# THE STORY OF MY HOUSE

BY
GEORGE H. ELLWANGER

AUTHOR OF
"THE GARDEN'S STORY"

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Title: The story of my house

Author: George H. Ellwanger

Release date: February 5, 2023 [eBook #69961]

Language: English

Original publication: United States: D. Appleton and Company, 1890

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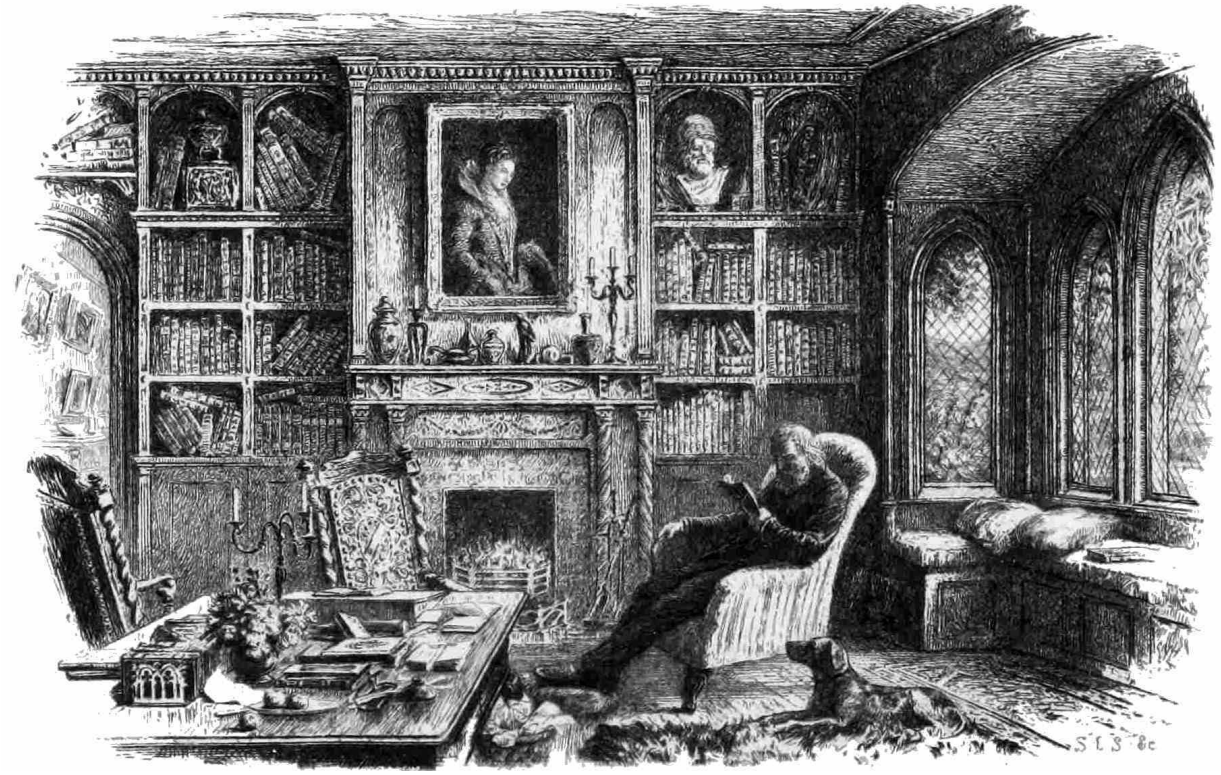


# THE STORY

# OF MY HOUSE

BY
GEORGE H. ELLWANGER

AUTHOR OF

"THE GARDEN'S STORY"

These are but my fantasies.

MONTAIGNE

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MDCCCXCI

# EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

A house without woman is a house without a soul.

TURKISH PROVERB.

*THERE is expressed from the grapes that ripen on the sunny slopes of Aÿ a wine called* Fine Fleur d'Aÿ blanc*—Fine Flower of white Aÿ—a sparkling, golden, perfumed nectar, to sip of which is an exhilaration.*

*In every ideal home there exists an essence that likewise diffuses its fragrance—the fine flower of noble womanhood, without which the house is a habitation, not a home.*

*Alone under the ministering care of woman may the routine of daily life be relieved and varied, and the course of the household made to flow free from friction and asperity. Caressed by her gentle touch, order ranges itself, beauty finds a dwelling-place, and peace enters as an abiding guest. Pre-eminently it is woman that idealizes the home, and, with her sweet, refining presence, mingled with the joyous laugh of children, creates its atmosphere of serenity and content.*

*To the gentler sex, therefore—to the old and to the young, to the dark and to the fair, to all who woo for us the sunshine of the home—a health in the Fine Flower of Aÿ!*

# CONTENTS.

# PROLOGUE.

Spring speaks again, and all our woods are stirred,
And all our wide glad wastes a-flower around.

SWINBURNE.

A SHADED slope bounds the homestead to the southward, and a thick copse, descending rather abruptly to the river, flanks the grounds in the rear. Screened from sun and glare, the grass-plot is always a favorite lounging-place during hot weather. Across the water a west or south wind invariably blows, freighted with coolness and charged with that indefinable odor which the wind gathers from its passage through a wood.

From the trees and bushes and grasses along the river banks the air has dusted a fragrance; from the leaves, the fern fronds, and the flowers it has extracted an aroma. The scent of the swamp honeysuckle along the hillside now forms its strongest component part. Its perfume is tangible, fresh, and uncloying—sentient with the delicious breath of the summer—and, I fancy, charms the wood-thrushes into sweeter song.

The west or south wind invariably blows. Even when not felt, it may be seen in the aspen's trembling leaves; so that, however hot the day, here a breeze may be always felt or seen. Through the trees the river sparkles, and through a wider opening may be traced its sinuous course until it merges into haze and sky. My book remains unopened; it is pleasanter to read the earth and air. The bees hum, a wood-dove calls, the soothing roar of the rapids rises and falls. So sweet is summer air, so caressing are summer sounds.

How the sails have multiplied on the river! Is it the haze or the sudden sunlight that has transformed their canvas into unaccustomed color? Yonder a larger vessel, of different mold from the pleasure-craft, is rounding the river's curve in her cruise up-stream. Her clean-cut prow rises high in air, her painted canvas is spread, and the sunlight strikes the gold of her sides. Onward she sails, graceful as a water-bird, tacking at intervals to catch the breeze. At once it becomes plain to me—it is no mirage, no cheat of the atmosphere, but a reality. Up the river from the lake, through the lake from the sea; launched from her harbor in distant lands, and laden with her precious stores, my ship has come!

# I.

# THE PERFECT HOUSE.

People who know my house come to like it a little; people who merely glance at it see nothing to call for comment, and so pass on....

My house not being a fine house, nor a costly house, nor what people call an elegant house, what is there in it to describe?—O. B. BUNCE, MY HOUSE.

I MAKE no claim that the house wherein I dwell is a perfect one; it is my first house—a fledgling. One must build at least thrice, it has been truly observed, to obtain the perfected dwelling, and still there will remain room for improvement. So many things go to make up the ideal house, it is beyond human possibility to combine them all; while even during the process of construction one's tastes are liable to change or become subject to modification.

To the most of mankind a single venture is sufficient; only architects build more than once for a pastime. For the sole office of the architect is to plan; the province of the builder to delay. The asylums teem with victims to the vexations of house-building. Having money to make and not to disburse, with no further care than to complete the work in hand with the utmost leisure, the architect and builder pass through the ordeal unscathed, and remain to lure new victims. One exception I recall. Picturesquely situated on the eastern coast, within hearing of the surge and rising amid the forest-growth, stands an untenanted villa. The imposing exterior is of massive stone, and all that unlimited wealth and taste could contribute has been lavished upon the interior. The mansion was completed within the specified time, but during its construction architect and builder both died,

the owner living only three days after its completion. From the placing of the foundation-stone to the prospective fire in the hearth—from commencement to completion—who may foresee the possibilities? Ever man proposes while Fate disposes.

Plans look so feasible on paper, and building seems so delightfully facile in theory—so much time, so much money, and your long-dreamed-of castle in Spain is a reality. But, like the quest of a German professor I once knew who was searching for a wife who must be rich, beautiful, young, angelic, and not afraid of a mouse, the perfect house is difficult to attain; while plans often resemble the summer excursions one takes with the mind during winter, apparently so easy to carry out and yet so unfrequently realized. We forget the toilsome climb up the mountain where we arrive, perchance, to find the view shrouded in mist; or a cold spell sets in when we reach the seashore; or heavy rains render the long-contemplated angling trip a dismal failure.

If we leave the house to the architect, he builds merely for himself—he builds *his* house, not yours. You must be the idealist of your own ideal. "Our so-called architects," says Richard Jefferies, "are mere surveyors, engineers, educated bricklayers, men of hard, straight ruler and square, mathematically accurate, and utterly devoid of feeling. You call in your practical architect, and he builds you a brick box. The princes of Italy knew better; they called in the poet and the painter, the dreamers, to dream for them." How the penetrating insight of Montaigne pierced the mask of the architect: "The Merchant thrives not but by the licentiousness of youth; the Husbandman but by dearth of corne; the Architect but by the ruine of houses!"

Perhaps the easiest way out of the difficulty is to secure a house already constructed that will meet your requirements as nearly as may be. But the mere building, the foundation, construction, architectural details, and interior arrangement are only a small part of numerous vital factors that should enter into the question of the house and home. There are equally the considerations of situation, neighborhood, accessibility, and a score of like important features to be seriously meditated on. One can not afford to make mistakes in building or in marrying. "In early manhood," says Cato, "the master of a family must study to plant his ground. As for building, he must

think a long time about it." The external construction is, indeed, the least part of building—there is still the decorating and the furnishing.

Wise is he who weighs and ponders ere he decides upon the location of his house, especially if he would be near the town. For in the ideal home I would unite many things, including pure air, sufficient elevation, pleasant views, the most suitable exposure, good soil, freedom from noise, and the natural protection from wind afforded by trees. "Let our dwelling be lightsome, if possible; in a free air and near a garden," is the advice of the philosopher, Pierre du Moulin. Very apposite are old Thomas Fuller's directions for a site—"*Chiefly choose a wholesome air*, for air is a dish one feeds on every minute, and therefore it need be good." And again: "Light (God's eldest daughter) is a principal beauty in a building, and a pleasant prospect is to be respected." In the chapter of the Essays, on Smells and Odors, the author pertinently observes: "The principall care I take, wheresoever I am lodged, is to avoid and be far from all manner of filthy, foggy, ill-savouring, and unwholesome aires. These goodly Cities of strangely seated Venice and huge-built Paris, by reason of the muddy, sharp, and offending savours which they yield; the one by her fennie and marish situation, the other by her durtie uncleannesse and continuall mire, doe greatly alter and diminish the favor which I bear them."

All these desiderata are well-nigh impossible to unite in the city. There all manner of nuisances necessarily exist—manufactories which discharge noxious smoke and soot, the clangor of bells and whistles, an atmosphere more or less charged with unwholesome exhalations. This more particularly in summer; in winter I grant the city has its charms and advantages. Wealth may sometimes combine the delights of urban and rural life, as when a large residence plot is retained in a pleasant neighborhood of the town. But even unlimited means can rarely procure a place of this description, which comes by inheritance rather than by choosing, and in the end becomes too valuable to retain. Besides, however fine the ancestral trees and endeared the homestead, it must still lack the repose of the country, the free expanse of sky, the unfettered breadth of the fields.

When I look about me I find the combination I would attain a difficult one to secure in almost any city. If I build in the suburbs, upon the most fashionable avenue, its approaches may be disagreeable and the surrounding landscape flat and uninviting. The opposite quarter of the

suburbs, the main northern residence avenue, will be windy during winter. If I locate westward there may be factories and car-shops to constantly offend the ear; if I move eastward unsavory odors may assail, and if I select a site in yet another neighborhood that commends itself for its elevation and pleasant society, there may be the smoke and soot of neighboring chimneys to defile the air and intrude themselves unceasingly into my dwelling. The country-seat sufficiently removed from town, and yet comparatively accessible, alone may yield, during the greater portion of the year, all the desired qualifications of the ideal home. Does not Béranger truly sing—

> Cherchons loin du bruit de la ville
> Pour le bonheur un sûr asile.
>
> Seek we far from the city's noise
> A refuge safe for peaceful joys.

And have not all the poets before him apostrophized the delights of a country life?

Why not the town-house, and also the country-seat—a hibernaculum for the winter, and a *villeggiatura* for the summer? Unfortunately, this would involve constructing two houses, meeting a double building liability, harboring two sets of worries; and, moreover, one's library, however modest, can not well be disarranged or periodically shifted from one place to another.

The old Latins were distinguished as we well know for their love of the country. Virgil, Ovid, Tibullus, and Terence all had their country-seats. Horace, in addition to the Sabine farm, possessed his cottage at Tivoli, and longed for a third resort at Sorrento. Pliny the Younger, and Cicero rode seventeen miles from Rome to Tusculum daily to gain repose. Pliny's letters attest his intense fondness for rural surroundings. The holder of numerous country-houses, he has described two of them very minutely, his descriptions giving to posterity the most reliable and truthful account of the old Roman villas. Of all his villas, including those at Tusculum, Præneste, Tibur, several on Lake Como, and his Laurentine and Tuscan resorts, the two latter were his especial favorites, whose fascinations he never tires of recounting. Especially attractive is his account of Laurentium: the apartments so planned as to command the most pleasing views; the dining-

room built out into the sea, ever washed by the advancing wave; the terrace before the gallery redolent with the scent of violets; the gallery itself so placed that the shadow of the building was thrown on the terrace in the forenoon; and at the end of the gallery “the little garden apartment” looking on one side to the terrace, on the other to the sea; his elaborate bath-rooms and dressing-rooms, his tennis-court and tower, and his own sleeping-room carefully constructed for the exclusion of noise. “My house is for use, and not for show,” he exclaims; “I retire to it for a little quiet reading and writing, and for the bodily rest which freshens the mind.” One side of the spacious sitting-room invited the morning, the other the afternoon sun. One room focused the sunlight the entire day. In the walls of this his study was “a book-case for such works as can never be read too often.”

The Tuscan villa was on a still more extensive scale, the house facing the south, and adorned with a broad, long colonnade, in front of which reposed a terrace embellished with numerous figures and bounded with a hedge of box from whence one descended to the lawn inclosed with evergreens shaped into a variety of forms. This, in turn, he states, was fenced in by a box-covered wall rising by step-like ranges to the top, beyond which extended the green meads, fields, and thickets of the Tuscan plain, tempered on the calmest days by the breeze from the neighboring Apennines. The dining-room on one extremity of the terrace commanded the magnificent prospect, and almost cooled the Falernian. There, too, are luxurious summer and winter rooms, a tennis-court, a hippodrome for horse exercise, shaded marble alcoves in the gardens, and the play of fountain and ripple of running water. The long epistle to Domitius Apollinaris, descriptive of the Tuscan retreat, he concludes by saying: “You will hardly think it a trouble to read the description of a place which I am persuaded would charm you were you to see it.”

It was the delightful situation and the well cared for gardens of Pliny’s country-seats, it will be seen, no less than the refined elegance and the conveniences of the splendid houses themselves, of which Pliny was mainly his own architect, that rendered them so attractive. Assuredly he must have been a most accomplished house-builder and artist-architect; for, in addition to the many practical and artistic features he has enumerated with such precision, he specifies a room so contrived that when he was in it he seemed to be at a distance from his own house. But even Pliny’s wealth and

inventive resources, much as they contributed to his comfort, could not combine everything. He could not bring Laurentium to him; he must needs go to her. The daily ride of seventeen miles and back to the city must have been irksome during bad weather; and even amid all his luxury and beauty of scenery he bewails the lack of running water at Laurentium. Luxurious and convenient as were the old Roman villas, they were built with only one story, in which respect at least the modern house is an improvement upon the house of the ancients; and there yet remain other beautiful sites than those along the Tyrrhenian sea or in the vale of Ustica.

Whether the house be situated in the country or in the town, whether it be large or small, it is apparent that the site and the exposure are of primary importance. So far as situation is concerned, a rise of ground and an easterly exposure, with the living-rooms on the south side, is undoubtedly the pleasantest. During the summer the prevailing west wind blows the dust of the street in the opposite direction; during winter the living-rooms are open to the light and sun. The comfort of the house during summer, and the outer prospect from within during winter, will depend in no small degree upon the proper planting of the grounds.

Deciduous trees, and here the variety is great, will shade and cool it in summer, evergreens will furnish and warm its surroundings in winter; while for a great portion of the year the hardy flower-garden, including the shrubberies that screen the grounds from the highway, and the climbers which disburse their bloom and fragrance over its verandas and porches, will contribute largely to its beauty and attractiveness.

Somehow I can not look upon my house by itself, without including as accessories, nay, as essential parts of it, its outward surroundings and external Nature—the woods whence its joists and rafters were hewed, the earth that supplied its mortar, brick, and stone, the coal whence it derives its light and heat, the trees that ward off the wind in winter and shield it from the sun in summer, the garden which contributes its flowers, the orchards and vineyards that supply its fruits, the teeming fields and pastures that continuously yield the largess of their corn, and flocks, and herds. From each of these my house and I receive a tithe.

My purpose, however, even were I able to do the subject justice, is not to treat of the adornment of gardens, of architectural styles, expression of

purpose in building, or the proper exterior form for the American town-house and country villa. There remain, nevertheless, some features of the interior of the home to which I would fain call attention, though even here, more than in the matter of the exterior, opinions necessarily differ. Every house, methinks, should possess its distinctive character, its individual sentiment or expression; and this depends less upon the architect and the professional decorator than upon the taste reflected by the occupants. And yet there is nothing so bizarre or atrocious that it will not please some; there exists nothing so perfect as to please all.

Shall the ideal house be large or small? Excellent results may follow in either case in intelligent, thoughtful hands. Where money is merely a secondary object, then the great luxuriously furnished rooms, the lofty ceilings, the grand halls and staircases, the picture gallery, the music, billiard, and ball rooms, the house of magnificent distances and perspectives. Still man is not content; for such a house, to be beautiful, calls for constant care, a retinue of servants, a blaze of light, a round of visitors and entertainments to populate its vast apartments and render it companionable. The house to entertain in and the house to live in are generally two separate things; but, of the two, you want to live in your house more than to entertain in it.

Doubtless, even to those possessed of abundant means, the medium-sized house, sufficiently roomy for all ordinary purposes and yet cosy enough for family comfort, is the most satisfactory. In daily domestic life you do not become lost and absorbed in its magnitude; and for the matter of entertainments, on a large scale, you always have the resource of a “hall,” with no further trouble beyond that of issuing the invitations and liquidating the bills. In the ideal dwelling-house of medium size even this will be dispensed with, while still preserving the charm of privacy—one has simply to add a supplementary supper-room and an ample ball-room, to be thrown open only on special occasions for the accommodation of the overflow. Thus it would be possible to avoid a barn to live in, and a cote to entertain in.

The great thing in house planning is to think ahead, and still think ahead. The hall which looks so spacious on paper is sure to contract, and ordinary-sized rooms will shrink perceptibly when they come to be furnished. It is important that the spaces between the doors and windows, the proportionate

height of the doors and windows, the many little conveniences, and innumerable minor yet major details, like the placing of mantels, registers, chandeliers and side-lights, be planned by the occupant, and not left to the mercy of the architect. The latter will place the mantel on the side of a long, narrow room, thereby diminishing the width several feet, when it should go at the end. He will hang the doors so they will bump together, or open on the side you do not want them to open on. If he concede you a spacious hall and library, he will clip on the vestibule, or be a miser when he doles out the space for the stairway landing or the butler's pantry. And what architect will stop to think of that most important of household institutions—a roomy, convenient, concealed catch-all, or rather a series of catch-alls!

Even so simple a contrivance as an invisible small wardrobe in the wall adjoining the entrance—a receptacle for hats, wraps, and waterproofs—he has never yet devised. Every hall must of necessity be littered up with that hideous contrivance, a hat-rack, in a more or less offensive form, when at a touch a panel in the wainscot might fly open to joyfully engulf the outer vesture of visitors. You must see your house planned and furnished with the inward eye ere the foundation is laid, and exercise the clairvoyant's art if you would not be disappointed when it is finally ready for habitation. The question of closet-room is best left to the mistress of the house, otherwise it is certain to be stinted; and it were economy in the end to secure the services of a competent *chef* to plan the kitchen and its accessories—that tributary of the home through whose savory or unsavory channels so great a wave of human enjoyment or dolor flows.

It is with houses very much as it is with gardens—no two are ever precisely alike; so far at least as the interior of the former is concerned. Both reflect, or should reflect, through a hundred different ways and niceties of adjustment and arrangement, the individual tastes of those who are instrumental in their creation. The ideal house must first be conceived by those who are to dwell in it, modeled according to their requirements, mirroring their ideas, their refinement, and their conceptions of the useful and the beautiful. By different persons these ends are approached by different ways. So long as we attain the desired end, the route thereto is of little consequence. But in the ideal house, it may be observed, a little money and a good deal of taste go a very great way.

All the eyes of Argus and all the clubs of Hercules must need be yours, would you see your house perfectly planned and perfectly constructed. The terrible gauntlet one has to run! He who builds should have nothing to divert his mind from the task. It is the work of a lifetime crowded into a year.

