foreign language pocket.” Whereupon he drew out two Arabic grammars, a Malay dictionary, and “The Perfect Stock-Breeder” in Chinese—his favorite reading.[29] Nor was this quite all. Later on, in looking for his handkerchief, Rodolphe came accidentally upon a small Tartar volume, overlooked in the department of foreign literature.

For the rest, Colline is a very agreeable companion, pleasant of manner, and courteous of bearing; and his conversation is amusingly spiced with quaint technical expressions and the most outrageous puns. Unlike his three companions, who are in perpetual bondage to love, he passes on, for the most part, in bachelor meditation, fancy free, as becomes a philosopher of the “hyperphysical school.” Once in a while, we find him flirting a little with the *bonne amie* of one of his friends, and we recall a single occasion on which, according to his own statement, he had an appointment of a romantic character. We read also, in the most incidental way, of his devotion to a waistcoat-maker, whom he keeps day and night copying the manuscripts of his philosophical works. But at these, as at all other times, the lady of his affections remains “invisible and anonymous.” In general, it may be said that he shows himself markedly superior to the human weakness which does so much to disturb the byways of Bohemia no less than the highways of the outer world.

Music, painting, and philosophy are thus well represented in the Bohemian *cénacle*, and in Rodolphe, the last of the group, the sister art of poetry finds a worthy exponent. Rodolphe is the real hero of the book, and is indeed an approximately faithful sketch of the author himself. In the fancy-poet of the Latin Quarter, the man who, in the very cut of his clothes, manners, appearance, conversation, “confessed his association with the Muses,” many of Murger’s well-known traits of character and personal idiosyncrasies are frankly reproduced. We have a brief but sufficiently detailed description of him when he makes his first appearance in the Café Momus, and there can be no doubt as to the artist’s model from which the study is made. He is presented as “a young man whose face was almost lost in an enormous thicket of many-colored beard. But, as a set-off against this abundance of hair on the chin, a precocious baldness had dismantled his forehead, which looked like a knee, and the nakedness of which a few stray hairs that one might have counted vainly endeavored to cover. He wore a black coat, tonsured at the elbows, and with practical ventilators under the

armpits, which could be seen whenever he raised his arm too high. His trousers might once have been black, but his shoes, which had never been new, seemed to have several times made the tour of the world on the feet of the Wandering Jew.” In all this—in the precocious baldness and parti-colored beard especially—we have the historian of Bohemia himself. We do not, therefore, wonder that the character of Rodolphe should stand out from among the other figures of the “Scenes,” by reason of a certain autobiographic distinctness of outline and color, nor that he should prevail upon us by a kind of personal charm which his companions rarely possess.

To follow Rodolphe’s various adventures and enterprises back to their originals in Murger’s life, would be an interesting task, but it is one that cannot be attempted here; and for the time being we must keep to the poet in the book. Like his friends Schaunard and Marcel, this young man has pinned his faith to one ambitious work, a drama called the “The Avenger,” which has already gone the round of all the theatres of Paris, and of which in the course of a couple of years, he has accumulated a dozen or so huge manuscript copies, weighing collectively something like fifteen pounds. “The Avenger” was ultimately produced, and ran for five successive nights, after large portions of these carefully wrought versions had been used up in the humble service of lighting the fire. But this does not come till towards the end of the story; and during the days when we know him best, Rodolphe, awaiting his dramatic triumph, is willing enough to turn his literary talents to account in less dignified ways. The main sources of his income appear to be “The Scarf of Iris,” a fashion-journal, and “The Castor,” a paper devoted to the interests of the hat-trade, both of which he edits, and in which he publishes from time to time his opinions on tragedy and kindred subjects. It is to the columns of the latter periodical, by-the-by, that Gustave Colline contributes a discussion on “The Philosophy of Hats, and Other Things in General”—how much to the amusement and instruction of its readers we are unfortunately not told. Probably the financial advantages of these two undertakings are of a rather slight and unsubstantial character; at any rate, the editor-in-chief shows himself at all times ready to supplement his official emoluments whensoever occasion offers. Witness his most famous piece of hack-work, the composition of “The Perfect Chimney Constructor.” Rodolphe, who has been sadly down on his luck for a time—fluctuating between going to bed without supper and supping without going to bed—happens accidentally to run across his Uncle Monetti, a stove-maker and physician of smoky chimneys, whom he has not seen for an age. Now, Monsieur Monetti is an enthusiast in his art,