And when all is done, and the lights are turned on and the house is peopled with its guests, who is there that is fully content with the result of his labor? who that finds in the fruition the full promise of the bloom? The perfect house in itself exists no more than the perfect man or woman. We can at best set up an exalted standard of excellence to approximate as nearly as we may. It is very much in building as it is in life, where content with what we have is, after all, the true source of happiness. "I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail," is the burden of Walden. How many of us are not likewise in quest of the something that ever eludes? When we think we have come up with the fox, it is but his shadow we seize; he himself has already vanished round the ravine. We follow, but may not overtake, at will, the siren that the poet beckoned for in vain:

> Ah, sweet Content! where doth thine harbor hold?
> Is it in churches with religious men
> Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
> And in their studies meditate it then?
> Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,
> Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbor here.[1]

1. Barnabe Barnes.

What philosopher among all who have moralized and analyzed has discovered the sought-for stone? Amiel failed in the pursuit: "I am always waiting for the woman and the work which shall be capable of taking entire possession of my soul, and of becoming my end and aim." "A man's happiness," says Alphonse Karr, in an apothegm worthy of La Bruyère, "consists in that which he has not got, or that which he no longer has." The coveted bauble palls when it is finally ours, the "dove" escapes, and we all grow old. Absolute happiness flees when we enter our 'teens. Methinks the French poet Chénier has resolved the experience of most of us with reference to a certain phase of life as felicitously as any of those who have endured and felt:

Tout homme a ses douleurs. Mais aux yeux de ses frères
Chacun d'un front serein déguise ses misères,
Chacun ne plaint que soi. Chacun dans son ennui
Envie un autre humain qui se plaint comme lui.

Nul des autres mortels ne mesure les peines,
Qu'ils savent tous cacher comme il cache les siennes,
Et chacun, l'œil en pleurs, en son cœur douloureux
Se dit: Excepté moi, tout le monde est heureux.

Each man his sorrows hath; but, in his brothers' eyes,
Each one with brow serene his troubles doth disguise.
Each of himself complains; each one, in weariness,
Envies a fellow-man who mourns in like distress.

None measureth the pains that all as well conceal
As he himself doth hide the griefs that he doth feel;
And each, with tearful eye, says in his sorrowing heart,
Excepting me, the world with happiness hath part.

Yet, I like to think, and cherish the thought, when the cloud reveals no silver lining, that however disappointing some phases of life may be, some experiences of human character, there are bright days and pleasant places ahead in the future, somewhere and sometime. Happiness is coy at the best, fickle in bestowing her favors; and we find her the more delightful, possibly, in that, like the sunshine, she comes and goes. We awaken some morning to find her present, and the next morning she has flown. "It sometimes seemeth that when we least think on her she is pleased to sport with us." So many she has to minister to that she has necessarily but a brief period to remain. Still I see her ever laughing with the children at play, and find her lingering where industry abides. Beside the humble board of the laborer she is often found, while frequently passing by the homes of the rich. Over gardens and fields she hovers on pleasant days of spring, and on blustering winter nights I hear the rustle of her wings above the poet's page. The sunshine that sifts through the window, warming and gilding all my surroundings, is mine to-day; to-morrow it may stream elsewhere. It is all the brighter when it comes; but to possess it I must open wide the casement to let in the beams.

Climbing with the sunny Rector of Eversley to the lonely tarn amid the hills—you have read and admired Chalk-Stream Studies; or, if not, you have that enjoyment in store—I recall the moral that adorns this delightful

essay. “What matter,” he happily reasons, “if, after two hours of such enjoyment, he (the angler) goes down again into the world of man with empty creel or with a dozen pounders or two-pounders, shorter, gamer, and redder-fleshed than ever came out of Thames or Kennet? What matter? If he has not caught them, he might have caught them; he has been catching them in imagination all the way up; and if he be a minute philosopher, he holds that there is no falser proverb than that devil’s beatitude, ‘Blessèd is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed.’ Say, rather: ‘Blessèd is he who expecteth everything, for he enjoys everything once, at least; and, if it falls out true, twice also.’”

And with this gentle spirit, despite his many trials, Charles Kingsley lived on through life, shedding sunshine and cheer from the vine-embowered rectory at Eversley. His house was large enough for his personal comforts, for the entertainment of his chosen friends, and for the satisfaction of his domestic requirements; and this sufficed. Reflecting the “sweetness and light” of his own nature, it became the perfect house to him for the reason that he was satisfied with his surroundings. The ideal home is largely the handiwork of the contented mind; and if before we build we learn to extract the finer essences of things, we may then pluck the rose where others only find the thorn.

# II.

# OLD ORIENTAL MASTERS.

> It is certain that colors exercise an influence over us to the extent of rendering us gay or sad, according to their shades.—VOYAGE AUTOUR DE MA CHAMBRE.

THE floors of my house, where hard-wood floors exist, are shellacked. This imparts an excellent finish without darkening the wood, and the subsequent care of the floor is slight. Beneath the rugs the finish is sand-papered to prevent them from sliding. Oiling floors is objectionable, the wood turning dark, and necessitating almost daily going over with a damp and a dry cloth to keep them clean. Waxing is a labor, and renders the floors slippery. Varnishing makes a very smooth surface, easily marred, the gloss soon wearing in the least exposed places.

My floors must, first of all, be subservient and subordinate to my rugs. By shifting my rugs I immediately change the color of a room, the expression of my house; I may cool a room in summer or warm it in winter at will. Beautiful as beautiful paintings are some of the antique Persian and Conia prayers, and the marvelously wrought Yourdes and ancient Coulas. I believe there is no comprehensive book on rugs. Some enterprising publisher should send a capable artist to Asia for a year and publish an exhaustive *édition de luxe* to supply a long-felt want. An artistic work of this nature would be as desirable as an edition of King Solomon's lost book on gems. For color and color-blending we must go to the Orientals; they have found its soul. Who else could blend greens and blues so felicitously, or place the different reds in riotous juxtaposition, or combine the whole gamut of browns with the entire octave of yellows? They play with colors

as a musician plays with the keys of an instrument. They sound no false notes, they strike no discords. I speak of the art as exhibited by the best masters. There are plenty of daubs and crudities, it is true, a single specimen of which will throw a whole house into an entasia. There is poor sculpture and there are poor paintings. The finer examples of the loom deserve to be stamped with the artist's name just as much as a canvas of Gérôme or a love-song of Hafiz.

There can be nothing more artistic, there is nothing more seductive than these old Asiatic hand-paintings. I am drawn and fascinated by their weird beauty. What charms do they not reveal! what multiplicity yet harmony of hue and design! Though not unfrequently repeating themselves in the same piece, color and design never tire. They have their recurrent beat and rhythm, like the harmonious cadence of the Pantoum. This large Afghan rug, for instance, mellow with use and time, the general tone of which resembles that of a zircon, is composed of innumerable shades of red, so many shades I can scarcely count them, one shade melting into another shade—shades of shades—till the eye renounces the task of pursuit. When examined closely, I find even magenta has been employed by the craftsman, to become in his hands a medium of beauty. A European produces a stiff-set pattern, the Oriental a maze of which one never tires. There is always an unsuspected figure or color to reveal itself, an oddity to suddenly appear, new lights and new shadows.

In coloring, some of the Afghans touch closely upon the Bokharas, though the former are less closely woven, but are generally less set, and more pleasing in design. As a class, I think the Bokharas are overestimated, their usual lack of borders or indistinct bordering giving them an unfinished look, despite their fineness of texture and the gloss of their terra-cotta shades. My large thick blue Bokhara, however, is a striking departure from the type, and I never tire of admiring its artistic frame and its kaleidoscopic tints. The larger red Bokharas, where the pattern is fine, the texture thin and silky, and the rug straight, are very rich and handsome used as full single *portières*. But a rug when hung, or used as a *portière*, must be something entirely out of the ordinary to be in keeping, rugs in all such cases virtually competing with and taking the place of old tapestries. The substitute, therefore, should afford equal delight to the eye. I turn this closely woven, heavy Shiraz, with the nap running toward the light, and its forest of

fluctuant palm leaves is blue. I spread it in the reverse direction to see its color change like a tourmaline, and the field become resilient with soft rich greens. Dusty, soiled, and dingy when I first saw it unrolled from the bale, it is now a gem, alive to every change of light and shade. Time has subdued its original strong colors. These delicate gleams of buff that dance upon the border were once a pronounced brown-crimson, while the original yellows of some of the figures have softened to pale primrose. Its blues and greens are alone unfaded, though refined by age. The artist painted better than he knew; or did he designedly leave the finishing touches to the master-hand of Time?

How strange this patch of shadow and yonder gleam of light in this ancient Tiflis, the shadow shifting to light and the light darkening to shadow, as I reverse my position. The cunning designer has suddenly reversed the nap in the center, and hence its puzzling changes. I marvel who has knelt upon these Conia prayers, in whose glowing centers four shades of blue and four shades of red are fused so imperceptibly you may scarcely tell where one shade ends and another begins—

> The mossy marbles rest
> On the knees that they have pressed
> In their bloom.

Tender tones of olive, yellow, and blue lurk in some of the old Coulas, and suave tints of peach-blow and of rose gleam in the patterns of the rarer Kermans. Generally speaking, the Coulas possess little claim to distinction. But the finer old examples are a marked exception, many resembling the Yourdes prayers, while some are as velvety and intricate in design as the old Meccas. My most admired Coula (4 × 5) in its pattern and coloring might have been copied from an ancient cathedral window.

This yellow Daghestan, coined four-score years ago, is a veritable field of the cloth of gold. There are also the precious old Persian Sennas, with a diamond flashing in the center, and a certain weave of Anatolians with a bloom upon them like that of a ripe plum, so velvety one wants to stroke them just for the pleasure of the caress. When viewed against the nap, they look almost black, the colors hidden by the heavy fleece till revealed by another angle of view. What strange conceits, what fine-spun webs of tracery, what fillets, tangles, and tessellations of color do they not disclose!

The command in the Khoran prohibiting its followers from reproducing the image of living things has not been without its pronounced advantage. It has served to develop the infinite beauty of geometrical design. Color-study no edict of Mohammed could banish; it is a sixth sense reflected from the sky and atmosphere—a priceless gift of Allah! There has long been wanting a well-defined scale to describe and place the different shades intelligibly, just as there exists a standard of weights and measures comprehensible by all. Artists have one set of terms, shopmen and milliners another; the average person can not define a shade. Who can place the hues of a sunset sky? There needs to be a color-congress to form a closer chromatic scale, and the task belongs by right to the Orientals.

As a class, the Kazaks are not as desirable as many other makes, design and colorings frequently being so obtrusive, and the weave usually being marked by coarseness. Yet some Kazaks there are of remarkable beauty. My best examples of Kazak art are done in cardinal and old gold. The one is an antique, 6 × 7, thin and finely woven, the ground-work in three shades of red, with the "tree pattern" raised in black upon the field, and a storm of white flakes scattered over it. The other is a very old piece of nearly similar size, in perfect preservation, so heavy that to lift it is a task. Its luster is marvelous. The pattern is one of the most admired of all the Kazak patterns when the colors are happily employed, consisting of squares within squares or octagons variously dispersed upon the field, the largest figure in the center. The colors consist simply of four shades of yellow, the exquisite play of light and shade produced by the glossy texture of the wool employed and the frequent shiftings of the nap heightening the effect. It is my Asian Diaz, and my ship contained it among her precious stores.

Always among the most beautiful of Persian and Turkish rugs are those of various makes not often met with, that, exceptionally heavy and glossy, possess a similar tone to that of the Kazak just specified—blendings and interblendings of russet, chestnut, fawn, and fallow. To me their sleek and velvety pile, their striped and spotted surfaces, their turmoil of tawny hues, possess an attraction akin to that of the wild beasts of the remote Eastern jungle. Looking at them, I instinctively recall a carnivorous animal—fascinating in his fulvous beauty, supreme in his splendor and his sheen. These graceful arabesques, are they not like the curving haunches of some huge cat of the desert? These lucent spots and markings, do they not

resemble the shimmering pelt of a couchant carnivore? A strange fascination they possess for me; a subdued ferity, even to the animal odor that clings about their lambent folds; and, sometimes, the gleams as of feline eyes that peer from the dots of their borders.

The Yourdes are among the few weaves that do not acquire an additional value from silkiness. Time mellows their naturally soft shades, and use imparts to them a slight luster. But their great value consists in detail of design and contrast of a few colors—black and dark bands on a gray-white ground for the border, the plain prayer-disks usually of gray, blue, green, or maroon. The warp and nap being relatively thin, and color and design not being dependent upon strong or direct light to emphasize them, they are excellently adapted for hangings—indeed, they are too tender and precious to be placed upon the floor. The antique Yourdes prayers usually come in sizes about 4 × 6, and are deservedly among the most prized among Oriental textiles. Some of the finer Persians are equally suitable for hangings. By Persians I refer to what is known as "Persian prayers," the term being used to designate a certain class of Persian fabrics with centers of self-colors, to which, for some unexplained reason, a more definite name is not given. More strictly speaking, with double disks, the larger one plain and the smaller partially embroidered or figured, the arabesque "a" and typical Shiraz figure generally present in the border. These Persians are recognizable at a glance. Can we wonder the Moslem is so resigned to prayer with such *prie-Dieus* to kneel upon!

Under the term Daghestan are lumped the makes of this and numerous other districts, the designs of which are somewhat similar. There are very many fine true Daghestans and Kubas, as well as very many poor ones, the old examples being relatively much handsomer than the modern. The ordinary Daghestan border repeats itself far too often, and its commonness mars many an otherwise valuable work of art. Next to the Meccas, the Daghestans are probably among the most crooked of the products of Eastern looms, and numberless specimens of extraordinary sheen and rare design and coloring are virtually spoiled on this account. A long strip frequently has a horse-shoe curve, and even very small pieces are often so much broader at one end as to prove positively distressing to the sense of proportion.

The finer Meccas, distinguished for extreme softness and silkiness, combined with intricacy and pronounced individuality of design, are generally not only very crooked, but gathered and puffed at the corners as well. A straight Mecca one rarely sees except in dreams. This is to be deplored, for their lovely arabesques and gracious fantasies are not to be met with elsewhere. A search for absolute geometrical precision in Oriental rugs, however, would be like Kaphira's pursuit of the golden ball. They are made and painted by hand, and not cut out by machine. Therein consists their enchantment. Nevertheless, one should only look for and secure comparatively straight specimens; the very crooked, the very crude, and the very glaring are worthless at any price. "A cur's tail," says a Turkish adage, "may be warmed and pressed and bound round with ligatures, and after a twelve years' labor bestowed upon it, still it will retain its natural form." The dog in the adage was intended, not for a Christian, but for a rug. No wetting, stretching and tacking will remove its aged seams and wrinkles—

> What nature hath not taught, no art can frame:
> Wild born be wild still, though by force you tame.[2]

2. Thomas Campion, Third Booke of Ayres.

Distinct from all other productions are the Kourdestans, notably the large anchor-pattern. These are difficult to manage, however, the design being so striking. Very large figures or very glaring colors are on this account to be avoided. They tyrannize over their companions, or clash with surrounding objects. The eye is perpetually directed to them and they disturb the sense of repose. Many specimens of the Carabaghs are remarkable for their beautiful combination of colors, especially in the blending of reds, olives, and blues. The nap is generally very heavy, and the wool employed not unfrequently of extreme glossiness, imparting almost an oily look to the surface. The rather large hexagonal figures, moreover, without being glaring are usually artistic and striking. Handsome are many of the Persian camel's-hair rugs, unique in design and usually of very subdued colors.

The Cashmeres or Somaks are lacking in animation compared with many other weaves. Individuality they possess, but neither sheen, softness of texture, nor marked grace of design. For the dining-room, the most serviceable rugs are the large India, and the Turkish Ouchaks, though when obtainable some of the finer large Khorassans and Persians are equally

desirable. Both of the latter are finer than the Ouchaks, and old pieces possess a brilliant luster which the Ouchaks lack. The fine large thick India rugs are among the most magnificent in the world, soft as a houri's cheek, and diapered and jeweled with every shade of color; yet harmonious as the play of an opal. It is impossible to conceive of more superb color-blending.

While age is unquestionably an important factor in the beauty of a rug, one should by no means cast aside a new rug if the example be exceptionally fine, and its design or coloring may not be obtained in an antique. It will require time, I admit, to develop its beauties. But by subjecting it to light and constant use its original crudeness will gradually depart, and each year of service will heighten its bloom. Against the crude new fabric must be placed the far more objectionable form of "antique," torn and thread-bare from rough usage, or soiled and faded beyond redemption. Neither may it be amiss to caution the novice, and many so-styled amateurs, against the not unfrequent practice of dealers—aye, of merchants in Constantinople, Ispahan, and even Mecca itself—of *painting* old rugs to mask their sordid condition, and gloze over their hoary antiquity.

Could the history of an old rug be traced, what a tale might it not unfold! —the Adventures of a Guinea were nothing in comparison. Venerable before it was secured by the itinerant collector in some remote province, how many vicissitudes and changes has it not passed through! Lashed to the backs of patient dromedaries goaded by the spears of fierce dragomen; borne under the heat of a tropical sun amid the toilsome march of the caravan; and escaping the rapine of plundering tribes, it arrived at the great marts of the East. Here, unstrapped from the bale, it passed to the bazaars, or the vast warerooms of the merchantmen. There, perchance, its lovely sheen caught the eye of a calculating middleman, who purchased the bale to secure the prize, passing it in turn to a third. Or, while ransacking the treasures of a Stamboul bazaar it was, perhaps, admired by a rich profligate —a bauble for a new-found flame. Or, did it figure in the collection of some noted connoisseur whose effects on his demise passed into unconversant or indifferent hands? Youth and beauty may have reposed upon it, and old age admired its bewitching hues. It may have overheard many a lover's tale; it may once have graced a pasha's wall.

In fine Oriental rugs mere size seldom governs their value, this being dependent upon intrinsic beauty and rarity. Of course, a splendid large piece

is more valuable than a similar example half its size, although the fine large piece may not be worth the rarer small one of some other make. Oddity and rarity, when combined with beauty, are the strongest factors in the value of a rug. A sage-green or mauve centered Yourdes, 6 × 4, may be without price, as a small Rembrandt may command a hundred times the price of a canvas double its size. It all depends upon the artist. Neither is thickness nor silkiness a necessary factor in the value of a rug. Depth of pile is certainly desirable in very many makes, a heavy piece keeping its place upon the floor far better than a thin one. Silkiness is likewise valuable in most cases; it imparts additional life, and enhances the play of the color facets. But in rugs like the rarer Yourdes and some of the old Persians and Coulas, neither depth of pile nor extraordinary luster govern their value. These are paintings —old masters—that should be hung, to be admired like a picture or a stained-glass window, and the eye revel in their beauty.

But my rugs are more than mere foci of color and revelations of Eastern luxury. They are, above all, examples of a rare handicraft; enduring expressions of artistic skill of various times and various peoples. They thus become sentient instead of simply material, their exuberance of hue and opulence of design representing the most consummate art, and appealing equally to me through the various motives of human industry, human interest, and human thought. In them are incorporated the sense of the beautiful as interpreted by the canons of Oriental art, a distinct artistic motive and theme underlying the technical finish and manual skill of the craftsman. Nor is spiritual quality less reflected in these masterpieces than the fine æstheticism with which they are pervaded; they express equally a religious symbolism of the Oriental mind, and the mystic rites observed in the mosque of Islam. Just as painting and sculpture are representative arts of Christian peoples, so these marvelous blendings of form and color are typical of the individuality of the Mohammedan alien race.

Endless is their variety. Independent of the diversity of the different wools employed, each district has its characteristic patterns, its peculiar weaves, and often its distinguishing colors and color-combinations which are its individual right and inheritance, and which other districts may not reproduce without incurring the opprobrium attached to the plagiarist. Anatolia may not borrow from Bokhara, nor Daghestan from Beloochistan. Nor may one rug of a district be an exact reproduction of another rug of the

same district. There may be a resemblance, it is true; but each valuable example will be found to possess a stamp of originality—the genius of the artist—which gives it its value and constitutes the difference between the mere commercial product and the enduring work of art. Thou shalt not purloin the work of another's brain! is a commandment embossed upon the loom of the Oriental—a law of the Medes and Persians generally observed unto this day.

Valuable as a well-chosen collection of porcelains is a well-chosen collection of rugs. While neither may be dispensed with as art objects, and both afford a constant delight to the eye and the sense of the beautiful, it may be said that textiles have the advantage over porcelains in that they can not break, and that they combine utility with equal charm and more extended color. It is, withal, a satisfaction to know that every footfall upon their luxurious pile and every beam of sunlight that streams upon them only serve to increase their value and heighten their beauty.

In the course of time, no doubt—aye, at no distant day, as fine old specimens become more and more rare and occupy, as they deserve, a still more exalted place in the domain of art—we will have exhibitions of Oriental rugs, as we have exhibits of paintings and statuary to-day. The appreciative and wealthy amateur who, in a single purchase, recently expended nineteen thousand dollars for twelve specimens of the Asiatic weaver's art—specimens that may not now be duplicated—will then be envied for his foresight and the cheapness of his purchase.

To form a fine, varied, and extensive collection of rugs, however, is the work of years. As Paganini declared, after a lifetime of study, that he had just begun to be acquainted with his violin, so the connoisseur may say with regard to the textiles he loves so well. For every piece should be like a painting, perfect of its kind, artistic in design, harmonious in color; and to combine the desired qualifications without incongruities or repetition of borders and patterns is to tread no primrose path. Not only a concent of color and design is requisite in each single example, but rarity, luster, age, good condition, and individuality—a combination not easily obtainable.

But my ship contained many straight and beautiful rugs among her stores!

# III.

# SIGNS IN THE SKY.

Nunquam imprudentibus imber obfuit.

VIRGIL, GEORGICS, I, v. 373.

LOOKING out through the windows of my house upon the sunset sky, I am often enabled to frame a weather report for the morrow; for, in his rising and his setting, the sun has a message to convey, sometimes written in type that is legible to all, sometimes in hieroglyphics that the ordinary observer may not decipher. Yonder blazing fire in the west and warm orange afterglow tell me I may expect fair weather, just as the leaden cloud which screens the sinking sun apprises me of coming storm. But to offset one aspect of the plainly lettered sky, there are a score more difficult to read, while, at best, we are liable to err in our interpretations where the weather is concerned.

Yet, trying as it often is, in this latitude especially, how could we dispense with its vagaries? Sunshine, by all means! but we would scarcely appreciate the sun if it always shone, even could vegetation and humanity exist under unclouded skies.

Were all the year one constant sunshine, wee
Should have no flowres;
All would be drought and leanness; not a tree
Would make us bowres.[3]

3. Henry Vaughn, Silex Scintillans.

It has been observed before now that we are always talking about the weather, always interested in it, always trying to foretell it, always grumbling at it, or delighted with it. Without the changes of the weather the world would go all awry. There would be no more guessing or prognosticating. Conversation must come to a standstill; if not to a full stop, at least to an awkward pause. When there is nothing else to talk about there is always the weather. It is the oil of conversation's wheel. How many a pleasant acquaintance dates from a weather remark! Simply as a conversational factor I have no doubt it has helped on innumerable marriages. But it is ever too hot or too cold, too damp or too dry, too cloudy or too sunshiny. If one can not openly anathematize his neighbor, he may damn the weather; faint, indeed, is its praise. With a bright sun shining, a purple haze on the hills, the thermometer at 50°, and the atmosphere exhilarating as champagne, still the lament will arise that we are not enveloped with a blanket of snow. Just the day for a walk, when one may start out dry-shod to inhale the stimulating air and bask in voluptuous sunlight! But the fickle weather-vane suddenly veers, and north wind and snow are exchanged for south wind and balm; the croakers have their turn.

There is reason to believe that the weather repeats itself in a general way at regular intervals of seven or ten years, more or less. Statistics are said to confirm this statement, and it gives us reason to hope that when our records shall cover longer periods and shall be more carefully and fully compiled, we may obtain considerable insight into the weather programme for the coming year. That one extreme follows another is perhaps the surest and most valuable weather indicator we have. An inordinate degree of warmth is generally followed by a corresponding degree of cold; a period of extraordinary coolness by a contrasting period of heat. The amount of water and heat in the world is always the same, though to human observation the extremes of temperature are capriciously distributed. If it is passing cold here, it is passing warm somewhere else. If we get an overplus of wet this month we receive an overplus of dry next month, or some month after. Nature will surely balance her ledger sooner or later; the difficulty is to tell when she will do it.

Restless and impatient, man is continually seeking change. What could supply this inherent craving in the breast of mankind so happily as the weather? The old adage, "'Tis an ill wind blows no man good," is daily

verified. This change to piercing cold means one hundred thousand tons more of coal for the furnaces of each of the great cities; this hot wave, one hundred thousand tons more of ice to their refrigerators. The mild winter that brings a scowl upon the dry-goods merchant's face is a benison to the laborer; the east wind that puts out the inland furnace fires may blow the disabled vessel into port. Blowing where it listeth, to some point of the compass the wind is kind.

If one could find no other occupation, one might busy himself in making observations of the weather. In the shifting vane and the restless clouds there is the attraction of perpetual change, elements we may not control nor yet fully understand—an omnipresent and omnipotent force. Their wayward moods bring plenty or pestilence, as the vane chooses to veer, or the tangles gather in the *cirri's* hair. All animal and vegetable life is dependent upon their inexorable decrees. The laws of the weather may not be altered. We may not increase the rainfall one inch or lower the temperature half a degree. The most we can do is to study its warnings, and, by reading the signs of the earth and sky, be prepared for what changes may be in store.

There is a relief from the tyranny of hard fact in endeavoring to trace the meaning of these *nimbus* clouds or the prophecy of this moisture-laden breeze. What will the next change be; of what complexion will be the weather to come? I foretell it frequently through my walls of glass that enable me from within to read the horoscope of the sky. The signs exist, if we may but comprehend them. They publish every event and indicate every change. Unvarying laws that may be understood by the intelligent observer control all atmospheric conditions, and particularly storms. By noting existing conditions the corollary is to be deduced. Blasius's laws, as stated in his volume, Storms, are comprehensive, and whoever will take the pains to study them (for many portions of the volume call for hard study) may learn to foretell much about the weather, at least so far as relates to larger storms. Many immediate changes are easy to foretell—from the moon's warning halo and the prophesying cry of the hair-bird, to the toad's prescient croak from the tree. From observation the farmer and mariner generally become weather-wise. Out in the open air continually, they learn to interpret the signs, their vocations being more or less controlled by and dependent upon the weather. A habit of studying the weather brings one into closer relationship with nature. However superficial the knowledge, one

must know something of nature in order to be a weather-prophet, that is, so far as prophesying from numerous well-known natural signs is concerned.

There are certain indices: the clouds no bigger than a man's hand, that indicate what is coming in a weather way for a short time ahead. Many of the old signs are reliable. From time out of mind a red sunset has been viewed as a precursor of fair weather, and a red sunrise the forerunner of storm. A bright-yellow sky at sunset uniformly denotes wind, a coppery or pale-yellow sunset, wet; and attentive observers do not need the testimony of Admiral Fitzroy to know that a dark, gloomy, blue sky is windy, and a light, bright, blue sky is fair. A high dawn indicates wind, a low dawn fine weather. A gray sky in the morning presages fine weather. If *cumulus* gathers in the north and rises, rain may be looked for before night. Frequently the *cumuli* clouds—argosies serenely riding at anchor above the southern horizon—flash forth warnings that are never fulfilled; the lightning of heat, and not of storm. If stripes are seen to rise northward from the southern sky, a change may be anticipated from their quarter. Without clouds there can be no storm.

One of the most beautiful cloud-formations, the mackerel-sky, is well known to be usually indicative of a change. Oftentimes on the otherwise unclouded blue of the heavens delicate volutes or scrolls may be observed, like cobwebs spun upon the sky; these frequently portend a decided change within two days. If this form of cloud, more familiarly known as mares'-tails, curls down toward sunset, fair weather may be looked for; if up, it will most probably rain before dawn. Frequently narrow bands or stripes extend from east to west or north to south over the entire aërial arch, the storm invariably coming from the direction pointed out by the clouds.

Local signs go to show that in winter a dark-blue cloud over the lake foretells a thaw; when the lower portion, however, is dark and the upper portion gray, snow may be expected. A halo round the moon is a sure indication of rain, snow, or wind, and the larger the circle the nearer the storm. When the stars are more than usually bright and numerous, or when the hills and distant objects seem unusually sharp and near, I am certain of an approaching storm. "You all know the peculiar clearness which precedes rain," observes Ruskin, "when the distant hills are looking nigh. I take it on trust from the scientific people that there is then a quantity, almost to saturation, of aqueous vapor in the air, but it is aqueous vapor in a state

which makes the air more transparent than it would be without it. What state of aqueous molecule is that, absolutely unreflective of light—perfectly transmissive of light, and showing at once the color of blue water and blue air on the distant hills?" Distant sounds heard with unusual distinctness apprise me of rain. The aurora borealis, when very bright, is usually followed by a storm, and often intense cold. The rainbow after drought is a rain-sign.

Natural signs, other than the handwriting on the sky, are innumerable, and, again, the old sign-posts point out the way. Heavy dews indicate fair weather, while three consecutive white frosts, and often two, invariably bring rain or snow. Before a snow-storm the weather usually moderates, while there is always an interval between the first drops and the downpour. If it rains before seven it will clear before eleven, is a wise saw. Certain stones, which, when rain is in the near future, become damp and dark-looking, are excellent barometers. We have all of us noticed that fire frequently burns brighter and throws out more heat just before a storm, and is hotter during its continuance—an easterly storm, however, often being the exception.

The closing of the blossoms of numerous flowers during the day tells me it will rain; my flowers also give out a stronger odor previous to rain. The trefoils contract their leaves at the approach of a storm. The convolvulus and the pimpernel also fold their petals previous to rain, the latter flower being appropriately named the poor man's weather-glass. When the chickweed's blossom expands fully, no rain will occur for several hours; if it continue open, no rain will fall during the day. When it half conceals its flower the day is usually showery. When it entirely closes its white petals, steady rain will occur. "It is manifest," observes Bacon in Sylva Sylvarum, "that there are some *Flowers* that have *Respect* to the *Sunne* in two kindes; The one by *Opening* and *Shutting*; And the other by *Bowing* and *Inclining* the *Head*; it is found in the great Flower of the *Sunne*; in *Marigolds*, *Wart-Wort*, *Mallow-Flowers*; and others."

Smoke rising straight in the air means fair weather. The odor of the *Mephitis* is very pronounced before rain, owing to the heaviness of the atmosphere, which prevents odors from rising. Spiders do not spin their webs out of doors before rain. Previous to rain flies sting sharper, bees remain in their hives, or fly but short distances, and most animals and birds

appear uneasy. “Sheep,” the Selborne rector states, “are observed to be very intent on grazing against stormy wet evenings.” One of the most reliable weather-signs in Texas is said to be supplied by the ant. The ants bring their eggs up out of their nests, exposing them to the sun to be hatched. When they are observed carrying them in again hastily, though there be not a cloud in the sky, a storm is near at hand. Swallows flying low near the ground or water is a rain-sign noted in the Georgics, the birds following the flies and gnats which delight in a warm strata of air. Aratus, the Greek poet, in the Prognostica, also cites the swallow’s flight low over the water as a rain-sign:

> Fast skim the swallows o’er the lucid lake
> And with their breasts the rippling waters break.

Previous to rain and just when it begins to rain, swallows fly swifter, doubtless to make the most of the insects while opportunity affords. Wheeling and diving high in the sky, the swallow flies to tell me the day will be fair. Chickens, it may be noticed, when steady rain sets in will continue searching for food after the rain has begun; if only a shower they will seek shelter before the rain begins. Foxes bark, and wolves howl more frequently when wet weather is approaching. Crows clamor louder before a change. Frogs, geese, and crows were looked upon as weather-prophets by the ancients, the crow especially figuring frequently as a foreboder of storm. According to Virgil, if they croak often, and with a hoarse voice it is a rain-sign:

> Tum cornix rauca pluviam vocat improba voce.

If they croak only three or four times, and with a shrill clear voice it is a fair weather-sign:

> Tum liquidas corvi presso ter guttere voces
> Aut quater ingeminant.

Lucretius likewise introduces the crow as a weather-prophet:

... om'nous crows with various noise,
Affright the farmers; and fill all the plain,
Now calling for rough winds and now for rain.[4]

4. Creeche's translation.

The crow's raucous voice also figures in Aratus's Prognostics of a Storm:

The aged crow on sable pinions borne,
Upon the beetling promontory stands,
And tells the advancing storm to trembling lands;
Or dips and dives within the river's tide,
Or, croaking hoarse, wheels round in circles dark and wide.[5]

5. Milman's translation.

And Chaucer, while following the majority of the poets in aspersing the crow, still makes him serve as a barometer:

Ne nevir aftir swete noise shall ye make,
But evir crye ayenst tempest and rain....

All nature reads the coming signs. The migratory woodcock will desert the fall covers in advance of the storm, even though the weather promise fair. Just before a storm, like its echo in advance, I have heard the Canadian forest resounding on every side with the cry of the great horned owl—*oh-hoo, oh-hoo! oh-hoo, oh-hoor-r-r-r*! Wild fowl are conscious of the change from afar. Even the domestic goose and duck are unusually garrulous previous to a storm, voicing their pleasure at the prospect of approaching rain. I recall a case in point while trout-fishing, where geese proved excellent weather-prophets. The day in question, September 14, 1875, the last day of the open season in Ontario, like the three or four preceding days, was warm, hazy, and delightful, with no perceptible omens to denote an approaching storm, save the graceful mares'-tails waving from the sky. But a large flock of geese, which appeared to dispute with the trout the possession of the pond, and which had frequently proved a source of annoyance while angling, were more than usually excited, screaming continually, and flying to and from the pond with loud gaggling. The sun descended behind the tamaracks with an angry frown, the moon became obscured by ominous clouds, the temperature fell suddenly, and a severe equinoctial storm set in.

Birds, however, can not be implicitly relied upon as weather-prophets, especially as harbingers of spring. Year after year, tempted by instinct and the tempered air, do the migratory birds take early flights to the northward. Suddenly on some genial morning, the vanguards appear. A blue-bird's, or song-sparrow's dulcet warble falls upon the ear, and we welcome the return of spring. But season after season we have to record the disappearance of the birds again, and the recurrence of stormy weather. Lured by the soft spring sunshine, and eager to revisit their northern homes, the birds, like human migrants to the south, frequently return too soon. Not until I hear the first sweet song of the white-throated sparrow am I convinced that spring has come to stay.

How far the weather is influenced by the changes of the moon is a disputed question. M. de Parville, a French meteorologist of note, has recently claimed that a long series of observations show that the moon which passes every month from one hemisphere to the other, influences the direction of the atmospheric currents; that the distance of the moon from the equator, or inclination of the moon's path to the plane of the equator varies every year, passing from a maximum to a minimum limit, and that the meteorological character of a series of years appears to be mainly dependent upon the change of inclination when those extreme limits have been touched: the rainy years, the cold winters, and hot summers return periodically and coincide with certain declinations of the moon. In proof of his assertion, he presents a table tracing backward this connection between the rainy years and the moon's declination.

In the European Magazine, vol. 60, p. 24, a table is given which has been ascribed to the astronomer Herschel. It is constructed upon a philosophical consideration of the attraction of the sun and moon in their several positions respecting the earth, suggesting to the observer what kind of weather will most probably follow the moon's entrance into any of her quarters. Briefly summarized, the nearer the time of the moon's entrance, at full and change or quarters, is to midnight (that is within two hours before and after midnight), the more fair the weather is in summer, but the nearer to noon, the less fair. Also, the moon's entrance, at full, change, and quarters, during six of the afternoon hours, viz.: from four to ten, may be followed by fair weather; but this is mostly dependent on the wind. The same entrance

during all the hours after midnight, except the two first, is unfavorable to fair weather.

It may be of interest to cite Bacon's rules for prognosticating the weather, from the appearances of the moon:

1. If the new moon does not appear till the fourth day, it prognosticates a troubled air for the whole month.

2. If the moon either at her first appearance or within a few days after, has her lower horn obscured and dusky, it denotes foul weather before the full; but, if she be discovered about the middle, storms are to be expected about the full; and, if her *upper* horn be affected, about the wane.

3. When on her fourth day the moon appears pure and spotless, her horns unblunted and neither flat nor quite erect, but between both, it promises fair weather for the greatest part of the month.

4. An erect moon is generally threatening and unfavorable, but particularly denotes wind; though if she appears with short and blunted horns, rain is rather to be expected.

The influence of the moon on the weather was one of the cardinal beliefs, not only of the ancients, but of our forefathers, and the old gardeners and orchardists believed implicitly in its effect on most operations connected with husbandry, regulating these operations with the greatest exactitude, according to the various phases of the planet. Harvard, in his treatise on the art of propagating plants, referring to the proper time for grafting, declares, "the grafts must alwaies be gathered in the old of the Moone." Lawson, in his New Orchard and Garden, advises as the best time to remove sets, "immediately after the fall of the Leaf, in or about the change of the Moon;" and the best time for "graffing" as "in the last part of *February* or *March*, or beginning with *April*, when the Sun with his heat begins to make the sap stir more rankly about the change of the Moon, before you see any great apparancie of leaf or flowers; but only knots and buds, and before they be proud, though it be sooner."

Very frequent references to the moon's influence with respect to forestry and its operations occur in Evelyn's Sylva. In felling timber, he charges the forester to "observe the *Moons* increase" (chap. iii, 13). And again, "the fittest time of the *Moon* for the *Pruning* is (as of *Graffing*) when the *sap* is

ready to stir (not proudly stirring) and so to cover the *wound*" (chap. xxix, 6.) The old lunar rules for felling trees are thus given by Evelyn (chap. xxx, 26): "Fell in the *decrease*, or four days after *conjunction* of the two great *Luminaries*; some of the last quarter of it; or (as Pliny) in the very article of the *change*, if possible; which hapning (saith he) in the last day of the Winter *Solstice*, that *Timber* will prove *immortal*: At least should it be from the *twentieth* to the *thirtieth* day, according to *Columella*: *Cato* four dayes after the *Full*, as far better for the growth: But all *viminious* Trees *silente Lunâ*; such as *Sallies*, *Birch*, *Poplar*, etc. *Vegetius* for *ship timber*, from the *fifteenth* to the *twenty-fifth*, the *Moon* as before; but never during the *Increase*, Trees being then most abounding with moisture, which is the only source of putrefaction: And yet 'tis affirm'd upon unquestionable *Experience*, that *Timber* cut at any *season* of the *year*, in the *Old Moon*, or last *Quarter*, when the *Wind* blows *Westerly*; proves as *sound*, and good as at any other period whatsoever; nay, all the whole *Summer* long, as in any *Month* of the *Year*."

Few of our large storms are of local origin; they are hatched for the most part on the plains east of the Rocky Mountains, and thence move eastward, deflecting slightly to the north during winter. In Europe, the meteorologists assert, storms are more nearly round than in America, where they are of a more irregular oval form, varying in size from the diameter of a few miles to those that surge from the gulf to beyond the lakes.

But Blasius for storms! the supreme authority, the Aristotle of the clouds and air-currents. When all our ordinary signs fail, we have only to turn to the Hanover professor to read and learn.

Unquestionably, nevertheless, the most infallible of weather rules is that there is no rule. So far as ordinary signs go, there is nothing more true than that all signs may fail during a protracted drought, or continuous rainy weather. Vainly then the peacock screams, or the sun emerges from a dripping sky. At best the weather is a hoiden, and, perhaps, loves a frown better than a dimple. The rain may come and the rain may go, persistently following the course of a lake or river, favoring this locality and slighting that; deluging one county to leave the adjoining one parched with thirst. For it is true of the weather and other things besides; it never smiles but it laughs, it never rains but it pours.

# IV.

# THE IDEAL HAVEN.

When my ship comes home I shall have a study of a very superior kind built. A part of the scheme will be a garden and a greenhouse which shall be especially adapted to the exigencies of authorcraft.—J. ASHBY-STERRY, CUCUMBER CHRONICLES.

HILE silence is pre-eminently golden in the study, the study, nevertheless should be more than "a chamber deaf to noise." Situated away from disturbing household sounds, it should also be withdrawn from ready access on the part of all intruders. It should be a "den" in the literal sense of the word —a covert, a haven. Not that it should necessarily be below ground, but the way leading to it should be difficult to find; and, like the fox's den, it should be provided with two entrances or means of escape, the more readily to baffle pursuers.

In how many houses, even those which are supposed to have been most carefully planned, are not the library and the study placed in close proximity to the front entrance, where anything like continuous repose is as far removed as the constellation Orion, and where the volume with which one endeavors to be engaged is forever chafed by the friction of passing inmates! Apart from mere noise, the discomfort of a library or study so situated is always great from the facility it offers to the wiles of innumerable outside forces. It is necessarily unpleasant to have certain visitors thrust unceremoniously upon one. You can not tell by the mere ring of the bell whether it is A, B, or C who has come to honor you with his presence—to bore or to charm; and without at every announcement making a sudden dive at the risk of being seen or heard, you are liable to be

chambered for an hour with the very person you may most desire to avoid. Thoreau often waited for the Visitor who never comes; many of us must wait for the visitor who never goes.

Not that I would limit visitors to a circumscribed few, or banish welcome ones at an early hour. I entertain the highest regard for the maxim of Pope respecting the coming and the parting guest; yet, in the very nature of things, there are always some to whom one would fain send the conventional message, "not at home." It was to obviate such monstrous misplacements as a library near the front door (a library merely in name), that Naudé, years since, in his Advis pour dresser une Bibliothèque, gave this excellent advice: "Let the library be placed in a portion of the house most removed from noise and disturbance, not only from without, but also from family and servants; away from the street, the kitchen, sitting-room, and similar places; locating it, if possible, between some spacious court and a fine garden where it may have abundant light, pure air, and extended and agreeable views."

In the case of all houses where rooms are thus misplaced, some means of spiriting one's self away through a side or rear door are absolutely essential to even a semblance of comfort. A study amid such surroundings, without safe and instantaneous means of flight from unwelcome callers is a grotesque misnomer. Is not a man's house his castle? The term "growlery," often applied to the study, undoubtedly arose from an apartment so situated, referring not to a cage where the master of the house may work off his surly moods, as some ladies erroneously suppose, but to the anathemas bestowed by its harassed inmate upon the architect who planned a place for retirement where retirement is only possible after midnight. All these can the more readily comprehend the force of a passage in Walden-"the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation; what is called resignation is confirmed desperation." A trap-door, concealed by an Oriental rug, that would respond to a certain pressure of the foot known only to the initiated, might be worthy of consideration by house-builders in this connection. Or some kind of reflecting-glass might be devised that would enable coming events of an unpleasant nature to cast their shadows before.

Even though one meet his modest accounts with all reasonable promptitude, there are still creditors oblivious to the amenities of life, who, instead of forwarding annual or semi-annual statements through the certain

channel of the mails, send their “cards of compliment” for collection through the medium of middlemen or runners, who, even yet more callous to the finer feelings of humanity, and intent solely upon pouching their guerdon, invariably present themselves at the front door to force a passage within. Fancy an intrusion of this kind while you may be rereading The Eve of St. Agnes, or perusing The Good-Natured Man! Though it occur but once a year, the shock must still remain. At one time or another this form of visitant is bound to appear to every one; for the species of fiend exists in common with front-door book-agents, itinerant venders, census-takers, expressmen, telegraph-messengers, and the rest of the customary mob that charges upon one’s front entrance wherever and whenever it is the most accessible means of invasion. Even the parcels’-delivery, despite reiterated warnings, will not unfrequently persist in demanding ingress through the forbidden portal. Indeed, the front door is a constant factor of discord, the baiting-place of disquiet, the arch enemy of household peace.