and has conceived the idea of drawing up for the benefit of future generations, a manual of chimney-construction, in which his own numerous patents shall be given adequate presentation. Finding his nephew fallen upon evil days, he intrusts him with this literary enterprise, promising him a remuneration of three hundred francs, and rashly giving him outright fifty francs on account. Of course, Rodolphe incontinently disappears, and only turns up again when the money has disappeared also. Uncle Monetti then resorts to drastic measures. He locks the volatile young gentleman in a small room, six stories up, with stoves and ovens for his company, and takes away his clothes, leaving in their stead a ridiculous Turkish dressing-gown. In this attic solitude the unfortunate young poet is fain to wax eloquent over ventilators, till he is rescued in the most romantic way by a certain Mademoiselle Sidonia, as the reader will find recorded at length in its proper place in the Bohemian chronicles.

In connection with one extraordinary episode in Rodolphe's career—his sudden receipt of five hundred francs in hard cash—we have an excellent opportunity of studying some of the mysteries of Bohemian finance. He and Marcel, who was then his fellow-lodger, regarded this colossal sum as practically inexhaustible; they were not a little surprised, therefore, to find, before a fortnight had gone by, that it had vanished into air, as though by magic. The strictest frugality had presided over all their expenditures, and the question was, where in the world the money could have gone to. Into this problem the two economists forthwith made inquisition, analyzing their accounts, and carefully weighing them item by item. This is about the way in which the audit was conducted:—

"March 19.—Received five hundred francs. Paid, one Turkish pipe, twenty-five francs; dinner, fifteen francs; miscellaneous expenses, forty francs," Marcel read out.

"What in the world are these miscellaneous expenses?" asked Rodolphe.

"You know well enough," said the other. "It was the evening when we didn't come home till morning. At any rate, that saved us fuel and candles."

There is nothing like rigid economy, as we see.

"March 20.—Breakfast, one franc, fifty centimes; tobacco, twenty centimes; dinner, two francs; an opera glass"—needed by Rodolphe, who, as editor of the "Scarf of Iris," had to write a notice of an art exhibition; and so on, and so on. As the account continued, "miscellaneous expenses" reappeared with ever-increasing frequency; indeed, the two financiers had

in the end to admit that this “vague and perfidious title,” as Rodolphe called it, had proved a delusion and a snare.

Such, then, are the four principal characters with whose doings and misdoings the “Scenes of Bohemian Life” are mainly occupied. A word only about the women of the book.

It is while he is in their company, I suppose, more than at any other time, that the Anglo-Saxon reader feels how far the pathways of Bohemia lie outside the boundaries of respectable society. Louise, the fickle bird of passage; Musette, vagabond and careless; Mimi, charming, heartless, ill-fated; Phémie, beneath whose delicate exterior was concealed a veritable volcano of passion;—yes, the face of the moralist will certainly harden as he dwells on the giddy vagrancy of their lives, and the hopeless tragedy in which the music and the laughter inevitably find their earthly close. About this matter I shall try to say something presently. For the moment I want only to point out that, though the women of Murger’s book are drawn from known or conjectured originals, the portraiture does not seem to be nearly as close as it is throughout in the case of the men. This does not mean only that each girl in the “Scenes” is a more or less blurred compound of various famous figures of the old Latin Quarter; it means, also—and this is, of course, far more important,—that the characters have undergone much transfiguration. The magic and grace by which, amid all their personal shortcomings and delinquencies, these heedless adventurers of the studio and the café are actually marked, are largely, it is to be feared, the results of Murger’s own idealizing imagination and delicately poetic touch.

There is an important point, suggested by the present part of our subject, which demands a moment’s attention. The principle indicated in the well-known lines of Lafontaine—

> “Deux coqs vivaient en paix: une poule survint,
>
> Et voilà la guerre allumée!”—

is generally held to be one of universal applicability. But the life of our Bohemian brotherhood for once gives it the lie direct. Never, even in the most trying seasons of love and jealousy, did the ties slacken which bound the four companions—Colline, the great philosopher; Marcel, the great painter; Schaunard, the great musician; and Rodolphe, the great poet—as

they called one another. Rodolphe and Mimi might lead a cat-and-dog life; Marcel might quarrel with Musette, and make it up only to quarrel again; Schaunard might see fit to address some of his telling observations to the person of the melancholy Phémie; but artist and poet, philosopher and painter, rubbed on together in peace; and if the truth must be told, smoked many a pipe in company over the grave of their dead passions. Truly the domestic side of their life left much to be desired. At one time they all occupied the same house, and then the unfortunate neighbors lived, as it were, on a volcano. Six months went by; things grew daily more and more intolerable; and then the final breaking-up of the establishment came about. "But," adds Murger—and the remark exhibits clearly the kind of understanding which existed among the strangely-assorted friends—"in this association, despite the three young and pretty women who formed part of it, no sign of discord appeared among the men. They frequently gave way to the most absurd caprices of their mistresses; but not one of them would have hesitated a moment between the woman and the friend."

Amid all the uncertainties and anxieties, the follies and the vices of their daily life, these brother Bohemians are possessed of a very keen and genuine enthusiasm for art, and of a sturdy faith in themselves and their own high calling. This is one good aspect of their character; another and complementary aspect, upon which Murger lays much stress, is their complete freedom from stiff-necked virtuosity and dilettante affectations. There are Bohemians who chatter only of "art for art's sake," who hold with inflexible obstinacy and stoical pride to the narrow path they have marked out for themselves, who scorn to descend, upon any pretext, for any purpose whatsoever, to the plane of common affairs. But Murger takes pains to make it clear that Rodolphe and his friends do not belong to this unfortunate class—the "Buveurs d'Eau," as they are called, the first tenet of whose creed is that no one of their number, on penalty of expulsion from the society, shall accept any work outside pure art itself.[30] Rodolphe, as we know, is working hard upon his great tragedy; Marcel, upon his "Passage of the Red Sea"; Schaunard, upon his symbolic symphony; Colline, upon his system of "Hyperphysical Philosophy": but there are no cant phrases of art-worship everlastingly upon their lips, and they are ready enough to turn their energies, when opportunity offers, into more remunerative, if less ambitious, undertakings. We have seen something already of the practical means, sometimes adopted by them, of putting a figure before the cipher,

which unfortunately, as a rule, constitutes their entire available capital. If further evidence be demanded, we need only refer to the occasions when Rodolphe versifies an epitaph for an inconsolable widow and turns off a rhyming advertisement for a dentist, and when Marcel paints eight grenadiers at six francs apiece—likenesses guaranteed for a year, like a watch.

Of the “Scenes of Bohemian Life” as a whole, it would be hopeless to endeavor to give any general idea within the limits of a rapid sketch. It is little to say that from cover to cover of this wonderful book there is not a dull or indifferent page—not a page that does not teem with quaint description, brilliant bits of characterization, vivid pictures of manners and life. Of the range and opulence of its humor some hint has perhaps been given, though the merest hint only, in the personal delineations attempted above. Mirth-compelling the “Scenes” certainly are, and we feel in their case, as we cannot always feel with the masterpieces of the French comic genius, that the laughter they provoke is generous, hearty, wholesome—laughter without taint of cynicism or spite. But the humor of the volume, rich and racy as it is, and the ebullient wit that glitters and flashes in its dialogues and incidental touches of comment and criticism, are not by any means the only qualities that deserve attention. Murger was a true humorist, and, like all true humorists, he had the keenest realization of the pathos and tragedy of life, the most delicate apprehension of “the sense of tears in mortal things.” Though it can hardly be said of the “Scenes of Bohemian Life,” as it has been rightly said of the great body of the author’s work, that the dominant note is one of poignant melancholy, the minor chords are heavy and frequent enough to tone down the exuberant gayety of the volume, and to cause the final impression left by it to be rather sombre than exhilarating. Murger saw much of the reckless and irresponsible life of the Latin Quarter on its grotesque side, and he has given this side extraordinary prominence in this particular book, reserving many of the harsher features, which from personal contact he knew equally well, for the “Scenes de la Vie de Jeunesse” and the “Buveurs d’Eau.” But the reader who follows to their close the chapters we have here more especially been considering—and who can put them down unfinished?—will find that their brilliancy of light and color are thrown up against a very dark background, and that the shadows gather and deepen about us as the story runs its course. At length, the wild music ceases altogether; the mad laughter is silenced; and the book

is laid by, not with a burst of final merriment, but with a gulp and a pang. *Ah, comme nous avons ri!* Yes, the struggles, the privations, the absurdities of Bohemia are comical enough; but life is stern, even in this Land of Romance; there is death in it, and many a heartbreak; and if we escape the suffering of failure, we must accept the inevitable disillusion of success. Life, too, is fleeting; the golden sands slip through our fingers as we try to clutch them. *Eheu fugaces!* It is the old-world burden that we must needs end with—"La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps!"