Many of the vexations that are ever striving to wedge their way through the vestibule may be avoided by intelligent, well-drilled servants who are capable of reading human nature, and at a glance can distinguish the false from the true. A thoroughly competent house-maid should wear her cap internally as well as externally, and, like a thrasher’s sieve, be able to winnow the chaff from the wheat. But such discriminating Cerberi are as rare as they are desirable, and the melancholy fact exists that the servant is invariably ready to leave so soon as she or he has become really valuable or thoroughly accustomed to your ways.

Lamb, in one of his essays on Popular Fallacies, has said some excellent things about visitors. If certain visitors would only read these things, and, reading, comprehend! And if the visitor who never knows when to leave, as distinguished from those who, staying late, always leave too soon, would only peruse and ponder! In his category of intruders Lamb emphasizes “purposeless visitants and droppers-in,” and he sometimes wonders from what sky they fall. Whittier’s Demon of the Study, too, would indicate that the type still flourishes in New as well as Old England. Under the inspiration of an architect who is yet to be born, the house of the millennium will be able to avoid all unpleasant intrusions upon a privacy that is its inherent right, but which, alas! exists not in the home of the present.

It is apparent at once that the ideal haven can not hide itself amid the turmoil of the first floor. To fulfill its mission it must betake itself to surroundings more retired, and soar to a serener sphere. The true place for the study, therefore, is on an upper floor, and in the ideal house I would have it a spacious oriel approached by a hidden staircase.

Hawthorne's idea was an excellent one—the study in the tower or upper story of his residence at Concord, which he approached by a ladder and trap-door, pulling the ladder up after him, and placing a weight over the door for additional security. Here he could look out upon his favorite walk amid the evergreens, almost touch the crowns of the leafy elms, and bathe in the sunshine that illumined the fertile plain across the roadway. His first residence at Concord—the Old Manse—was sufficiently remote to dispense with a trap-door, unless, indeed, this was an after-consideration owing to family reasons. At an opposite extremity of the village, far removed from Emerson and even the fleet feet of Thoreau, situated at a distance from the highway, the house itself of a gray neutral tone to baffle observation, and half concealed amid the shade of the distant suburbs, he was here free from all external annoyances. Here in the retired three-windowed study in the rear of the house, which overlooked the romantic Concord River below, he could set about his chosen task with no dread of interruption from the outside world.

Montaigne's was a model study, a true sanctum. Without the quiet and reclusion it afforded, the pervading charm of the Essays would never have been ours. Instead of sauntering and loitering along with the easy abandon they do, they would have hurried and galloped by at breakneck speed, striding the noisy highway rather than pacing the shady lane. The placid, thinking, receptive mind of Montaigne was obviously the direct outcome of the calm and tranquillity exhaled by the inaccessible round Tower of Périgord.

The enchanting landscape, too, that smiled through the spacious windows was, no doubt, a constant inspiration, serving to rest the eye and mind when they were wearied by the tyranny of print, or fatigued by protracted writing. There would doubtless be more Montaignes were it possible to reproduce the life and surroundings amid which the Essays were inspired. Genius is capable of much; but, to be at its best, even genius must be in the mood, and moods are largely the result of surroundings. "No doubt," observes Lord

Lytton, “the cradle and nursery of definite thought is in the hazy limbo of Reverie. There ideas float before us, rapid, magical, vague, half formed; apparitions of the thoughts that are to be born later into the light, and run their course in the world of man.”

“Like the rain of night,” remarks Henri Amiel in the Journal Intime, “reverie restores color and force to thoughts which have been blanched and wearied by the heat of the day.”

The true flavor of a fine vintage may not be savored if the wine be roiled, or served at an improper temperature; the fine effluence that should emanate from the study—the framing of one’s mood and the molding of one’s thoughts, is only to be obtained in its perfect measure when the mind is freed from all disturbing influences.

Let us mount the classic staircase with Montaigne, and view the apartment so minutely described in the third chapter of the Third Book. The well-filled book-cases, the sunlight, the seclusion, the inviting prospect, the fireplace, and the immunity from noise, all are there:

“At home I betake me somewhat the oftener to my library, whence all at once I command and survey all my household; it is seated in the chiefe entrie of my house, thence I behold under me my garden, my base court, my yard, and looke even into most roomes of my house. There without order, without method, and by peece-meales I turn over and ransacke, now one booke and now another. Sometimes I muse and rave; and walking up and downe I endight and enregister these my humours, these my conceits. It is placed on the third storie of a tower. The lowermost is my Chapell; the second a chamber with other lodgings, where I often lie because I would be alone. Above it is a great wardrobe. It was in times past the most unprofitable place of all my house. There I past the greatest part of my lives dayes, and weare out most houres of the day. I am never there a nights: Next unto it is a handsome neat cabinet, able and large enough to receive fire in winter, and very pleasantly windowen. And if I feared not care, more than cost; (care which drives and diverts me from all businesse) I might easily joyne a convenient gallerie of a hundred paces long, and twelve broad, on each side of it, and upon one floore; having already for some other purpose, found all the walles raised unto a convenient height. Each retired place requireth a walke. My thoughts are prone to sleepe, if I sit

long. My minde goes not alone as if ledges did moove it. Those that studie without bookes, are all in the same case. The forme of it is round, and hath no flat side, but what serveth for my table and my chaire: In which bending or circling manner, at one looke it offreth me the full sight of all my books, set round about upon shelves or desks, five rancks one upon another. It hath three bay-windowes, of a farre-extending, rich and unresisted prospect, and is in diameter sixteen paces wide. In winter I am less continually there: for my house (as the name of it importeth) is pearched upon an overpearing hillocke; and hath no part more subject to all wethers than this: which pleaseth me the more, both because the accesse unto it is somewhat troublesome and remote, and for the benefit of the exercise which is to be respected; and that I may the better seclude myselfe from companie, and keepe incroachers from me: There is my seat, that is my throne. I endeavour to make my rule therein absolute, and to sequester that only corner from the communitie of wife, of children, and of acquaintance. Else-where I have but a verball authoritie, of confused essence. Miserable in my minde is he, who in his owne home, hath no where to be to himselfe; where he may particularly court, and at his pleasure hide or with-draw himself. Ambition paieth her followers well, to keepe them still in open view, as a statue in some conspicuous place."[6]

6. Florio's translation.

Aside from the quiet, sequestration, and conveniences of the philosopher's study, it will be observed that among its many desirable features was that of its being "very pleasantly windowen" (*très-plaisamment percé*), the windows commanding a "farre-extending, rich, and unresisted prospect" (*trois veuës de riche et libre prospect*). Assuredly the sunshine and light that warmed and brightened the apartment, and the unlimited view of hill and plain, were a stimulus to the writer.

Fortunate is he who has a pleasing prospect to look in upon him—it invigorates and cheers like a cordial. Whatever the time of year, the distant hills, visible through my windows, are a source of companionship and charm. So constantly are they before me, I have begun to consider them as my own, a remote part of the garden and the grounds to which they form the frame. I love to watch their changing expression and note their play of light and shade. Meseems they almost resemble a human countenance in the varying sentiments they convey. Content and malcontent are as plainly

expressed by their mobile curves as they are by the lines of the human face. Like the rest of us, in sunshine they smile, in storm they frown. They are warm, or cool, as the mood takes them; as they reflect or absorb the sky and atmosphere. For days they rest in absolute calm; again they recede, and, again, they advance. Mirroring every change of the day and of the passing seasons, they are a dial that tells the hour, the time of year to me. The sun salutes one side of their profile the first thing in the morning; his parting rays illumine the other side the last thing in the evening. They hasten the dawn, and prolong the twilight. The full moon rising from the far horizon behind them, silvers their wooded slopes ere it gilds the topmost gables of my house. They catch the first drops of the summer shower, and receive the first flakes of the November snow. The loveliest blues and purples seek them, drawing a semi-transparent veil over them. On hot summer noontides the cloud-flocks repose upon them, and the orange afterglow lingers long upon their tranquil heights. In spring the earliest violets carpet their sheltered places; in autumn they yield me the last blue gentian bloom. I see the wind lifting their green skirts, and fancy I hear his voice murmuring through their umbrageous depths. My hills ever catch and focus color, and toy and play with wind and sun. Whether shimmering in midsummer glare, or standing out against the wintry sky, or slumbering in the haze of the dreamy autumnal day, they are my finest landscape paintings. When the snow has spread its shroud over the silent fields they still speak to me in color—gray, bronze, and purple—by turns during the day; a kaleidoscope of tones when the sun sinks behind their serried ranks of trees.

Seeing them thus year after year they have come to possess a personality; and when a rarefied atmosphere brings them unusually near, I find myself casting an imaginary lasso at them to bring them still closer to me that I may stroke their lovely contours. So familiar have I become with them, I have only to look out of my windows, and I am treading their luminous heights, and am fanned by the breeze that perpetually blows upon their peaceful crests.

With the wind from the southeast, I hear the roar of the railroad trains, panting and steaming, coming and going along their slopes, leaving a trail of smoke to mark the passage of their flight. The ceaseless tide of travel ever hurries on. How many of those seated in the luxurious coaches note the beauty of my hills? Cloud-shadows chase each other, and hawks wheel over

their summits, while the train speeds on, intent upon overtaking other hills and its remote destination: the beauty of my hills remains for me.

A knock at my study-door interrupts my musings, and my hills abruptly recede. Not that my friend Sherlock drives them away; he is so versatile and colorful himself that the charm of his presence and conversation takes the place of my hills. I never learned until to-day why he has remained a bachelor. It was only when conversing about the ideal home that the true reason occurred to me—he has failed, not in discovering the ideal woman, but the ideal architect to carry out his admirable conceptions of the perfect house; and rather than fall below his artistic standard he passively submits to fate, and awaits the architect who is to be.

"You seem to overlook the probability of my being referred to a committee *inquirendo lunatico*, should my views ever be carried out; and it seems dangerous to commit them to print," was my friend's rejoinder to a request that he present his views in detail.

"But the simple story of my house will at most be read by a few," I replied; "and these few will charitably give us credit for good intentions; moreover the critics are not nearly as black as they are painted."

"My ideas," continued my friend, "fly so rudely in the face of all convention that people would consider the order of Nature reversed. 'A kitchen in the front yard!' I hear them say, 'Away with him!'

"Nevertheless, had I the courage of my convictions, together with ten times as much money as I shall ever possess, I would build my house all front, and no rear!

"A capacious vestibule, say 20 × 20 feet, should be, not the entrance exactly, but a means of exclusion for unwelcome visitors. A door on one side should open to my lady's reception-room where she should receive all formal and business calls; in short, every one whom she took no pleasure in seeing at all.

"This reception-room should be connected with the domestic end of the house; the store-rooms, servants' hall, kitchen, kitchen-pantries, and, *back of these*, the dining- and breakfast-rooms.

"On the opposite side of the vestibule should be a door, similarly accommodating all unwelcome guests of the master, being the entrance to

the office, and connected by a heavy *portière* and door with the den and library. From these masculine apartments a staircase, concealed in the wall, should enable the good man of the house to disappear to his bath- and dressing-room; and there should also be an outer side-door from the den, through which could be 'fired' (and admitted also) such tardy and bibulous friends as might meet the disapproval of madame.

"The back of the vestibule should open and expand into the hall—a great living-room connecting the library at one end with the dining-room at the other, and out of which should open such little parlors and snuggeries as inventive genius might suggest.

"Into this hall, the real house, only those one wished to see should be admitted. Here the great staircase should rest the eye, and the great hearth should blaze. On occasions of festivity the guests, in their wraps, should ascend by a modest staircase in the vestibule to their disrobing rooms, and thence descend by the grand staircase.

"The kitchen being at one end of the front part of the house, and so conveniently accessible to the butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker, would leave all the space behind the house for piazzas, terraces, and gardens, with such fountains, statuary, and conservatories as might be within reach of the goodman's purse; and all where the reporter and unwelcome caller could not intrude; for they would be secluded alike from the general public and the ordinary domestic offices. The principal apartments of all Japanese houses, I may observe, are at the back of the house, looking out upon the garden with its lilies, irises, pæonias, azaleas, its foliage plants and flowering shrubs.

"Thus you perceive my ideal house requires four staircases: the great one in the great hall, the modest one in the vestibule, the secret one (to escape creditors), and the one for the servants.

"When I consider that this is only two more than all civilized houses have, I am surprised at the moderation and restraint of the average house-builder. But pray remember I am anxious to avoid that committee of lunacy; and I have not yet begun to build."

Personally, I entertain the highest regard for my versatile friend's ideal. Were I to suggest any change in the main points, so admirably conceived, it

would be to have the study removed to a still serener sphere, as has already been suggested. Even with my friend's excellent barricade, still, on *some* occasion when least expected—perchance a most momentous one, just as a long-lost conceit had winged its return—the dreaded intruder might force an entrance, and put the thought to instantaneous and irremeable flight.

The size of the study, methinks, should be small rather than large; yet ample enough to harbor the cheering grate-fire, the easy-chairs, the center-table, the writing-desk, the well-filled book-cases, and the artistic glass cabinet or cabinets, for such precious works as should be kept under lock and key and never loaned, or even touched by sacrilegious hands.

Let these gems be worthily set as becomes their quality and rarity, so they may minister to the delight of the eye and the pleasure of the touch as they contribute to the delectation of the mind. "Sashes of gold for old saints, golden bindings for old writings," Nodier expresses it; and Charles Asselineau affectionately exclaims: "My Books, I love them! I have sought them, gathered them, searched for them; I have had them habited to the best of my ability by the best tailors of books." My glass cabinet is my casket, my jewel-case; and in the many-colored morocco of the bindings that reflect the precious riches contained within them, I see all manner of jewels flash and glow. In these, and in some of the superb marblings employed in the finer French bindings—and here the exquisite beauty of the perfect half-morocco binding is apparent—I derive a satisfaction akin to that I receive from the contemplation of any fine art object. The airy conceits and felicities of phrase of a favorite author become yet more entrancing when held by these colored butterfly-wings and variegated plumes dreamed out by the artist, and stamped in permanent form by the skill of the binder.

Thought is inclined to wander amid the freedom of a large room. But though the study should not be a vast apartment, it should be sufficiently spacious for comfort and to avoid overcrowding. Sufficiently large it should also be and the ceiling sufficiently high to insure a pure atmosphere. On account of ventilation, a fire-place is of great advantage in the room where one is engaged in sedentary pursuits. It is the next thing to the walk and the elixir of the open air. De Quincey worked in a room seventeen by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. The low ceilings must have oppressed him; and the vitiated air and sense of suffocation, it is not

unlikely, led him to yield to the dangerous stimulus that inspired the Confessions.

Most wisely has Leigh Hunt discoursed upon the study and its surroundings in that ever-pleasing essay, My Books. “I do not like this fine large study. I like elegance. I like room to breathe in, and even walk about, when I want to breathe and walk about. I like a great library next my study; but for the study itself give me a small, snug place, almost entirely walled with books. There should be only one window in it looking on trees.... I dislike a grand library to study in. I mean an immense apartment with books all in museum order, especially wire-safed. I say nothing against the museum itself, or public libraries.... A grand private library, which the master of the house also makes his study, never looks to me like a real place of books, much less of authorship. I can not take kindly to it. It is certainly not out of envy; for three parts of the books are generally trash, and I can seldom think of the rest and the proprietor together.”

To be attractive and cozy, the study need not be extravagantly furnished. As in other apartments of the house, light is one of its first requisites; with color, ease, quiet, and, if possible, a pleasant prospect. In the study, above all, no discordant elements should intrude. The general tone of the walls, decorations, and furnishings, while rich, should yet be subdued and restful. A glaring placque, a staring figure in the wall or carpet pattern, or any subject unpleasing in its nature or sentiment, whether in paintings, pictures, or ornaments, has no place in an apartment which, by its very atmosphere, should conduce to reverie and a contemplative frame of mind. Let dreamful landscapes, rather than figures in action, adorn and complement the rich slate or sage of its walls and hangings; and I picture my ideal study, when my second ship comes in, hung round about solely with Daubigny’s tender twilights and peaceful river-reaches on his calm and slowly gliding Oise.

For the closer concentration of thought, the working-chair would be placed in the most attractive corner of the apartment, back of the spacious writing-desk, with its amplitude of drawers and pigeon-holes; its topmost shelf and other convenient places so arranged with pictures and portraits of favorite authors and dear or absent friends as to create and constantly diffuse an atmosphere of congenial companionship.

A carved book-rest should hold the dictionary in place close to the working-chair, and a revolving case within arm's reach should bring to it desired works of reference and such especially treasured volumes from which ideas may be collected—another name for inspiration. I would mention some of these—each worthy of crushed levant covers, the handicraft of a Padeloup or Payne—but for the fact that every one should choose such inspirations for himself. One may not be guided by another's choice in a face or book that charms.

Once during the day, but always unperceived, save for an added freshness pervading the apartment, my study should respond to the touch of gentle fingers. Then, as I mount the secret staircase when I would be alone—a lingering aroma of violets and the vanishing rustle of a silken robe.

# V.

# WHEN LEAVES GROW SERE.

For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.
SONNET CVI.

Not all the joy, and not all the glory,
Must fade as leaves when the woods wax hoary.
SWINBURNE.

THERE is a sigh in the passing breeze as the autumn days steal on—a sigh for the summer fled. I hear the change, the admonitory whisper of the leaves, almost ere the transition becomes perceptible, for Nature as yet has scarcely altered her outward garb.

Yet daily the shadows lengthen, the haze deepens, mellower grow the evening skies, until, no longer vacillating between summer and autumn, the first frost smites the low-lands, and the division line of the seasons is visibly proclaimed.

"We hope in the spring, only to regret in the fall." But shall I regret the vanished summer? Will not yonder hillside glow as all the summer meadows have never glowed? these yellowing woods outshine the sunshine of spring? Suddenly, through my windows, I note where the first fires have begun to burn. I watch the flames creep stealthily along the hills, smoldering, perchance, in a distant hollow, anon riding the higher crests, illuming sumac-sentineled ravines, invading the brier patches, and lighting

sproutland and swamp with living fire. High on the uplands the splendor hangs, low in the valleys the glory falls. Steeped and flooded with its color, the landscape gleams like an opal beneath the autumn sun. What poet, what prose painter, what cunning artificer of phrase can depict the tidal wave of beauty of the latter year?

Shall I regret the summer with the October carnival at hand, when the woodcock whistles from the alder thicket and the grouse bursts through the painted covert? It is for this the sportsman has longed and waited during the lingering months of summer. Stanchly as he is drawn upon the covey, I am sure The Spanish Pointer, in the old print above the writing-desk, feels the advent of the season, and thinks, with the latter-day philosopher, that "the preacher who declared that all is vanity, never looked at a fall woodcock over the rib of a good gun."

Always on his point on the knoll, the pointer's riveted attitude now has an added meaning. His eye still fixed upon the quarry, he nevertheless moves unceasingly in his frame. There is no deception, no optical illusion; he *moves*—not forward or backward, but with an oscillating, sideward motion, as if the constant strain on his powerful tendons had caused them to relax. Rigid as a statue has he stood throughout the summer, the blue blood of generations of pointers holding him unflinchingly upon the game. Perhaps now the scent has grown cold. Or has he wearied of waiting for the volley of the barrels, and, looking up for a moment at the crimsoning copse, bethought him that a fresh season has dawned, and there are fresh coveys to spring? The grim lion by Barye, in the etching that hangs above him, remains motionless. Though you would dread to meet the beast of prey on the desert where he is stalking, he shows no signs of animation on the wall whence he looks down upon you. Only the old pointer moves unceasingly in his frame. Is the movement of the picture due to the furnace heat behind the partition wall? To you, perhaps. To me he is plainly motioning to the covers.

Methinks, also, that my good Irish terrier, who is often by my side, looks up at the fox's pelt more intently as autumn draws on apace. The fox may suggest the covers and its denizens to him, as the motion of the pointer suggests them to me—the fleet forms that haunt their mazy fastnesses, the hares and rabbits and vanishing shadows his steel sinews are eager to pursue. Surely his sharply pointed ears, his quivering muscles, and his

glittering hazel eyes are in sympathy with the movements of the pointer, and second his invitation to the woods.

Musing upon the ancient print, with its rolling background of hill and dale, I sometimes picture the scene of desolation which would ensue were the woods and waters stripped of their native tenants—the game which is at once their glory and their joy. Fancy the landscape denuded of the wild life that is as indigenous as its flora, that is nurtured upon its mast, and derives sustenance from the very twigs and leaves of its vegetation. Conceive, if it be possible, streams with no trout to people their pools and shallows, waters that never mirrored the wood-drake's mail, and lakes unruffled by the web of wild fowl.

Imagine the woodlands with no grouse to beat the reveille of spring, no hares to thread their shaded labyrinths, no fox to prowl through their coverts. Silence the scream of the hawk, and the voice of the owl, crow, and jay, and instantly the landscape would be deprived of half its beauty, its innate beauty of sound. Game is the essence of the woods and free, uncivilized Nature—the division line that separates the wild from the tame—and he whose nerves have never tingled at the electric whir of a game-bird's wing and the responsive boom of the double-barrel, has remained insensible to one of the most inspiring exhilarations of the senses. Just as the library refreshes and stimulates the mind, so do the woods, the streams, and the stubbles become a field of health for the body, and by the invigorating and elevating recreation they yield do field sports serve to strengthen both mind and body. Enough for me that autumn is here; I must accept the invitation of the old pointer, and examine for myself what the woods have in store.

Brilliant as they are in the flush of their October splendor, they will lose but little of their beauty as autumn wanes. The bare trees extend and expand the landscape for me, contributing enchantments of distance that only denuded vegetation may reveal. Then, with the weather in a gracious mood, I obtain effects that the green entanglement of summer never knew. The purple bloom upon my hills is never half so exquisite as when a thaw has freed them temporarily from their coverlet of snow, disclosing their russet slopes and leafless trees. A new palette of color is presented in these subtle gradations of umber and ochre, of drab and of bronze, that drape the withered stubbles. Sere and faded in the latter year, the lonely marsh is yet

glorious with subdued hues when touched by the afternoon splendor. The hush which broods upon the landscape, too, has a charm of its own, in harmony with the quiet tones of the slumbering woods. The very lisp of the chickadee and solemn tap of the nut-hatch only intensify the repose of Nature; and I question if the combined glories of the midsummer twilight, when the bat and night-hawk raced upon the evening sky, yielded anything so radiantly beautiful as the slant November sunlight streaming through the trees of the lowland, its vivid crimsons reflected in the pools below.

The airy spray of the beech I may admire only during winter, and only when it stands divested of its summer garniture may I behold the marvelous framework of the elm. Attractive as it is when robed in the bloom and leafage of summer, the thorn develops a new beauty in its gnarled and naked branches and the hoariness of its gray antiquity. Loveliest, too, are the birch and hemlock in midwinter; whilst the swamp, ablaze with the scarlet fruit of the *Prinos* and smooth winterberry, presents its most vivid life above the snow. From it, likewise, I catch the gleam of the golden willow, with purple rufous lights that smolder amid the twigs and branchlets of the shrubs which seek its cool and solitude. Again, when the snow comes sifting down from the pallid sky, what magical effects do I not obtain amid the dark mysterious depths of the hemlock woods! Even then my hills and woods offer a glorious excuse for an outing. For have I not long pictured in imagination the shadowy vistas where I know the big white hares are in waiting?

It is worth scaling a dozen hillsides to breathe such air and obtain such views. No play of sunlight on an English South Down could be finer, and no lines of beauty fairer than those revealed by distant table-land and wide-extending vale. A silence, broken only by the roar of far-off railroad trains or the ring of the woodsman’s axe, rests like a benediction over all, a sleep of Nature—peaceful, deep, profound.

Within the shelter of the wood, beneath the refuge of the evergreens and undergrowth, it is warm; without, the gale may rave, and, above, the tree-tops wail a requiem for the departing year; but here below it is protected as within the walls of a building. On either hand extend the green arcades of the hemlocks, like the nave and transepts of a cathedral. The downy woodpecker and titmouse are here, ever present as choristers; the wild life of the woods is here, the companionship of bird and beast and dormant

vegetable life. There is life beating beneath the mold, beneath the snowy mantle—the ermine with which Nature keeps her treasures warm. There is life—nimble, fleet, and stirring—above the tell-tale snow.

That is a fox's track leading to his den on the hillside, the return trail of Reynard whose sortie toward the barn-yards you previously noticed. When he started on his foray his pace was a walk, as his footsteps close together reveal. Warily he was proceeding under cover of the darkness, planning the best means of ingress to his gallinaceous goal. All the caution of a skilled general on the eve of a decisive battle is apparent in his skulking foot-prints. His dreaded enemies are well known. Only yesterday the hounds were hot in his pursuit, and the echoes reverberated with the volley of barbarous vulpicides, which happily fell wide of its mark. But he will outwit them all! His trained cunning has taught him the danger of traps and gins; his fleet foot has long borne him through many a loop-hole of escape. The stork's invitation to dine must needs be deftly perfumed and framed on an unusually tempting card to induce him to take his claret out of long-necked *carafes* or his *pâté de foie gras* from metal tureens.

The tracks leading back from the farmyard show him to have been jogging along at a more rapid gait. The prints are the same, except that they are farther apart, one following directly behind the other, Indian filewise, in an almost straight line. His object accomplished, there was no further need of extreme caution or dalliance. From a safe distance he had watched the lights in the farm-house till one by one they were extinguished, had waited until all was silent, and his keen scent apprised him that danger was past. It was then an easy matter to pounce upon and bear off the unsuspecting prey. Along his return trail there are feathers strewed here and there, attesting conclusively that his raid was successful.

Lightly he tripped along with elevated brush, the booty slung over his shoulder, to the safeguard of his den. Obviously before reaching his haven he has been startled by something. The tracks, still in a straight line, become much farther apart; the trot has given place to a canter for a few rods, when his former gait is resumed. The baying of a hound, perchance, from his kennel on the farther hillside, or the bark of a fellow-vulpine freebooter, has quickened his pace for the moment. Where he struck into a gallop the prints of his nails are visible; these do not show when he progresses on his customary trot or walk, so well are his feet protected for extended

predations by the thick fur padding between the toes. His long sweeping brush never once touched the snow, burdened though he was by his plunder. This he carries well up, knowing the increased weight it would engender should he get it wet. A cat is not more careful of her dainty feet than is sly Reynard of his precious tail.

In general, a fox that has acquired a taste for poultry is considered rather an undesirable subject for the chase proper. A poultry fox always makes his headquarters near the farmsteads. His daily beat, therefore, is limited as to distance compared with his brethren who subsist by foraging in the woods, and whose nightly rounds embrace a very much larger territory. Usually a poultry fox, if started, does not take a straight line very far, but, after leading a short distance, commences to circle, coming round to the place of starting after the manner of the hare. A fox who subsists on game knows all the fat covers of the neighborhood where the most game lies. His extended tramps give him wind, fleetness, and endurance, while his familiarity with every rod of the covers stands him in excellent stead when hotly pursued.

A round glittering eyeball, bright as a coal of fire, is scrutinizing you from beneath a pile of brushwood at the edge of the cover. Scarcely is the gun discharged ere a small covey of quail spring close at hand. Investigation is needless to reveal the baffled assassin; the tell-tale tracks upon the snow, round like those of a fox, but smaller, and the distance between considerably less, divulge the nature of the trespasser. It is none other than a cat, the petted tabby of the farmstead, that spends a large portion of its time in stalking game—a poacher scarcely less destructive than its fierce wild congener. When once a taste for game has been formed, pursuit is thenceforward continual and relentless, till the offender usually ends by adopting a permanent woodland abode, where it thrives lustily, increasing in size and acquiring a heavy coat of fur.

Look at this much-traveled esplanade, where the tracks show so thickly upon the snow. Overnight the hares and rabbits have been browsing upon the young beech, maple, and hemlock buds, with an occasional sally into the brier patches. The numerous trails indicate they have availed themselves of the bright moonlight to continue their feeding longer than usual. On moonlight nights the *Leporidæ* always travel most; on cold, blustering nights they seldom leave their forms. Birds and animals dislike to venture out during stormy weather unless impelled by hunger. At such times a wood

throbbing with animate life seems entirely deserted by its furred and feathered population. Vainly, then, the pointer or setter may quarter the ground; the game lies concealed and apparently scentless beneath the brush and hiding-places, refusing to leave its refuge unless almost stepped upon. An apparently similar disappearance of game is often noticeable when the weather is fair immediately preceding a storm. The squirrels are warmly housed in their nests within the trees. Many of the grouse seek shelter amid the dense hemlocks, sitting close to the trunks on the leeside of the storm, protected by the thick foliage and their own matting of feathers. The closest of beating then goes for little, so that in a wood where you know game exists in comparative abundance it appears a mystery whither all its wild life has fled.

The white hare and rabbit tracks—if the smaller *Lepus* may be referred to as a rabbit—which strew the ground are identical save in size. There are first the marks of the hind feet, side by side, followed by those of the fore feet, one behind the other. Thus it is seen the gait is always a lope or bound, and that in springing the hare brings up with his hind feet nearest the head, alighting, however, on all fours at once. His long, powerful hind-quarters seem made of rubber sinews, the crooked stifles and great strength of thigh acting as levers to the supple body framed with special regard to speed—his sole protection. In reaching for the buds and young shoots of the undergrowth during the deep snows, he is materially aided by his long hind legs.

Under the beeches the squirrels have been busy scratching for the mast; these appear to be the most restless foragers of the wood, their trails being by far the most numerous. Like the hare's and rabbit's, their gait is a lope. As he lands from his spring, the hind feet of the squirrel touch the ground nearest the head, as in the case of the hare and rabbit, but the two forward feet, instead of striking one before the other, strike nearly side by side, like a single footfall. Occasionally, not often, he prints similarly to the rabbit in the position of the feet, although always smaller and somewhat less pointed. The large blacks and grays are persecuted by the smaller pugnacious reds, which frequently drive them entirely out of a wood, first pilfering their nests of the shack they have stored.

Here Master Reynard has been mousing, seated on a stump intently watching, his flowing brush clear of the snow; the air is tainted with his

strong odor. Where he made a leap his footmarks are distinctly visible amid the numerous tracks of the field-mice—a dainty of which he is extremely fond. Yonder is the scene of an oft-enacted woodland tragedy, with Reynard in his great title *rôle* of slayer. There, beneath the shelter of an uprooted beech, a grouse had repaired for his nightly slumber, his head screened from the moonlight under his protecting wings. The impress of his form is clearly molded upon the snow. But, alas! his now tattered plumage and a prowling fox's foot-prints attest his grim awakening when his relentless foe discovered his retreat. For this had his wings so often rung defiance to the double-barrel; to this ignominious end had he come at last! Were the ghosts of murdered grouse to haunt the scenes of their earthly sojourn, they might rattle their featherless wings in triumph to know that on this self-same hillside, but a few rods from the scene of the tragedy, Master Reynard met his fate, a week afterward, in the jaws of clamorous hounds.

It requires a very warm day in winter to tempt a coon from his hibernacle. To-day his large flat prints and zigzag course are not observable; he is snugly clad in his fur overcoat within the fastness of a sheltering tree. The ground-hog is sealed in his burrow outside the wood, having "pulled his hole in after him"; this he covers up with leaves and earth, until, after his protracted slumber, he emerges to view his shadow in the spring.

That was an owl which skimmed the air so silently, on wings soft as eider-down, noiseless as a butterfly, and stealthy as a fox's tread. It is not often one sees an owl, however; in the day-time he usually sleeps, seldom leaving his retreat till dusk, unless during gloomy weather. The little or screech owls are more frequently seen by day than the larger species. With the hawk, crow, jay, skunk, and fox, the owl is extremely destructive to eggs and young birds during the nesting season, large owls not hesitating to pounce upon full-grown hares, and sharing with the fox a great fondness for poultry. The skunk leaves a print similar to that of the fox and cat, barring its reduced size. There are invariably numbers of these threading the runways and leading to and from the farmsteads.

There is a murmur like unto many voices in the woods' mysterious depths, as if Pan and his train of Oreads were holding a revel within. It is a combination of numerous sounds that produces these ceaseless whispers of the woods. You hear them in summer when the insect choirs are chanting an aërial melody and the hermit-thrush sings as if he had a soul; you hear them

in winter when the wind sobs amid the needles of the pines, and the woodpecker's hammer resounds unceasingly from hollow trees; you hear them now, on every hand, a chorus of voices, the forest's pulsations—a palpable part and portion of its solitude. How weird the cry of the blue jay, the loon of the woods, whose startling scream sounds like that a faun might utter in despair! His sapphire coronet is not for you, however; he jeers at you in strident tones from his stronghold in the tree-tops, keeping close watch of you, but taking care to remain well out of range. Like his clamorous friend the crow, he has scented F. F. F. powder before. At intervals the airy treble of the tree-sparrow swells the sylvan choir—a minor but most melodious addition to the chorus. When the powdery snow patters upon the withered leaves and the stillness is otherwise almost unbroken, you may hear his carillon while he feeds on the tender buds of the sweet birch. "A merry heart goes all the day" is his motto and the tenor of his blithe refrain.

There are grouse tracks also that have left their reflection in winter's mirror—the roving feet of the brown forest hermit, the daintiest print upon the snow. Unless disturbed, the ruffed-grouse will travel a great distance on foot through the woods in quest of food. A single bird will leave a surprising number of tracks in the course of his protracted wanderings, so that one is often puzzled at the comparative scarcity of birds. But even on the snow he is extremely difficult to detect, so closely does he blend with his surroundings. Not until he springs with sonorous pinions close at your side are you made aware of his precise location, when you wonder you had not observed him before. All game is alike in this respect—difficulty of detection—even to the brilliantly marked trout, which assume the general color of the bottom of streams in which they lie.

Should you shoot a crow amid your rambles, a swarm of mourners will quickly be in attendance on the remains. Within a few minutes every ebon inhabitant of the neighborhood, apprised by the alarm of its companions, may be seen winging its way thereto with loud cawings. It can not be the sense of sight alone that locates the dead, for the discovery will not unfrequently occur in thick cover or open glade.

One of the numerous runways of the hares, within gunshot of which you have taken position, extends through a glade, affording ample opportunity to observe the game. The eager hounds have struck the scent leading to a

form in a thicket of brier where the quarry lies concealed. The startled hare leaps from his covert, with the hounds in full cry coming directly toward you, until, turning into another runway, the music recedes in the distance. Amid the frenzy of pursuit two other hares have been started, the deep baying indicating the course of the divided pack. Round and round the fleet hares circle, one of them after a prolonged flight approaching your standpoint. His agile dash for liberty has left his pursuers in the rear, and he pauses—a white silhouette of living beauty, and the embodiment of nimble speed—for a survey. He sits upon his great hind legs—his only safeguard—turning his long clean-cut ears forward and backward, each one singly, to focus the sound. The music swells into a grand *crescendo*, the twigs crackle beneath the trampling of many feet, and the hare is off again with the speed of the racer. The baying of the pack indicates the direction of pursuit, whether the game is coming or going. A hare always circles, returning sooner or later to the place he started from; he never "holes," like the rabbit, unless in a log when exhausted. To baffle the dogs he will sometimes imitate his wily master, Reynard, by taking his back track for quite a distance, and then, leaping aside, to strike out on a fresh course; by this means he gains a breathing-spell and puzzles his foes.

So the sport progresses, and the bag mounts with the lengthening shadows. An owl is sounding his lone "tu-whoo!" when the hounds come in with lolling tongues and trembling flanks from the prolonged excitement of the chase. The last hare has carmined the snow with his life-blood, and the heavy spoils are harled and strung. The flaming fires of sunset are smoldering into ashen embers in the soft southwest; the tender violets of the remote table-lands chill to colder purples with day's decline; the marshaled ranks of the skeleton trees stand out upon the hills as if limned in India ink; the mellow hyemal twilight deepens over woodland and valley, till the perfect winter day merges into the moonlit winter night and the *vale* of the sport.

# VI.

# DECORATIVE DECORATIONS.

All arts are one, howe'er distributed they stand;
Verse, tone, shape, color, form, are fingers on one hand.
W. W. STORY.

WHILE I make no pretense of vying with the shops of *bric-à-brac* and curios—it has been said the modern house has come to resemble a magazine of *bric-à-brac*—yet, somehow, I find a great many objects which would be classed under this definition have gradually drifted or floated in, and have become as much of an artistic and companionable feature of the house as the paintings on the walls. Especially since the arrival of my ship, when several large bales with cabalistic marks and lettering proved on opening to be a veritable repository of ancient Oriental workmanship and design.

I can conceive of no more hideous nightmare than that which must haunt one who is obliged to live in intimate companionship with many of the so-called "ornaments" that dealers and the fashion of the hour force upon one, and that, in one guise or another, must ever be snarling and snapping at the unfortunate possessor. Littered up with all sorts of *outré* and unmeaning knick-knacks, the home at once becomes a place to flee from; and instead of the spirit of quiet elegance and congruity which should prevail, there reigns a pandemonium of disconformity. Yet a certain amount of *bric-à-brac* is not only admissible but requisite to the decorative atmosphere of the interior. Its effect depends upon the choosing. Given a correct eye for color and form and a natural feeling for harmony, Sir William Temple's sentence is pertinent, "The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he

has chosen." Like my paintings, rugs, and etchings, so also my porcelains, bronzes, arms, and armor are pleasing objects for the eye to rest upon; and, ranged upon the shelves and about the apartments, minister equally in the expression and variety they lend to the surroundings.

I rejoice in my collection of arms and armor. Many rare antiques from the Stamboul bazaars my ship contained—lovely inlaid Persian guns, exquisitely mounted Albanian pistols, antique rapiers, daggers, and swords, ancient kandjars and yataghans, with scabbards of *repoussé* silver, of velvet, of copper, of shagreen and Ymen leather; with handles of jade, agate, and ivory, constellated with garnets, turquoises, corals, and girasols; long, narrow, large, curved; of all forms, of all times, of all countries; from the Damascene blade of the Pasha, incrusted with verses of the Koran in letters of gold, to the coarse knife of the camel-driver. How many Zeibecs and Arnauts, how many beys and effendis, how many omrahs and rajahs have not stripped their girdles to form this precious arsenal which would have rendered Décamps mad with joy![7]

7. Gautier. Constantinople—Les Bazars.

There are, moreover, glistening helmets and coats-of-mail, corselets, maces, spears and hauberks, battle-axes and halberds, bucklers of tortoise-shell and Damascene steel—all the implements of the ferocious ingenuity of Islam. On the blue blade of this magnificent yataghan, still keen and glittering, its ivory handle inlaid with topaz and turquoise, is graven the number of heads it has severed. These cruel swords, now crossed so peacefully, were once crossed in savage strife and brandished in hate upon the battle-field amid the blare of Mussulman trumpets and the shouts of murderous Janizaries. Often, as the sunlight strikes the lustrous steel, do they seem to leap into life and flash anew in remembrance of the battle-cry of Mohammed. Though mostly of great age, my arms and armor are all in a state of perfect preservation. For mere antiquity in art objects or curios is not desirable in itself. Age has its charms unquestionably, but it becomes a valuable factor only when accompanied by beauty. Where an object loses its pristine beauty through time, age is a detriment rather than a desideratum. With many classes of art objects time heightens their attraction, or at least does not detract from it. In all such, age is a desirable quantity. To be old is generally to be rare; but an object may be rare and still be undesirable. Objects that are extremely sensitive to wear are usually worthless when old.

Others, like tapestries and Oriental textiles, are improved by use, and gain in richness and value through age. An ancient textile or article of *bric-à-brac* is only desirable when, added to intrinsic beauty of texture, color, form, or design, it preserves its youth in its antiquity, or acquires additional attractiveness through time.

Naturally, my ship contained many fine stuffs and hangings—old Flemish, French, and Italian tapestries, embroideries from Broussa and Salonica, Spanish brocades, and brocades from Borhampor and Ahmedabad, with some priceless ancient altar cloths, chasubles, and dalmaticas I had long desired to possess. Yet with all these and other acquisitions, now that the bloom of first possession is brushed off, may I declare without prevarication that I am fully satisfied? Increase of appetite but grows on what it feeds. Collecting begets collecting, the desire for possession constantly increasing, ever goading one on to unrest in the quest of the unprocurable. How much one misses with a little knowledge, and how much one gains! The love for beauty too often proves a bane. Even a love for books is as dangerous as a love for *bric-à-brac* or art objects—the book in the end becoming an art object. Gradually, from the ordinary editions one passes to the good editions, while from the good it is but a step to the rare, and the seething maelstrom of book-madness. My ship brought me many of my decorations; my books, with few exceptions, I must procure myself.

But though sometimes productive of regrets, no one should be without a hobby, or hobbies. “Have not the wisest of men in all ages, not excepting Solomon himself—have they not had their hobby-horses?” asks Sterne. “The man without a hobby may be a good citizen and an honest fellow,” observes George Dawson, in his altogether lovely volume, The Pleasures of Angling, “but he can have but few golden threads running through the web or woof of his monotonous existence.” A hobby is the best of preceptors, and rides straight to the mark. From a good collection of porcelains one may study the Chinese dynasties, and prepare himself for an Asiatic tour by a study of his rugs. Unconsciously the collector of arms and armor becomes a student of the history of numerous peoples and an eye-witness of many of the noted battles of the world. Were I desirous to thoroughly familiarize myself with the history of the American red man I should first proceed to collect Indian implements of the chase and war, supplementing these by

close study in the fertile field of literature pertaining to the Indians. But my bows and arrows I should shoot first; they would be the guide to the target.

One of the essays of Elia has demonstrated the fallacy of the adage "enough is as good as a feast." In decorations it were a scant feast without the endless form and color supplied by the potter's art. Of all art objects, a truly fine piece of old porcelain is amongst the most beautiful. In color it may outshine a precious stone; in form, rival that of a beautiful object of Nature herself. Its very frailty and frangibility intensify its charm, and when possessing both grace of contour and enchantment of color it becomes an object of beauty by the canons of the most perfect art, exciting the profoundest and purest pleasure—profound pleasure to all who behold it, supreme pleasure to him who possesses it.

I speak of the finer examples of Oriental ceramics, though I grant there is much to admire in some of the Italian soft-paste porcelains, notably the lovely Capo di Monte productions of the first period and the fascinating Doccia *terraglias*. Royal Worcester, despite its finish, always looks new, and Sèvres wares I invariably associate with a gilded French *salon* and crimson brocatelle. These may be of excellent design and highly wrought decoration, representing infinite labor, skill, and minutiæ of detail; but they seldom seem effective compared with the handiwork of the Oriental. For the most part European ceramics may not be included under Prof. Grant Allen's term, "decorative decoration." Among Oriental porcelains, it is well known that articles produced to-day may not be compared with the same class produced in the past. The secret of the marvelous old glazes has been lost, like the secret of the famed old Toledo blades, and the craft of the ancient metal workers. It is the remote Celestial we admire and revere.

Apparently, my ship must have touched some of the out-of-the-way ports of Holland, that paradise of blue and white, for her collection of ceramics was rich in this form of Oriental porcelains. It has been asserted that the love for blue and white is a fashion, a craze that can not endure. But fine blue and white from its very nature is beyond the caprice of fashion, and must be enduring for all time. What other blending approximates so closely to Nature? It is but a Celestial reflex of the firmament—the most beautiful of all sky formations, the summer *cumulus* cloud. A coolness of color it has possessed by no other form of porcelain unless by the incomparable old solid blue and blue-green enamels.