No—"ce n'est pas gai tous les jours, la Bohème." For my own part, I know not whither one could turn to find pages of purer tenderness and pathos than those in which Murger has written of Francine's muff and of the death of poor little Mimi. And yet, there is no effort, no melodramatic striving after effect. The lips quiver, the eyes grow dim as we read; but so admirably is the art concealed, so perfect is the reserve under which it is all done, that it is only when we come to turn back over the chapters for the express purpose of analyzing them, that we begin to realize the author's exquisite perception and tact, and the genius with which he carries his meaning straight home to our hearts. Poor Francine! Poor Mimi! These fragile slips of womanhood from the dingy old Latin Quarter are filled with the life that the poet alone can give. We meet them once in a few pages of print; and their hungry eyes and poor, worn faces linger with us forever.

And now we must revert for a moment to a question already touched on—the loose morality not infrequently charged against this record of Bohemian life. I promised that I should try to say something about this matter ere I brought these jottings to a close; but now that it is definitely before us, I do not feel, after all, that there is very much to be said. Our judgment on such a book as this, ethically considered, must finally depend on the point of view from which we regard it, and this point of view will always be at bottom so much an affair of temperament, outlook, training, bias, that it is not likely to be much affected by any arguments, adverse or favorable. "Certainly," Murger once imagines one of his readers saying, "I shall not allow this story to fall into the hands of my daughter." To this, doubtless, most Anglo-Saxon fathers would say amen, and there is little question that they would, on the whole, be wise in so doing. I readily admit that it would be better that the perusal of such a work as this, as of many other great and enduring pieces of literature, should be left for those whose minds have been schooled and sobered by the discipline of real life, and

who are thus in a position to bring Murger's imaginary scenes, with all their bewitching humor, magic of description, and charm of style, to the touchstone of actual experience. But while I concede this much, I cannot for a moment go with those who would, therefore, place the volume on their unofficial "Index Expurgatorius," on the score that it will be found dangerous to morality. Such a notion seems to me simply absurd, and due to an entire misapprehension of what it is in literature that renders it injurious in its effects. Murger drew his material from a world he had known and lived in, and he incorporates all its irregularities of conduct, and very much of its wantonness. Yet I challenge any intelligent and broad-minded reader to deny that the atmosphere of his "Scenes" is almost always fresh and wholesome. Those at least who know something of the French novel, from "La Dame aux Camélias" onward, and of some of the English fiction produced within recent decades, by writers who boldly claim place in the ranks of the moralists, will hardly feel called upon to attack our author on this particular head. Nowhere, let it be said emphatically, does Murger deliberately give himself up to the worship of the great Goddess of Lubricity; nowhere does he willingly throw the halo of poetry over mere physical passion; nowhere does he go out of his way to show vice as vice in glowing or attractive colors. These may read like phrases of the most conventional criticism, but they are here thoroughly to the point. The very story which the writer stops short for a moment to interject the imaginary comment quoted above, is as pure and delicate as a love-story well could be, and only a reader capable of sucking poison out of a lily, could be disturbed in the slightest degree by the irregularity of the relations existing between Jacques and poor Francine. It can never be often urged that in such a case as this—perhaps in all art whatsoever—the one fundamentally essential thing is treatment; and with Murger's handling of his theme, no possible fault could be found, even by the most austere and exacting critic.

A more substantial charge may, I think, be brought against the "Scenes," on the ground that in their delightful pages the shiftless, improvident, hand-to-mouth existence of Rodolphe and his friends is made too engaging and seductive. Are there not, it may be asked, scores of young men who believe that they have (in very large capitals) Genius and a Mission in Art, and who need nothing but the incentive of such a volume as this to lead them to throw aside the sober concerns of law or commerce, and voluntarily exchange a career of useful, if monotonous, toil, for one wherein immediate misery is practically certain, and ultimate success only a remote chance? Youths of some sensibility and ambition, who hate the counting-house and