Not that my ship's stores were limited to the blue and white so lavishly distributed among the appreciative Dutch burghers by the fleets of a former day. There were also many *chrysanthema* that could only have been gathered from the classic gardens of the Celestial himself—specimens from the periods of Wan-li, Kia-tsing, Ching-te, Ching-hoa, Siouen-te, and yet still earlier rulers of the great dynasty of the Mings; diaphanous egg-shells of the reign of Yong-tching; Kien-long glazes fabricated in imitation of the color and texture of old bronzes; delicate sea-green *céladons*; solid deep iridescent reds; and frail translucent white pastes—marvels of the furnaces of the past. It would require a Jacquemart or a Dana to describe them. However alien races may regard the Mongolian and his flowing pigtail, there can be but one opinion of the forms and colors crystallized in these his airy inspirations. Matchless stands the ancient Chinese potter's art. The world might find a substitute for his tea; his finer vases, jars, and bottles, and his fantasies in storks and dragons are unique this side of paradise. From the ordinary blue of Nankin to the "blue of the head of Buddha," the "blue of heaven," the "blue of the sky after rain," the "lapis lazuli," and the priceless "turquoise," my blue porcelains are a study of the clouds and the sky.

Blue! "the life of heaven," the hue of ocean, the violet's joy; type of faith and fidelity, it has remained for the almond-eyed molder of clay to render thy beauty tangible. When I admire the hues of a Chinese vase or bottle, I remember that each color is regarded as a symbol; the fundamental colors being five, and corresponding to the elements (water, fire, wood, metals, earth), and to the cardinal points of the compass. Red belongs to fire, and corresponds to the south; black to water and the north; green to wood and the east; white to metal and the west. Dark blue corresponds to the sky, and yellow to the earth; blue belongs to the east. Blue is combined with white, red with black, and dark blue with yellow. The dragon, which in the Chinese zodiac corresponds to our *Aries*, also personifies water, while a circle personifies fire.[8]

8. Jacquemart. Histoire de la Céramique.

Of the bloom of the peach my ship contained no example, so factitious a value has been set upon this color by pretended connoisseurs. In place of the peach-blow, I found gleaming among my ceramics a much more beautiful form of opalescent porcelain—two vases of the extremely rare

“topaz,” brilliant as the gem itself, and of which these are unique examples. Did I say my rugs supplied the rarest colors? I had forgotten my old bottle of *bleu de ciel* and my ancient vase of *sang de bœuf*!

The bronzes my ship contained differed essentially from the generality of those I had previously known. Apart from a few fine specimens enriched with gold and silver, and a superb figure of Buddha, they consisted for the most part of a singularly beautiful collection of ancient tripods, temple-censers and incense-burners, with dark patine and antique-green surfaces, and engraved ornamentation and ornamentation in relief. The largest incense urn occupies a prominent place in the hall, and often curls its fragrant clouds through the mouth of its dragon. I light it when I read A Kempis and the Religio Medici.

Yet the stores of my ship would have been incomplete without an old hall-clock that marks the time for me. An old Dutch inlaid hall-clock of all clocks for symmetry, beauty, and sonority! It measures rather than accelerates the flight of the hours; and with its quarter chimes, its deep hour-bells, its moons, and its calendars, it punctuates not only the moments and the hours, but chronicles the passage of the months and the years. I need not consult a watch for the time, or a calendar for the day of the month and the phases of the moon—the musical voice and the index-fingers of my clock proclaim them for me.

Among my most valued curios is a superb violoncello. A glance shows that it has been long and tenderly caressed by the virtuoso who once possessed it and developed its melodious voice. Even its ancient case and the green baize of the lining attest the care it has received. Scarcely a scratch is visible on the lustrous wood, and its curves are as harmoniously proportioned as those of a Hebe. There is a rich, mellow tone to the wood, and the bow draws tones no less rich and mellow from its deep caverns of sound. Though there are no traces of the maker’s name or the date of manufacture, the lovely glaze of the spruce top and maple back at once proclaim its antiquity. Beneath the strings the rosin has left a fine mahogany stain; and there are worn spots on the hoops where it has been pressed by a loving knee. The grain of the top is as straight as if it had been molded. At the base of the gracefully turned scroll, in old English script, is carved an “H,” its only mark.

I find the same difference between a violin and a violoncello as there exists between a piano and an organ. The difference of tone between individual violoncellos is, if anything, more marked than in most other musical instruments. There could be nothing more sonorous and more delicately shaded than the magnificent baritone of my old violoncello as it interprets the Cavatine by Raff, or chants the Andante by Mozart. Sometimes, methinks, it gives forth a still richer consonance when it renders Stradella's grave Kirchen-Arïe; or, indeed, whenever noble church music of any kind is drawn from its resonant depths. Then its voice seems almost human, and the strings quiver apparently of their own accord. Is it fancy, after all? Are not its strings sometimes swept by unseen fingers—the tender touch of The Warden of Barchester, good old Septimus Harding—who possessed it in years gone by; who so often found solace in its companionship from the tyranny of the archdeacon and the bickerings of Barchester Close! I almost find myself, like the warden, passing an imaginary bow over an imaginary viol when annoyed or harassed away from home, so strong is its personality and so soothing its companionship.[9] Trollope has never been sufficiently appreciated, it appears to me; and among his best works is his simplest one. The character of the warden, so exemplary and yet so vacillating, the old men of the hospital who love him so tenderly, the crafty and worldly archdeacon, and, withal, the mellow ecclesiastical light that pervades the churchly precincts of the Close, form a picture beautiful in its quiet coloring and simplicity. It is far less a novel than an idyl, and as such it should be read and must be regarded.

9. The Warden; Barchester Towers.—Anthony Trollope.

Music and flowers! The one suggests and complements the other. The home should never be without either—they are its brightest sunshine, next to lovely woman's smile and the laughter of a child. Averaged throughout the year, a dollar a week is a modest, reasonable outlay for a man of limited means to expend for the luxury of flowers in the house. Every petal holds a beautiful thought, so long as the flower is beautiful and the petals are fresh. Even a few green leaves with a single fresh blossom or two are a solace to the eye and a balm to the mind.

# VII.

# MY STUDY WINDOWS.

How perfect an invention is glass! The sun rises with a salute, and leaves the world with a farewell to our windows. To have instead of opaque shutters, or dull horn or paper, a material like solidified air, which reflects the sun thus brightly!—THOREAU.

TO-DAY a slaty sky, accompanied by vaporous clouds throughout the afternoon, is succeeded by a pale sunset, a vivid primrose band extending far, and lingering late along the southern horizon.

I hear an angry wind at night, first tongued by the distant trees. Rising close to the edge of the river, the copse catches the least breath of the west, transmitting its voice through the trees. Each tree thus becomes a harp or viol played upon by the air in motion, producing a varied music according to the character of its spray. How different the sound of the summer wind! the whispering and rustling of trillions of living leaves; one might distinguish the season by the sense of hearing alone. Now that vegetation is devoid of foliage, there is so much less to obstruct the current of the air brought pure and undefiled from the Western plains. This air, additionally sifted and clarified by its passage through countless woods and primeval forests, I inhale in full draughts within my comfortable room. Gathered by the cold air-boxes, this oxygen and nitrogen is tempered and warmed by a single pound of steam below, before rising fresh and delicious through the registers above. Thus even in midwinter do I receive the essence of the meadows and the woods.

Not less comfort and delight do I owe to glass than to coal. It retains the heat and excludes the frost. Scarcely the space of a foot separates my easy chair and summer warmth from falling flakes and wintry cold. It lets in the balm of the sky and the grace of the leafless trees; it serves to simulate summer. Transparent to light and to outward forms, glass is merely translucent to sounds. I look out and see the trees rock and toss beneath the gale; I listen, and hear the wind rejoicing in his strength. Light and sunshine stream through my window-pane as though it were a part of the atmosphere. It is almost like the atmosphere—transparent, invisible, inodorous. No material used in the construction of the house imparts such an air of richness from without as polished plate-glass. Is it not equally desirable within, to look out through? Let the carpets, if necessary, have less depth of pile; but let in the landscape and the light as clearly as we may. To look at exterior objects through vitreous waves is to cheat the sight and rob pleasant surroundings of their charm.

Again, the glass that brings the landscape into my room shuts out the external world as readily as it lets it in—in the form of stained glass it passes from transparent to translucent, but still retains its life through color. I would have in my hall above the landing a wheel-window of ancient stained glass to render daylight doubly beautiful and refined—a flood of violet like that concentrated and diffused by the windows of the tall clere-story of Tours. But the gorgeous stained glass of mediæval days, such as still blazes in the old cathedrals, is an art of the past, and my ship contained it not amid her precious stores.

Yet once more is glass transformed, and from transparent and translucent is changed to opaque—opaque, yet not opaque. Neither clear nor colored, it possesses still more life in this its other form. For my mirrors not only receive light and color, but stamp them indelibly upon their surface. Placed in certain positions, they even enable me to see through opaque surfaces. By a glance into the hall through the door of the room where I sit I may discern what transpires in the adjoining room, though divided from it by a solid wall. Without my mirrors I could not even recognize my outward self. They double the objects in my house; they double the number of my guests; they possess a double life. They take the place of a Daubigny, for do they not reflect the Daubigny? And lovely woman, how could she look so sweet without her second self—her mirror!

The primroses in my garden are harbingers of spring; the primrose band in the south was the precursor of storm. All night the wind raved, bringing snow and still more wind with returning day. The weather-cock creaks ominously in its socket, pointing alternately west and northwest. I note a drop of twenty degrees in the temperature, and hereafter I shall distrust the primrose band.

Again the strange light in the south, shining brightly throughout the afternoon. This band appears most vividly through a vista of the grounds which focuses a distant slope crowned with deciduous trees and isolated pines. I notice it, at times, during late autumn and early spring, or on mild winter days when the moisture of the atmosphere may be perceptibly felt. The weather-vane always points to it, though no air be stirring—indeed, it only occurs during a calm. Glowing through the skeleton trees, a lustrous primrose or lively crocus, it illumines and transfigures the entire horizon of the south, as if inviting to follow it to a blander clime. It seems almost more beautiful than sunlight; it is colored sunlight screened from glare. When I attempt to trace it to the range of the southern hills it keeps receding to the hills and trees beyond—always present, ever out of reach. An observer standing there, in turn, would see it farther on, and these farther hills and trees would yield its luminousness to the landscape more southward still.

Is it typical of life—man grasping at an object only to see it disappear, seizing a pleasure to find it evanescent, relinquishing a hope for one yet more ephemeral; ever reaching for happiness to meet with disappointment at the goal?

Whence its origin? in what distant sky does it first appear? The swift wings of the hawk might trace it to its source; for me it is intangible. Doubtless with a word the meteorologists would dispel the charm it holds. I prefer to regard it as an occult force, a mysterious weather-sign to flash upon the wintry gloom and foretell the coming storm. In the present instance it brought yet more moisture, and was succeeded the following day by fog and driving mist, changing in the evening to sudden cold and wind.

A windy moonlight night, with clouds chasing each other like crests of advancing waves. The moon rides high in the west; the strong wind sweeps from the west. Æolus and all his retinue are abroad. The hillside trees toss and boom like the sea—it is high tide in the air. The air becomes a sea, the

clouds its surge, the trees the shingle upon which it beats. It fascinates like the sea! When the moon appears between the rifts it seems stationary; when partly concealed under a white cloud, it appears coursing rapidly westward, while the clouds seem traveling slowly eastward. The moon then becomes the voyager, and the squadrons of the sky the loiterers. Its luminousness is but slightly masked by the silver clouds, their translucency making them seemingly a source of light. Every now and then it disappears beneath a mass of inky breakers, gilding their outer crests ere taking its sudden plunge; it looks as if it were dropping from the sky. Almost immediately it reappears, so fast the clouds are moving. Anon it dips beneath a snowy surge, to re-emerge and sink below a Cimmerian roller, just as a swimmer dives into and is lost in the surf. Meanwhile, the wind roars like an angry sea. This glory of the wintry night my glass brings into my room. But the silver lining and life of the moonlit clouds can not be traced in written words, nor the varied voices of the wind be rendered into musical bars. The moon and the sun shine so that all may see. The wind blows so that all may hear.

I hear a new creak in my neighbor's weather-vane amid the moaning of the wind; or is it the repeated far-off blowing of a horn? Twice on my going to the door the sound suddenly ceases, to continue fitfully on my return. I discover it is produced merely by the side-light above my writing-table. Do we not thus frequently attribute ulterior motives to causes which exist only in imagination, or whose source originates with ourselves? Often is the humming in our ear.

> At times the small black fly upon the pane
> May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

How deceptive is sound! The leaf-cricket's chant on hot summer nights seems to proceed from the lawn, rods away; he is singing in the honeysuckle vine a few feet overhead. Not unfrequently, when sitting within doors, am I obliged to consider whether the monotonous humming I hear is the planing-mill far remote or the purring of the cat—my pet Maltese, who looks at me with her beryl-like eyes and arches her back to be stroked. But though she pricks up her ears when I scratch the under surface of the table, she does not long mistake the counterfeit for the wainscot mouse.

Little sounds, like the petty annoyances of life, are frequently the most unpleasant. A great annoyance one meets forcibly, knowing it to be a necessary evil that must be put out of the way. The snake is killed or evaded; the fly remains to harass. The roaring of the gale, the downpour from the sky—sounds loud and violent—are soothing rather than the reverse; the rattling of a window-blind is far more annoying. Who but the man that is filing it can hear without a shudder the filing of a saw, and who but the katydid himself can passively endure the katydid's stridulation?

A monotonous sound, providing it be not a rasping sound, the ear becomes accustomed to, and misses when it ceases. The ticking of a clock, in itself unmusical, is, nevertheless, soothing; you awaken when it suddenly stops. The nocturnal cricket's reiterated cry is a somnolent sound—a voice of the darkness and the dew. The grasshoppers' jubilant chorus sings away the fleeting summer hour, and by its rising and falling pulsation marks the waxing and waning of the year. Even when immelodious, most sounds of external Nature are not irritating. The rattling of the window-pane exasperates—one intuitively anathematizes the carpenter; the angry creaking of the boughs has a meaning, and one accepts it as a fitting and necessary accompaniment of the gale. The harsh barking of a dog rouses one from slumber; it is plainly in most cases an annoyance which has no just reason for existence—the neighborhood were better off without it.

The railroad whistles, scarcely farther removed and far more plainly heard, are not annoying. At once they are accepted by the mind as possessing a reason. For behind the whistle are the vast driving-wheels, the passengers, the mails, and the merchandise. When I hear the locomotive's whistle I feel the locomotive's power, and the significance of its strength. It is the voice of might and speed; the exultant neigh of the great iron charger. It sounds the hours for me. Day after day—night, morning, and afternoon—with the same exactitude, scarcely a minute after the engineer has opened the sounding-valve, do the cars, arriving and departing, pass along the opposite shore of the river. Far off among the distant valleys resounds the clatter of the oncoming train; now lost for a moment, now more distinctly heard. A mile and a half away on the still night air the whistle sounds, and the awakened echoes respond. I hear the roar through the gap of the hills, the crash across the bridge, the reverberating flight along the bank, the

gradual receding and absorption of the sound. Nightly, expectantly, I listen for it, and miss it when the train is late.

How much does not the arrival of the night express signify! how much of pain or pleasure to those it bears! Friends who have parted, and friends who are waiting; news sad and joyous; regrets and hopes; hatred and love; laughter and tears; all the emotions and passions harbored in human hearts are present in the rapid flight of the train. The engineer at the throttle, the fireman who supplies the fuel—calm, watchful, serene at their posts amid the deafening roar and jar—I think of them when the whistle sounds, plunging onward through the darkness and the storm.

What a fascination exists in the flight of a train—an exhilaration to those on board, an ever-recurring marvel to those who witness it pass by! A speck in the distance, it momentarily enlarges till, thundering past, it instantly recedes, as swiftly lost as it was swift to appear. Onward it flies, annihilating space, outspeeding time, flinging the mile-posts behind, bearing its burden to remote destinations. A moment it pauses to slake its thirst, or to deposit a portion of its burden, replacing it with fresh freight in waiting. Still onward it flies, linking villages and towns, spanning streams, connecting valleys, tunneling hills, joining States. Ever the crash and the roar, the great trail of smoke and steam, the engineer at the throttle—calm, watchful, serene—plunging through the darkness and the storm! This the whistle means for me.

Instantly I detect the whistles of the different roads, some more musical, some more acute, some deeper, more sonorous in tone. Varying in resonance according to the state of the atmosphere, they apprise me of the temperature without, like the audible vibration of the rails themselves when passed over by the cars. Clear and musical in the early summer mornings, during cold weather they are more sibilant and piercing. They are a weather-vane to the ear, blown by heat or cold, responsive to the moisture or the dryness of the air. I observe similar acoustic effects in the tones of the distant bells. So that I may often prognosticate the weather as surely by external sounds as by the shifting barometer of the hills.

Even through my windows I like to analyze the sentiment of animate sounds. “The nature of Sounds in general,” remarks the author of Sylva Sylvarum, “hath been imperfectly observed; it is one of the subtellest

Peeces of Nature." During a ramble through the woods and fields I am impressed by the various emotions conveyed by bird voices alone. Through them the woods and fields acquire an added meaning; they are the interpreters of Nature. Thus, the voice of the jay is a signal to inform his companions of danger; the scream of the hawk, a note of menace to intimidate his prey and cause it to reveal its whereabouts. The woodpecker's tap is a sound of industry. The mourning-dove's notes express sorrow; the hermit-thrush's, ecstasy; the veery's, solitude; the white-throated sparrow's, content. The voices of the bluebird and song-sparrow are sounds of welcome, an exordium of spring. The plaintive whistle of the wood-pewee, the liquid warble of the purple finch, and the refrain of many a companion songster, it would require the fine ear and fancy of the poet to interpret aright. Perhaps Frederick Tennyson well defines the sentiment they express in his melodious rendering of the blackbird's song:

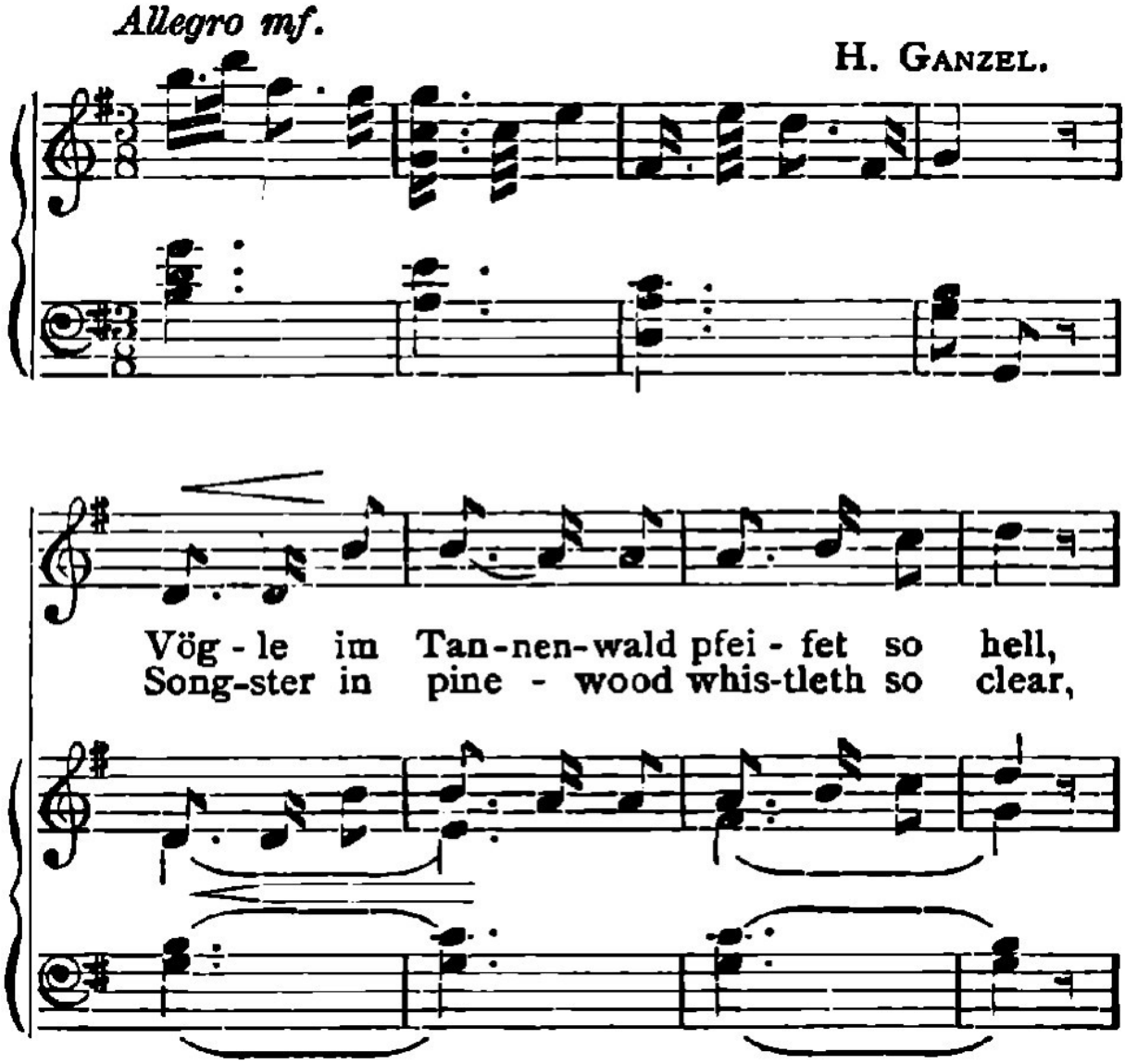
> The blackbird sings along the sunny breeze
> His ancient song of leaves and summer boon;
> Rich breath of hayfields streams through whispering trees;
> And birds of morning trim their bustling wings,
> And listen fondly, while the blackbird sings.