the desk; who have written verses or made sketches which have been praised by injudicious friends; and who have devoured the numerous biographies of those who, having commenced life in uncongenial labor, boldly kicked over the traces and finally made for themselves a position and a name, are prone enough, it may be alleged, to mistake themselves for great men in embryo, and to set up their backs against the daily routine and the common task, without the aid of a book which paints Bohemia so constantly on its pleasantest side, and gives to even its struggles and sufferings a romantic charm, which the jog-trot round of experience does not possess. All this, perhaps, is true. At any rate, I have myself known one young fellow of the class referred to who, under Murger's inspiration, played for a time at Bohemianism, allowed his hair to grow down over his shoulders, wore by preference a threadbare coat, and posed as an unappreciated genius. His genius, I believe, remains unrecognized still; but he has long since assumed a respectable garb, and given other outward and visible signs of his perversion to conventionality. And yet, even with this instructive case well in mind, I think too much might easily be made of the harmful tendencies of Murger's book. The *Sturm und Drang* period of youth, the period of ferment, and aimless experiment, and general unrest, will always be fraught with perils of one or another kind; and a few wild dreams of vague ambition, some spiritual green-sickness, an attack or two of the hysterics of social revolt, a little affectation of Byronism, or Shelleyism, or Murgerism, are not the worst of these. Fortunately, the real world is a businesslike and remorseless disciplinarian, and in the school of practical experience, a nature essentially healthy will presently right itself, and be none the worse—perhaps even the better—for a handful of battered illusions and some pricked bubbles of fancy. And as for the natures not fundamentally healthy—well, Life the Schoolmistress has her own effectual way with these also.

But should there perchance be any young man in danger of taking the Bohemian fever a trifle too seriously, we will refer him for treatment to a very satisfactory physician, a specialist, one may say, in the complaint—Murger himself. Properly read, and read through to the end, the "Scenes" should prove their own corrective; and if their full significance is not clear, the preface furnishes the needed commentary. It is but simple justice to Murger to say that he himself had no sympathy whatever with the indefinite ambitions and mawkish sentimentalism of a certain class of young men, who mistake the cravings of aspiration for the promptings of genius, and turn to art because they are fit for nothing else. Again and again does he

insist upon the stern realities of the artist's probation; again and again does he raise the voice of warning to those who would rashly decide to commit themselves to the artist's career.

"Il en est dans les luttes de l'art à peu près comme à la guerre—toute la gloire conquise rejaillit sur le nom des chefs. L'armée se partage pour récompense les quelques lignes d'un ordre du jour. Quant aux soldats frappés dans le combat, on les enterre là où ils sont tombés, et une seule épitaphe suffit pour vingt mille morts."[31]

These are solemn and uncompromising words. And scarcely less solemn are the phrases in which he describes the life of Bohemia as "charming but terrible, having its conquerors and its martyrs"—a life upon which no one should enter "who is not prepared beforehand to submit to the inexorable law of *Væ Victis*!" Woe to the conquered indeed! In the brilliant pages of the world's history, the name and fortune of the one who succeeds alone are inscribed; those of the nine hundred and ninety-nine who ignominiously and miserably fail pass into everlasting oblivion.

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1. Allusions to the continuance of this revolting practice are numerous as late as the eighteenth century. See, *e. g.*, Pope's "Essay on Man," iv., 251-252, and the famous anecdote of Johnson and Goldsmith (Boswell, *anno* 1773).

2. As the pronunciation of our diarist's name is often under discussion, I subjoin, for the reader's guidance in the matter, some clever verses, originally published a few years ago in the London "Graphic":—

> "There are people, I'm told,—some say there are heaps,
> Who speak of the talkative Samuel as Peeps;
> And some, so precise and pedantic their step is,
> Who call the delightful old diarist, Pepys;
> But those I think right, and I follow their steps,
> Ever mention the garrulous gossip as Peps!"

3. A curious circumstance in connection with the first reading of the Diary is worth mentioning. An indefatigable student, it is said, toiled

at its decipherment from twelve to fourteen hours a day for the space of three or four years. All the while—such is the strange untowardness of earthly things—Pepys had left in his library a long-hand transcript of his short-hand account of Charles the Second's escape, and this, had it been known at the time, would have served the purpose of the required key.

4. This is a tragi-comedy by Dryden, written partly in blank verse, partly in rhyme. Pepys had seen it performed some two years before, and had then pronounced it "a very innocent and most pretty witty play."

5. Taking always in my own study of literature the wider line of inquiry just indicated, I am grateful to Professor Royce for pointing out the connection between two phenomena apparently so radically diverse as the spread of prose fiction and the appearance of the Lockian philosophy. (See his delightful volume—a model of popular exposition—"The Spirit of Modern Philosophy," pp. 80-81.)