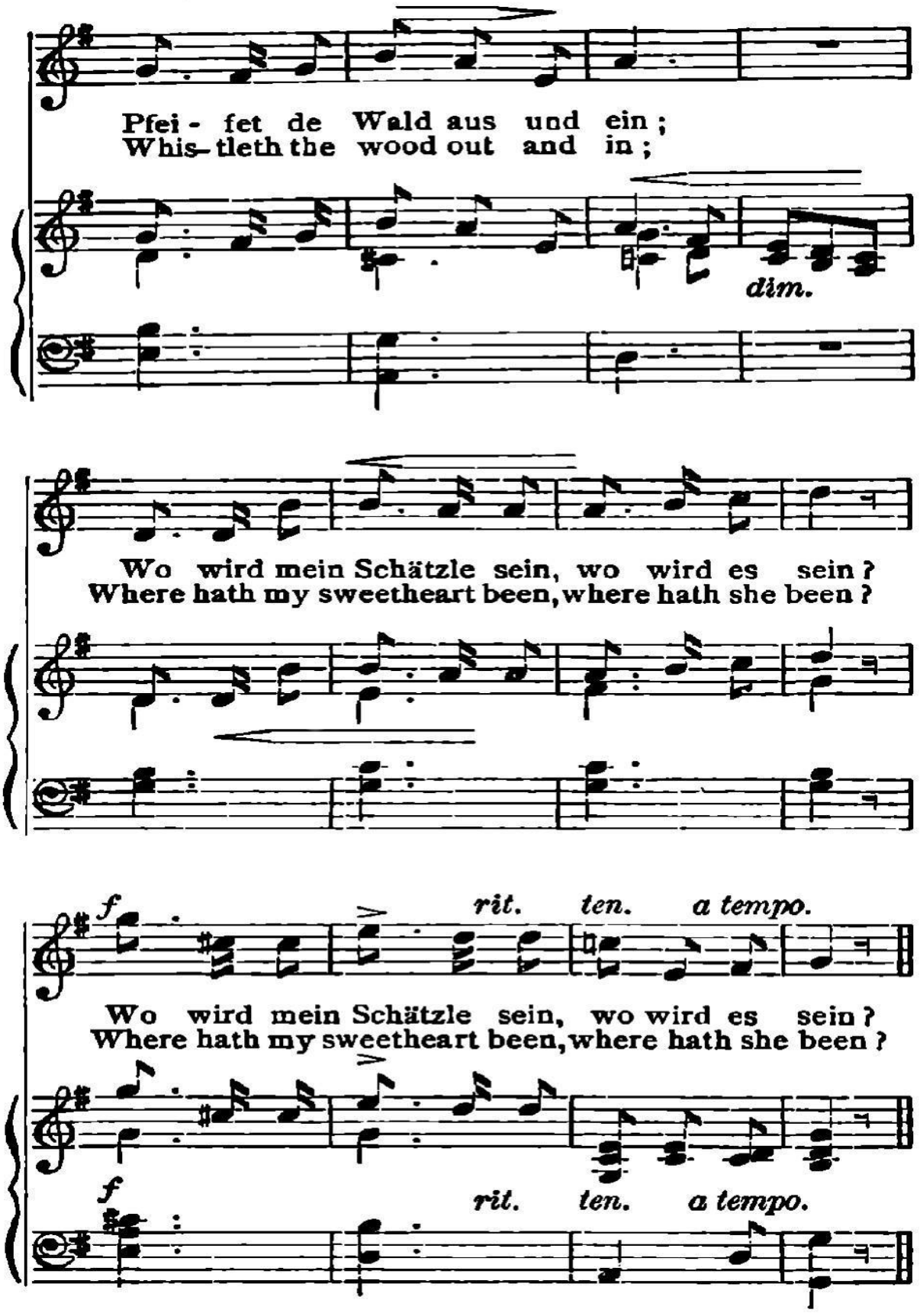
And how deliciously one of the sweet old Swabian singers has also voiced the blackbird of Europe, and interpreted his rippling strain:

> Vög'le im Tannenwald pfeifet so hell—
> Pfeifet de Wald aus und ein, wo wird mein Schätzle sein?
> Vög'le im Tannenwald pfeifet so hell.
>
> Songster in pine-wood whistleth so clear—
> Whistleth the wood out and in, where hath my sweetheart been?
> Songster in pine-wood whistleth so clear.

Is it a Minnesinger? I wonder; for I can not place the poet who hymned the feathered minstrel so sweetly. My German friend the professor, who improvises in music as deftly as Heine improvised in verse, and to whom I repeated the lines the other day, was struck anew by their haunting melody. Seating himself at the piano, he immediately set them to this exquisite accompaniment. The music has been ringing in my ears ever since—a very echo of the songster, rising clear and jubilant from the shade of the wood.

The words have been set to music before, a version being included in that melodious collection of national, student, and hunting songs entitled Deutscher Liederschatz. But this is commonplace compared to the rendition of my German friend. Try it those of you who have a voice to try; or let your sweetheart try it for you. You will then appreciate the consummate art of the music—the ascending scale of the second bar felicitously phrasing the whistle of the bird, and the falling inflection of the third happily portraying the cool, shadowy depths of the wood. And how like a silvery bird note of June the upper "g" in the seventh bar sounds the close of the refrain!




Pfei - fet de Wald aus und ein ;
Whis- tleth the wood out and in ;
dim.
Wo wird mein Schätzle sein, wo wird es sein ?
Where hath my sweetheart been, where hath she been ?
f
rit.
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Wo wird mein Schätzle sein, wo wird es sein ?
Where hath my sweetheart been, where hath she been ?
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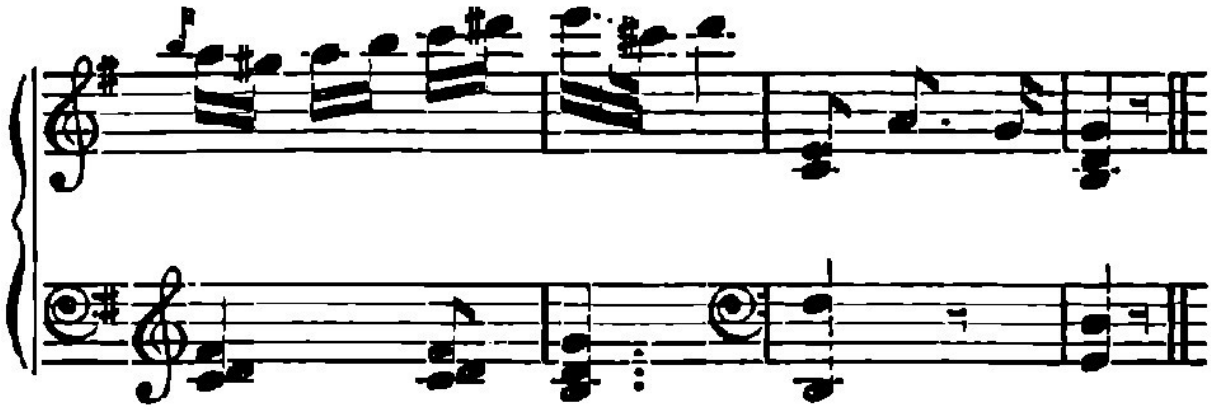

[Music:

*Allegro mf.* —— H. Ganzel.

Vögle im Tannenwald pfeifet so hell,
Songster in pine-wood whistleth so clear,

Pfeifet de Wald aus und ein;
Whistleth the wood out and in;

Wo wird mein Schätzle sein, wo wird es sein?
Where hath my sweetheart been, where hath she been?

Wo wird mein Schätzle sein, wo wird es sein?
Where hath my sweetheart been, where hath she been?

]

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No poet or prosatist, however, comes so near to the bird as the great prose-poet of the Wiltshire Downs:

“The bird upon the tree utters the meaning of the wind—a voice of the grass and wild flower, words of the green leaf; they speak through that slender tone. Sweetness of dew and rifts of sunshine, the dark hawthorn touched with breadths of open bud, the odor of the air, the color of the daffodil—all that is delicious and beloved of spring-time are expressed in his song. Genius is nature, and his lay, like the sap in the bough from which he sings, rises without thought. Nor is it necessary that it should be a song; a few short notes in the sharp spring morning are sufficient to stir the heart. But yesterday the least of them all came to a bough by my window, and in his call I heard the sweet-brier wind rushing over the young grass.”[10]

10. Richard Jefferies. Field and Hedgerow.

Just what emotion the caw of the crow conveys I am at a loss to determine, unless it be self-complacency—a harsh way of expressing it, it would seem. His notes sound more like anger; and in the woods he certainly does quarrel with the owls, the song-birds, and his own kindred. But his apparent anger may be only feigned, and his voice belie his real character. Assuredly, there was never a more self-complacent tread than the crow’s on a grain field. The farmer and the scarecrow at once become secondary to him, and pilfering becomes almost a virtue, he pilfers with such grace. His tread is as majestic as the soaring of the hawk, and though black as night and evil, his plumage glistens as brightly as light and purity. He seems a true autochthon of the soil. It is much in the way things are done, after all; boldness often passes for innocence, and self-confidence begets security.

Gladness, serene contentment, is most strongly expressed to me by the bobolink, the “okalee” of the starling, and the singular medley of the catbird. To be sure, the catbird frequently justifies his name, and is anything but an agreeable songster; but to make amends for his introductory discords he frequently gives us a delightful palinode. Plaintiveness, sadness over the departed summer, is conveyed by the blackbird’s warble fluted over fields of golden-rod; it is expressed in the trembling notes of the yellow-bird, as he scatters the thistle’s floss to the winds.

If we would carefully analyze the speech of external Nature, I doubt not we could trace some well-defined sentiment in nearly all animate sounds; assuredly in very many of the voices of birds, animals, and insects. For Nature’s moods and tenses are conveyed as strongly through the tympanum

of the ear as through the retina of the eye. Their correct interpretation depends upon our inner sight and hearing. I am not sure that in man's relation to Nature the sense of hearing does not contribute almost as much enjoyment as the sense of seeing. Certainly, Nature would seem but half complete without her characteristic voices. Think of her wrapped in the winding-sheet of eternal silence, a mere mummy, with no song of bird or whisper of wind to impart animation to her scenes. Color and form are but half the landscape; it is sound that gives it life, and renders it companionable. What is winter, in one sense, but absence of sound, not merely the absence of bird and insect voices, but the rustling of leaves and grasses, the murmur of waters, the life and movement of growing vegetation!

Are not the first signs of spring conveyed through sound? Ere yet a song-bird can find an utterance, or grass-blade impart a sense of resurrected life I hear the cracking of the ice and the gurgling of the frost-freed rills. The crow announces the change before the snowdrop comes, and the wild geese proclaim it from the sky before the sallows invite the precocious bee. No doubt the bee is already waiting for the flower, and winnows it into bloom; for no sooner is the corolla ready to expand than I hear his murmurous wings. High in the willow catkins; low down in the horn of the skunk-cabbage; bending the yellow bloom of the first dog-tooth violet, his hum of industry is heard. The bee is perhaps the first constant spring musician, though his is not the earliest vernal voice. The pushing daffodils of the perennial flower-border speak to me of spring, the choir of the toads and *hylodes* announces it even more emphatically.

How we should miss the voice of Chanticleer were the domestic fowl to become silent! It never occurred to me how important a role he plays until the author of The Bohemians of the Latin Quarter makes him serve as a matutinal alarm to Schaunard in lieu of the time-piece he has pawned. And Herrick, too, in His Grange, or Private Wealth, has the domestic fowl serve a similar purpose:

Though clock
To tell how night draws hence, I've none,
A cock
I have to sing how day draws on.

We might rise and retire, indeed, with the clock of the cock, and at all times of day and at all seasons we would sadly miss his voice were he subject to laryngeal troubles. It is a cheery and companionable sound, the absence of which would cause an appreciable void. Many sounds not strictly belonging to outward Nature become complementary to her through familiarity, or through the surroundings amid which they are heard. Thus the hills and valleys speak through the roar of the railroad train, and the harvest fields find a fitting tongue in the thrashing machine. A domestic voice rather than a voice of Nature, the cock's crow is, notwithstanding this, associated with Nature and rural scenes. It is more a voice of the country and a pulsation of the rural landscape than an expression of urban surroundings. The city hems it in; the country expands it. Orpheus might pause to listen to it when sounded from an autumnal upland, it is so resonant and sonorous. So much does the scene, or the conditions amid which sounds are uttered, affect the sounds themselves.

As a purely wild sound of Nature—the Nature of our own woods and fields—the cry of the owl is, perhaps, unrivaled. The bark of the fox has some analogy to it in point of wildness, except that his voice is always further removed. I hear it on moonlight winter nights following the undulations of the wooded hills—a short sharp bark thrice repeated at rather prolonged intervals. It is an eerie sound, the cry of the vulpine freebooter, ranging his native woods through the frosty winter nights. I never look up at the fox's pelt slung across the *portière*-rod in the smoking-room without a feeling of regret for the lissom life that was slain. The grand brush that steadied him in his flight; the sharp pointed nose, once alive to every atom of the atmosphere; the fine soft fur, beautiful still in death, appeal mutely to me for a life wantonly sacrificed. I care not how many grouse and ground-birds may have fallen victims to his cunning—they were his rightful prey, the spoil of his domain.

The drumming of the ruffed-grouse imparts a sense of life and companionship to the woods such as few other sounds convey. *Bonasa umbella!* there is a whir of vigor in his very name. Every one should be born a sportsman to appreciate his glorious *crescendo*; hunting is given to man of the gods, Xenophon rightly said. The grouse is the woodland guide, the alcaid who holds the keys to all its guarded recesses, the courier who knows every lane and passage that thread the forest depths. Accept his

invitation, and you are conducted into hidden nooks, and presented glimpses of sylvan beauty of whose existence you would otherwise never have dreamed. His roll-call is a stimulus to exercise, an excuse to explore the covers. Onward and onward and still onward he leads; now amid a sun-flecked vista of tree-trunks, now through a thicket of intertwining saplings, now to a woodland antechamber frescoed with October colors, now up some lofty hillside overlooking the empurpled valley. A taste of the bitter he also mixes with the sweet, as when flushed for the third or fourth time, weary of pursuit, he leads to an almost impenetrable thicket of bramble, perchance to skim off unseen on hearing your approach, or to dive deep down into a precipitous glen, only to mislead by suddenly wheeling up the hillside in a long deceptive flight. Most noticeably in the spring, and frequently in the autumn, and on tempered winter days do I hear the music of his wings, far away in some sequestered glade, beating a sylvan tattoo—most picturesque of all woodland sounds; it is as if the woods themselves were speaking.

The squirrel's bark is emphatically a sylvan expression. He knows its effect upon the listener, and selects a bland, sunshiny day when he may be distinctly heard. But only at a safe distance, for has not the fox taught him caution, and the grouse the wile of placing a tree-trunk between himself and the double-barrel? Were I to analyze the sentiment of the squirrel's bark, I should term it an utterance of derision. Not altogether derision, however; for besides a snarling tone, it has a perceptible sound of cracking and crunching, as of nuts and acorns being husked and split by a rodent's tooth.

An eery cry is the "ssh-p! ssh-p!" of the twisting snipe—two fifths a whistle, two fifths a cry, while to the nervous sportsman the other fifth is a jeer. A guttural cry, a strange raucous cry, a very voice of the treacherous ooze and the rustling sedge. It can not be put into words, and only the snipe himself can sound it. Most voices of the marsh are characteristic; it has its distinctive gamut of sound. The cheerful music of the woodlands is wanting; its speech is pitched in a graver key, in keeping with its solitary haunts where Syrinx ever murmurs through her murmuring reeds. How expressive its many-sounding tongues—the boom of the bittern, the harsh quack of the heron, the scream of hawk and kildeer, the multitudinous calls of water birds—

cries that might
Be echoes of a water-spirit's song.

All through the spring and autumn nights countless wings are cleaving the upper air, bearing the hurrying voyagers in search of distant climes—flocks of plover and woodcock, skeins of snipe and shore-birds, throngs of ducks and geese, voicing their way through the darkness, league after league, hour after hour on their long journey of migration.

I look for drought and heat when the cicada shrills. The rhythm of the cricket's creak tells me if the night be hot or cold. I see the gathering rain-clouds when the tree-toad croaks and the hair-bird trills. The bluebird warbles, "it is spring"; a thousand throats proclaim the summer. Sounds from the woods, sounds from the waters, sounds from the fields, sounds from the air! The infinite beauty of sound! Are not Nature's voices one of her most endearing charms?

How the gas-burner and window-pane have led me to digress! But even from my comfortable room it is sometimes pleasant to look out beyond the storm and bask in the luminousness of the primrose band.

# VIII.

# MY INDOOR GARDEN.

Tell, if thou canst, and truly, whence doth come
This camphire, storax, spikenard, galbanum;
These musks, these ambers, and those other smells
Sweet as the vestry of the oracles.

HESPERIDES.

ONTRASTED with the bleakness without, the greenhouses and conservatory possess an additional charm. Within their walls of glass reigns a luxuriance of leaf and bloom. Like the garden, however, the greenhouse will not care for itself. Many of the requirements necessary out of doors I find imperative within. And yet cultivation is on an entirely different scale, a mere pot of earth taking the place of barrowsful under out-of-door culture. In the garden I simply place a plant at the requisite depth and in the proper exposure and soil; in the greenhouse a finer discrimination is called for.

This small plant, bulb, or fern may not be plunged indiscriminately into any receptacle. I must measure the size and requirements of the plant; and not only place it in congenial soil, light or shade, but measure its needs with regard to the size of its prospective domicile. My small plants will fail with too much nourishment, my large plants pine with too little. Some will not thrive in soil at all, but must be cultivated on a block of wood, sustaining themselves merely on air and moisture. In the garden each plant draws from the largess of the earth just what properties it needs for growth and development, and the deeper the surface soil the better the plant will thrive. From some standpoints my greenhouses possess an advantage over my garden; in another sense the garden is more satisfactory. The one is

artificial, the other natural; but the greenhouse is, possibly, more easily controlled. With proper care and intelligence I can count upon certain fixed results. I am not dependent upon the uncertain watering-pot of the sky, and have nothing to fear from frost or violent winds. But I must needs exert a keener watchfulness over my charges; Nature is no longer the warder. Just so much heat, so much air, so much sun, so much moisture they must have. For tender exotics, born of a milder clime, are among my nurslings.

My orchids, for instance. Some occur naturally on damp rocks in a cool atmosphere; others on trees in dense tropical forests; still others on high elevations where they receive much sunlight. Shade or coolness, which certain species demand, are injurious to others which flourish in warmth and sunshine. The different habitats of the species, therefore, must be carefully studied, and the conditions under which they thrive in nature imitated as far as possible under glass. “A juggler,” says the accomplished curator of the Trinity College Botanic Gardens, “not unfrequently keeps four balls flying over his head with one hand, and the successful orchid-grower has to deal quite as closely with heat, air, light, and moisture.” My greenhouse, accordingly, calls for its parlor and bath-room, its smoking-room and refrigerator.

I miss the breadth and sunlight of the garden; I gain immunity from the caprice of the elements. My glass house bridges over the dreary interval between the last wind-flower of autumn and the first primrose of spring. If I can not go to the tropics, if I can not have the summer, I can at least recall the one and counterfeit the other. Could I control the sunlight and inclose a sufficient space, I should scarcely miss my hardy flower borders.

In the greenhouse I have my charges nearer my eye; I can watch their development closer. Many of the insect pests that infest the garden come to prey upon the plants indoors. The same warfare I wage without, I must wage within. Care and attention are ever the price of the flower. The insects continue to multiply. They develop new races and people new countries. No sooner does one scourge become extinct than a dozen others take its place. For the weevil we have the army-worm, the potato-bug, the apple-tree borer, the codling-moth. I no sooner administer a soporific to the red spider than the aphides are at work, and these are scarcely subjugated ere the mealy-bug appears. Cockroaches bite the orchid roots, mice nibble the

young shoots of the carnations. Mildew and blight likewise destroy, and snails emerge from unsuspected places to prey upon the succulent leaves.

My greenhouse gives me a bog-garden which the altitude of the grounds precludes without. My tank is a miniature bayou, a cage for aquatics. It is always pleasant to watch the growth of water plants, they seem so appreciative of their bath; the very fact of their growing from the water gives them a distinct individuality. These clumps of Egyptian papyrus and smaller variegated *Cyperus*, emerging from the ooze, are as beautiful as flowers. One of the easiest of aquatics to grow, the papyrus, or great paper-reed, throws out strong runners beneath the water, forming dense tufts of tall culms, crowned with large handsome umbellate panicles; indeed, it spreads so rapidly that it requires to be kept vigorously in check. The handsome variegated *Cyperus* has a tendency to revert to the type, but this may be prevented by cutting out the green shoots that appear.

The great water-lilies, too—the *Nymphæas* and *Nelumbiums*—are among the most accommodating plants for water culture, as they are unquestionably among the most beautiful of flowers. Equally handsome and fragrant, many of the species rival the terrestrial lilies, and are far less fastidious. Few, if any, of the species are more beautiful than the common water-lily (*Nymphæa odorata*), the white and perfumed cup that floats upon our ponds and sluggish streams. From my tank I may pluck its blossom without being mired, though I miss the kingfisher's clarion and the sheen of the dragon-fly's wings with which I associate it in Nature. I miss also the flapping of its pads when touched by the wind, showing the red under sides of the shields, lovely as the flash of trout that lurk beneath. Long must I search for a more delicious odor than that contained within its waxen folds. Begotten of the ooze, a stem shoots upward to the sun and air to unfold its chalice on some secluded pool. The first white water-lily, cradled on the water's rippling breast! it is the floral embodiment of summer. It falls upon the sight like the tinkle of a woodland rill upon the ear, imparting its harmony to the mind, a thing to be carried away and perfume the memory. I would willingly exchange the Zanzibar species for it, if thereby I might cause the white lily to bloom in winter.