6. The reader of Pepys, recalling Mrs. Pepys's fondness for these interminable stories, will remember that, as we have seen, "Le Grand Cyrus" once gave rise to considerable unpleasantness between husband and wife.

7. Novel-readers will not need to be reminded that the "story-within-story" device survived long after the classical-heroic romance had passed into oblivion. It is employed, for instance, by both Fielding and Smollett, and traces of it are to be found in the earlier work of Dickens, and in other writers quite near our own time.

8. A delightfully witty account of this work, and of the classical-heroic romance at large, will be found in Jusserand's "English Novel in the Time of Shakspere," a book which combines with the erudition of the German specialist the verve, tact, and lucidity of the French—qualities which are commonly to be sought in vain in the voluminous and too often chaotic lucubrations of Teutonic scholarship.

9. Translations of several of the great French romances, including "Clelia," "which opened of itself in the place that described two lovers in a bower," are given in the list of books on Leonora's shelves ("Spectator," No. 37); and suggestive mention is made of "Pharamond" and "Cassandra" as late as 1711 ("Spectator," No. 92).

Mrs. Lennox's satire, "The Female Quixote," may be taken to show that even in 1752 these works were still sometimes read.

10. Common fairness leads me to state, though it must be in the quasi-obscurity of a foot-note, that in any exhaustive treatment of the Restoration novel, place should be found for a third female name—that of Swift's "stupid, infamous, scribbling woman," Mrs. Haywood. But though this lady produced, between 1720 and 1730, a number of short stories that might fittingly be touched upon here, her best-known works, "The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless" (1751) and "The History of Jeremy and Jenny Jessamy" (1754), belong to the times of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, and therefore to another school and period of fiction entirely. She would thus be very likely to tempt us too far afield for the purposes we have here in view.

11. Scott's edition of Swift's works (1824), vol. ii., p. 303, *note*.

12. This is the name under which Mrs. Behn enters the satire of Pope:-

> "The stage how loosely doth Astræa tread!"

The second line of the couplet may be left unquoted.

13. See "Apotheosis of Milton" in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for 1738 (vol. viii., p. 469).

14. This, according to Mr. Gosse ("Dictionary of National Biography") was "a relative whom she called her father." Mrs. Behn certainly does speak of him as her father in "Oroonoko." And in the Life, "by one of the Fair Sex," prefixed to the first collected edition of her works, we read: "Her father's name was *Johnson*, whose relation to the Lord Willoughby, drew him, for the advantageous post of Lieutenant-General of many isles, besides the continent of *Surinam*, from his quiet retreat at Canterbury to run the hazardous voyage of the West Indies." I do not know what is the source and origin of Mr. Gosse's implied doubt.

15. How vast was the change in taste between, say, the opening and the close of the eighteenth century, is shown by Sir Walter Scott, in an anecdote which has special interest for us here, as bearing directly upon the woman now in question. A grand-aunt of his, Mrs. Keith, of Ravelstone, towards the close of a very long life, asked Scott if he

had ever seen Mrs. Behn’s novels. “I confessed the charge. Whether I could get her a sight of them?—I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners or the language, which approached too near that of Charles the Second’s time to be quite proper reading. ‘Nevertheless,’ said the good old lady, ‘I remember them being so much admired, and being so interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again.’ To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs. Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with ‘private and confidential’ on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with merely these words: ‘Take back your bonny Mrs. Behn; and, if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not,’ she said, ‘a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London!’” (See Lockhart’s Scott, chap. liv.)

16. “English Women of Letters,” vol. i., p. 31.

17. Another matter of curious interest in connection with “Oroonoko” calls for passing mention, though too far removed from our special subject to detain us here. This is the remarkable way in which, in its presentation of the “noble savage,” and the innocence, purity, and high moral character of the “natural man,” the story anticipates Rousseau and the later romanticists. Jusserand, who points this out, goes so far as to say that Mrs. Behn “carries us at once beyond the times of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, and takes us among the precursors of the French Revolution.” It may be added that, in the hands of “Honest Tom Southerne,” the story of Oroonoko became a successful play.

18. “The Fair Jilt.”

19. Mrs. Manley, in her Dedication to Lady Lansdowne, says that her stories have truth for their foundation—*i.e.*, are based on fact. Mrs. Behn calls her “Nun” a “true novel.”

20. “La Vie de Bohème,” act i., scene 8.

21. “La Vie de Bohème,” act i., scene 8.

22. *Ibid.*

23. In this slight historic sketch of Bohemianism, we simply follow, without comment or criticism, Murger's original preface to the "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème."

24. A story to the point is worth repeating here. When the playwright, Barrière, went to him one afternoon to propose the dramatization of the "Scenes of Bohemian Life," he found Murger in his attic in the Latin Quarter, in bed. It subsequently came out that a Bohemian friend, having occasion to pay a business visit to some important functionary, had borrowed his only pair of trousers, which had the advantage of being a trifle better than his own; and Murger had to remain in bed, with such patience as he could command, until they should be restored.

25. The passage in which reference is made to the meeting with Victor Hugo will be found at the close of chapter xiv. of the "Scenes." "After lunching together, they started for the country. In crossing the Luxembourg, Rodolphe met a great poet, who had always behaved to him with charming kindness. For propriety's sake, he was going to pretend not to see him. But the poet did not allow him time; in passing, he gave him a friendly recognition, and bowed to his young companion with a gracious smile. 'Who is that gentleman?' asked Mimi. Rodolphe replied by mentioning a name which made her blush with pleasure and pride. 'Oh,' said Rodolphe, 'this meeting with a poet who has sung so well of love, is a good omen, and will bring luck to our reconciliation.'" Banville's statement of the way in which Murger fed his fiction day by day upon the happenings of his own life, reminds us somewhat of Mr. Robert S. Hichens' grim and powerful story, "The Collaborators."

26. This passage, like sundry others already cited, is taken from the dramatization of the "Scenes of Bohemian Life," which was, as we have seen, made by Murger in collaboration with Théodore Barrière, and was extremely successful. It differs in many particulars from the book, the scattered scenes of which are reduced to coherence and unity, but the male characters preserve their general traits.

27. The "Norman uncle" very possibly stands for Schaune's father, the toy-manufacturer, to whose business he presently succeeded.

28. This incident of Marcel's picture is said to have had its prototype in a composition of Tabar's, originally sketched as "The Passage of

the Red Sea," and afterwards exhibited in the Salon as "Niobe and Her Children Slain by the Arrows of Apollo and Diana."

29. This famous volume appears in an "édition princeps," with "notes in modern Syriac," in the very amusing story, "Son Excellence Gustave Colline," which really forms an episode of the "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème," though it is published in the collection of miscellanies entitled "Dona Sirène."

30. See "Les Derniers Buveurs d'Eau," in "Dona Sirène"; "Les Buveurs d'Eau"; "Scènes de la Vie de Jeunesse"; and the "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème," preface, and the story of "Le Manchon de Francine."

31. "Les Derniers Buveurs d'Eau," in "Dona Sirène." Murger uses precisely the same words in the preface just referred to.

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Transcriber’s note:

Page 13, ‘sequested’ changed to ‘sequestered,’ “in the sequestered neighborhood”

Page 48, ‘euphuism’ changed to ‘Euphuism,’ “Yet Euphuism and Italianism were”

Page 69, comma inserted after ‘Lowell,’ “asks Mr. Lowell,”

Page 80, ‘euthusiasm’ changed to ‘enthusiasm,’ “versatility of enthusiasm”

Page 137, comma struck after “Cléopâtre”

Page 137, comma inserted after “Le Grand Cyrus”

Page 148, ‘D’Aumont’ changed to ‘d’Aumont,’ “into the mouth of d’Aumont”

Page 158, comma struck after ‘prevailing,’ “to hit the prevailing taste”

Page 159, ‘ambibitious’ changed to ‘ambitious,’ “her one ambitious effort”

Page 159, ‘consquence’ changed to ‘consequence,’ “mark the consequence!”

Page 175 footnote, second ‘a’ struck before ‘true,’ ““Nun” a “true novel.””

Page 188, ‘cookshops’ changed to ‘cook-shops,’ “kitchens and the cook-shops”

Page 188 footnote 30, single quote changed to double quote before “Scènes de la Vie de Bohème”

Page 205, ‘thfs’ changed to ‘this,’ “this meeting with a poet”

Page 208, ‘Medicis’ changed to ‘Médicis,’ “bric-a-brac dealer, Father Médicis”

Page 216, ‘courtersy’ changed to ‘courtesy,’ “By courtesy it was held”

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