For winter blossoming the former are invaluable aquatics, with pink-purple and blue flowers respectively, opening during daylight. The deliciously scented pink-purple variety (*N. Zanzibarensis rosea*), almost an

evergreen aquatic, is the strongest grower, its flat leaves also being large and of great substance. The night-blooming *Nelumbiums*, *N. Devoniensis*, *rubra*, and *dentata*, with pink, red, and white flowers respectively, are the best of their division. *N. speciosum*, the sacred lotus of the Nile, is a beautiful summer-flowering species with immense pink flowers; *N. luteum* is the tall-growing yellow water-lily, its blossoms seven to ten inches in diameter. Balzac, in Le Lis dans la Vallée, associates the lotus with the old Hellenic sentiment, except that instead of the word country he substitutes love:

> Cueillons la fleur du Nénuphar
> Qui fait oublier les amours,

the *Nénuphar* being the lotus of France, *Nymphæa alba major*. And those of us who do not know the lotus of the classics are all familiar with the lotus of Tennyson, "that enchanted stem" which whosoever did receive and taste, forthwith obtained rest and dreamful ease.

There exists some doubt, however, as to which lotus the old Greeks really referred to. The question, What was "lotus"? has been discussed intermittently for at least two thousand years. We must bear in mind that "lotus" was a term applied by the Greeks to several plants or trees. The Latin poets, and Pliny very likely, used the term more vaguely still, not being botanists as were some of the Greeks. For there is also the date-plum (*Diospyrus lotus*), a deciduous tree native of the coasts of the Caspian Sea, and cultivated and naturalized in Southern Europe, the fruit of which is edible. This has been held by some to be the lotus of the Lotophagi, or lotus-eaters. Besides, there is the prickly lotus shrub or jujube-tree (*Zizyphus lotus*), indigenous to the Libyan district and portions of Asia, to the sweet and odorous fruit of which has been equally ascribed the power of causing one to forget one's home. It is still eaten by the natives, and a wine or mead is extracted from its juice. The term lotus was also applied to several species of water-lily—the Egyptian water-lily (*Nymphæa lotus*), the blue water-lily (*N. cærulea*), and more particularly to the *Nelumbium* of the Nile (*Nelumbium speciosum*). The *Nelumbium* is a native both of India and Egypt, though almost extinct in the latter country now; and in the ancient Hindoo and Egyptian mythological representations of Nature, as is well known, it was the emblem of the great generative and conceptive powers of

the world, serving as the head-dress of the Sphinxes and the ornament of Isis. It was known, moreover, as the Egyptian bean, on account of its fruit, the cells of which contained a kind of bean employed as an article of food. Indigenous to China as well, the roots are still served there in summer with ice, and laid up with vinegar and salt for winter. Both the fruit and the root of *Nymphæa lotus* were likewise eaten by the ancient Egyptians; while Horus, the divine child who personified the rising sun, is always represented in hieroglyphics as emerging from a water-lotus bud.

In the East, a belief in a divinity residing in the lotus has existed from the most ancient times, worship of this divinity of the lotus being the dominant religion in Thibet at the present day. The daily and hourly prayer, Wilson states in the Abode of Snow, is still, "*Om mani padme, haun*," or literally rendered, "O God! the jewel in the lotus. Amen." In Cashmere the roots of the water-lotus are pulled up from the mire and employed as an article of diet. The root is sweet, and was formerly used for making an intoxicating beverage, as the sap of the palm is still employed in some localities. In like manner the roots of the yellow lotus were used by the American aborigines as an article of diet, Nuttall recording that, boiled when fully ripe, they become as farinaceous, agreeable, and wholesome as the potato.

Research tends to show that it is the *Zizyphus* rather than any of the other species of lotus to which Homer and Theophrastus ascribed the power of causing forgetfulness. Theophrastus and Dioscorides, Greek botanists, both describe different kinds of lotus, but their descriptions are not always trustworthy. Homer mentions yet another lotus, supposed to be *Melilotus officinalis*, the yellow variety of sweet clover common to this country where it has become naturalized from Europe. It was this plant which he describes as nourishing the steeds of Achilles. Authorities differ so greatly, however, that it is difficult to decide with absolute certainty which species of lotus is really the fabled plant of the Greeks, though the weight of opinion would point to the *Zizyphus* as against the *Diospyrus* and especially the *Nelumbium*. The poetical folk-lore of plants must not be expected to be literally true. Even the observant Greek, Aristotle, has many absurdities about plants. So has Theophrastus, but Pliny is full of the most ridiculous superstitions, which he relates with all the seriousness of a firm believer in them.

In attempting to place many plants and flowers of the ancient classic poets there is, therefore, always more or less difficulty and uncertainty. To identify the plants mentioned, without studying them in the country where those who wrote about them lived, is fruitless when there is such a great difference of opinion as to what the ancient Latin poets mean by "violet" or "hyacinth," or "narcissus." Sibthorp, who was Professor of Botany at Oxford, England, about eighty years ago and who was a fine classical scholar, went to live three years in Greece for the purpose of identifying the Greek flowers and plants mentioned by the classics. He returned with the conclusion that it is impossible to do it satisfactorily and he was quite certain, though the Greek language still remains in Greece very slightly changed, that what the modern Greeks call a "hellebore" or a "hyacinth" is different from the flowers that were called by these names two thousand years ago.

Herodotus (Book iv, p. 177) places the geographical range of the lotus-eaters from the recess of the Gulf of Cabes eastward to about half-way along the coast of Tripoli, which would correspond with Homer's account. The former describes the natives as living "by eating the fruit of the lotus—the fruit about the size of the Pistacia nut, and in sweetness like the fruit of the date. From this fruit the lotus-eaters made their wine." What Homer says regarding the lotus is this (Odyssey, Book ix, v. 82, etc.): Ulysses is recounting his adventures to the guests of the King of Corfu after dinner. He relates how he was on his way home from Troy, and was doubling Cape St. Angelo, when a storm from the north met his fleet and drove it from its course. After sailing southward for nine days, he sighted land and made for it, as the fresh-water supply was exhausted. The crews enjoyed the luxury of a meal on shore, and then began to wonder where they were. So Ulysses chose two good men, adding a herald with a flag of truce, a necessary precaution in those times when strangers were enemies, as a matter of course. These men were to inquire who the inhabitants of the land were. "The lotus-eaters received them kindly and gave them lotus to eat. As soon as they eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus they would not come back to bring me tidings, nor go away, but wished to remain where they were with the lotus-eaters, gathering and eating lotus and to think no more of going home. They shed tears when I dragged them back by force to the ships and tied them by ropes to the benches in the hold. Then I ordered the rest of the

crews to go on board at once, for fear any of them should eat lotus and think no more of going home."

To believe that the Homeric legend referred to the fruit of the jujube-tree does not necessitate our believing that the fruit had a sedative effect upon those who eat it. Rumors of a people leading a lazy and indolent life in a delightful climate and subsisting on the fruit of trees, and rumors that sailors accidentally landing there had given up the dangers and hard work of a seafaring life and deserted, would be enough to give the foundation of the legend. There is a story entitled The Mutiny of the Bounty, a true history, which gave the foundation of Byron's tale The Island; and there are many points of similarity between this and Homer's brief tale; but Ulysses, the man of many resources, proved a better match for his mutinous men than did Captain Bligh.

Tennyson's lotus "laden with flower and fruit," which is specified as being borne on "branches," is evidently the *Zizyphus* or else the *Diospyrus*; although the line—

The lotus blows by every winding creek

might lead one to suppose he referred to the *Nelumbium*, were it not for the former contradictory line and the fact that the water-lily grows in the water itself. At any rate, sufficient authority exists to render it certain that some species of lotus yielding an intoxicating product was regarded sacred because of an indwelling god. But whatever species was really referred to by the classics as the charmed nepenthe—whether the fruit of the jujube-tree, or merely a fruit of the fabled garden of Hesperides, to us the name lotus at once brings up the gorgeous water-lily that once rocked upon the Nile, with its grand pink blossoms and its great green leaves. The *Nelumbium* has taken kindly to American soil, having increased in several marshy localities in New Jersey with astonishing rapidity, entirely crowding out the native growths of arrowhead, pickerel weed, and horsetail, where it has been placed and become established. With its great tendency to spread and multiply, it will soon supply the dragon-fly a classic flower to rest upon, and the great green frog a still more spacious paludal throne than that hitherto supplied by the shield of the native water-lily.

Suspended above the tank are numerous large plants of *Lælia anceps* and *L. a. morada*, leaning their long lavender sprays over the pool, like flocks of hovering butterflies. With them are also suspended large specimens of the staghorn and the hare's foot ferns. Ferns and orchids invariably look well in combination. Palms being somewhat stiff themselves, do not associate so well with orchids, which need the relief of more graceful foliage. The hare'sfoot fern is appropriately named, the innumerable twisting rhizomes being soft and woolly, like the foot of a hare, and the fronds fine and feathery. Of all the *Lælias*, *L. a. morada* has the longest stems, and is among the largest and finest flowered. I grant the exquisite beauty and fragrance of the white form. Comparatively an inexpensive variety, the former is to be preferred to some others quoted at from ten to twenty times its marketable value. For in orchids, price very frequently does not represent intrinsic beauty of bloom; and mere rareties or orchidaceous curiosities are preferable in one's neighbor's collection. I am satisfied with fine specimens of a few of the easier grown and really beautiful species and varieties. A fine plant of *Cypripedium œnanthum* which my neighbor values at a thousand dollars is not worth my *Lælia* to me. Its flower is stiff in comparison, and its dorsal sepal, though strikingly rayed—white, striped with pink—has not the grace and beauty of the *Lælia's* velvety petals and the exquisite blossoms of many other species. After all, may it not well be questioned whether the hardy pink lady-slipper has a rival among the numerous species and hybrids of the big labellums and long-tailed petals?

My orchids, like my roses, have their parasites—the green and yellow fly, the black thrip, the mealy-bug, the lesser snail, the scale. Of late years the yellow fly has become more numerous, though, with the green fly, the rose is his especial prey. It is difficult to know what plan to adopt against my insect enemies. The rule of three will not solve the difficulty, for a mean proportional does not exist. If my houses are too hot or the plants too dry, the red spider and black thrip swarm; if too cold, the mildew comes; if the weather be muggy, it is a summons for the green and yellow fly. Tobacco stems placed upon the hot-water pipes banish the black thrip where fumigating is of no avail. Fumigating alone will disperse the aphides. The smaller snail I must bate with lettuce leaves; the larger one must be searched for at night with a lantern. For mildew I must place sulphur and lime on the pipes, and the scale and mealy-bug demand their periodical sponge-bath. The cockroach sips treacle and is lost in the sweets. Wood-lice

come from underneath the benches, and the lesser snail, despite all precautions, will sometimes bite off a flower-spike six times larger than himself. It all reminds me of a passage in the Faerie Queen:

> A cloud of cumbrous gnats do him molest,
> All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
> That from their noyance he no where can rest;
> But with his clownish hands their tender wings
> He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

Care and attention are ever the price of the flower.

It is hardly to be wondered at that orchids have their insects; the wonder is they do not possess them in greater numbers, the flowers themselves so resemble insects and strange creatures of the air. I can scarcely define which attracts me most, the singular flowers or the fantastic odors they exhale. Perfumes of lilacs and primroses—lilacs and primroses thrice intensified—greet me when *Oncidium incurvum* and *Dendrobium heterocarpum* are in bloom. The redolence of jasmines, jonquils, and cyclamens is combined in many of the *Cattleyas*, while *Odontoglossum gloriosum* seems a whole hawthorn hedge in flower. I open the door of the warm-house when the *Vandas* are in bloom, and I know not what subtle overpowering fragrance weighs down the air. What a sachet and censer of perfume! what a spice-box of the Orient! Cleopatra might have just passed through. Such strange odors! languorous, sensuous, all but intoxicating! I expect to hear a tom-tom's beat, or the rustle of a houri's skirt. Some of the *Stanhopeas*, how powerful their scent—a *pot-pourri* of all the gums of Brazil! The suave yet pungent aroma exhaled by one of the *Oncidiums* (*O. ornithorhynchum*), I can never get enough of. Its insidious, delicious fragrance defies analysis; it haunts me like an unremembered dream or a thought that has escaped. Intensely red flowers are seldom odorous; the brilliant *Sophronites*—some of them the purest essence of scarlet—are scentless. The *Phalænopsis*, too, although among the most floriferous of orchids, are likewise inodorous.

It is fascinating to attempt to trace the resemblance of some of the odors. G. W. Septimus Piesse would be at a loss to place many of them or to determine their combination. Some, on the contrary, are distinctly like many well-known and grateful odors, though generally much more pronounced. From *Dendrobium aureum* and *Cattleya gigas* there rises a triple extract of

violets; from *Cattleya citrina*, a strong fragrance of limes; from *D. scabrilingue*, a delicious breath of wall-flowers; from *D. moschatum*, a pronounced musk-like scent. Besides *Odontoglossum gloriosum*, both *Burlingtonia fragrans* and *Trichopilia suavis* emit a perfume of hawthorn. One of the *Zygopetalums* smells like hyacinths, one of the *Oncidiums* like cinnamon, one of the *Catasetums* like anise. The straw-colored flowers of *C. scurra* have a pronounced perfume of lemons. *Cymbidium Mastersii* is charged with the odor of almonds. *Dendrobium incurvum* is distinctly jasmine scented. A mellifluous essence of cyclamen clusters about *D. Dominianum*. Not a few orchids smell like honey, while in others I can plainly trace the scent of elder flower, heliotrope, the wild grape, sweet pea, vanilla, tuberose, honeysuckle, lily of the valley, and various tropical fruits, like the pine-apple, banana, and *Monstera*. The majority of the *Vandas* and *Stanhopeas*, and not a few of the *Cattleyas*, are puzzling to place.

Form is scarcely less strange than odor in many orchids, most of the species bearing a pronounced or faint resemblance to some form of bird, insect, or animal life. The *Masdevallias* and *Maxillarias*, how like the walking-stick and water-skaters many of them are! My primrose-scented *Dendrobium* looks like a flock of lovely buff-colored moths ready to take flight from the stems. The ivory-white flowers of *Angræcum sesquipidale*, whose perfume so strongly resembles that of the white garden lily, look like a starfish. These *Stanhopeas*, whose emanations are almost overpowering and whose spikes emerge from the bottom of their suspended baskets, remind me of serpents in the form and spots of their fleshy, purplish or orange-dyed flowers. The flowers of the species *Anguloa* resemble a bull's head; those of *Cycnoches Loddigesii*, a swan. In the white waxen flower of *Peresteria elata* I trace the symbol of immortality—a dove with expanded wings; in the terrestrial *Ophrys* I almost hear the humming of its bees. Many species closely resemble spiders and beetles; others seem almost an exact counterfeit of various moths and butterflies—there is no end to the strange resemblances.

Color is scarcely less strange than odor and form. These abnormal spots and blotches, these oddly tipped petals and painted sepals, I meet in no other flower. The lily, *Sternbergia*, and anemone have each been singled out as the candidate for the honor of being referred to in the twenty-ninth verse of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew. But was any one of these, or even

Solomon himself, arrayed like *Dendrobium Wardianum*? The most gorgeous of its gorgeous tribe, it is perhaps the most gorgeous of flowers; and among the easiest grown species, it blossoms freely, suspended in the library from a block of wood.

I must watch long to see a blue or purple orchid in bloom, colors common enough among garden and other greenhouse flowers. True red and vermilion are extremely rare, yellow in its various shades being perhaps the most common color, green and white occupying an almost equal place. Brown-shaded or brown-spotted flowers are common, and there exist numerous pink-purples and crimsons. Magenta frequently creeps into the *Cattleyas*, staining the crest of the pearl or cream-colored lobe, or splashing the curled or fimbriated lip. But magenta lends itself better to orchids than to other flowers; and objectionable as it generally is, it may be pardoned in some of the *Cattleyas*. It is a tropical color and brings perfume. Apart from the strange odors, shapes, and colors of the flowers, the orchid still continues exceptional in the wonderful duration of its blooms both upon the plant and in the cut stage. Epiphytal or terrestrial, tropical or native, in all its aspects the orchid is strange.

How few, while admiring the gorgeous beauty of an epiphytal orchid, think of the price it has cost to transfer it from its tropical habitat! For very many of the numerous species have been obtained at the sacrifice of human lives—martyrs to hardship, exposure, and disease engendered while wresting a new species from its miasma-infested home. The accounts of many orchid collectors who have lived to relate their experiences read like the exploits of a Stanley or a tale of Verne.

If my orchids are chary of red, many foliage plants supply this color abundantly, and ferns the graceful leafage and lovely greens which orchids lack. I say nothing of the palm, the tree-fern, the *Monstera*, the *Musa*, and similar large plants that require special quarters where they may have ample space to do them justice. But color and form are supplied by many medium-sized foliage plants of comparatively easy culture; and in selecting these, like orchids, it is well to choose a few of the finest and most distinct, rather than crowd the stages with a mass of plants of only average merit. One can never cease to admire the brilliant mottling and veining of the Croton's evergreen foliage, the grand purplish green leaves of *Maranta Zebrina*, the elegant markings of the *Calladium*, the velvety crimson-mottled leaves of

the *Gesneras*, the polished bronze shields of *Alocassia metallica*, the bronze-green and satiny luster of the *Camphylobtrys*, the vivid exquisite red tones of the *Dracæna's* younger leafage, and the *Poinsettia's* fiery scarlet whorls. Perhaps no other red, even that of the pomegranate, is quite so intense as the flaming spathe and spadix of several of the great tropical aroids belonging to the species *Anthurium*, valuable for their fine foliage as well as for their startling flowers. An interesting foliage plant is the old *Strelitzia reginæ*, producing singular brilliant orange and purple flowers, one continually pushing up beneath the other from its magical wand. The *Imatophyllum*, or *Clivia*, is likewise a satisfactory foliage plant, apart from the showy florescence of its large umbel of twelve to fifteen coppery-red blossoms.

The variegated form of the pine-apple (*Ananas bracteatus*) goes farther than any other greenhouse plant in its combined appeal to the senses, its rich reddish foliage pleasing the eye, and its rich red fruit captivating the sense of sight, smell, and taste. I fancy the smaller fruit of this variety is of more pronounced flavor than that of the type; but this may be simply owing to its more inviting appearance. One needs no other odor in the greenhouse when the pine-apple is in fruit. It was a Huguenot priest who described the pine-apple, three centuries ago, as a gift of such excellence that only the hand of Venus should gather it. It might have fallen from the sky a larger and more delicious strawberry. No one who has tasted it only after it has been plucked green and subjected to a long voyage in the hold of a vessel, can conceive its ambrosial flavor when cut ripe from the stem. It is a fresh revelation to the taste; it almost renews one's youth.

Some specimens of the *Sarracenias* or pitcher-plants are interesting, though when suspended from their baskets they lack their native grace. I always recall the *Sarracenia* as I first met it, its purple cups and rufous-green leaves fringing a deep black pool. Springing from the sphagnum, cotton-rose, and cranberry tangle of the swamp, it seemed to possess a conscious life of freshness and of color, callous to November frost and cold. The thick carpet of cranberry upheld the footstep on the quaking bog, and every tread spilled the water from the *Sarracenia's* brimming cups and leaves. Aflame with scarlet berries, a growth of black-alder skirted the outer edges of the pool; on the rising ground beyond, the gray boles and gilded foliage of a beech grove were illumined by the sinking sun. It was a study

for a Ruysdael or a Diaz, if a Diaz could reproduce the mellow grays and reds of the sphagnum and the *Sarracenia*. Fontainebleau or the thickets of Bas-Bréau hold no such pool; it is alone the product of a wild New World swamp.

Of flowers grown for the sake of fragrance alone, or beauty of blossom and fragrance combined, it is difficult to specify which are the most desirable—so many are so beautiful. Such stiff, soulless subjects as the camellia and calla are worthless, and should be thrown out of the greenhouse—there are too many good things to take their place. A flower should have a meaning, or a sentiment attached to it; and the camellia and calla have none; they are frigid even for the grave. Many of the glaring blues, purples, crimsons, and magentas of the *Cinerarias*, and some of the agonizing reds of the Chinese primrose are equally to be avoided as so much rubbish for which the greenhouse has no room. The common pink begonia, which every one grows because every one else grows it, should likewise be left out in favor of many other better varieties of its class. Of roses there can not well be too many; and of these a well-grown Maréchal Niel or a Gloire de Dijon can scarcely be excelled for luxuriance, fragrance, and beauty of bloom.

I should hesitate which to pronounce the most satisfactory—the cyclamen or the lily of the valley, both are so sweet. The latter is much more easily raised; the former must be sowed from seed yearly; it does not propagate. The fragrance of the cyclamen is delicious and distinct. But it is of a variable quantity, some kinds being delightfully scented, and some odorless. Marie Louise violets—

> The violet of March that comes with spring,

should, of course, be generously grown in frames connected with the greenhouse, to cut from *ad libitum*; there is no other indoor or outdoor flower to take the place of the violet. Neither can the carnation be dispensed with, this colored clove among flowers, which only demands a cool temperature to repay cultivation. And how could one be without the haunting fragrance of mignonette!

Tulips, hyacinths, and crocus, methinks, should not be raised indoors—their true place is in the April garden without, to herald the returning spring.

A few of the white, salmon, and vermilion geraniums are showy and sometimes useful, especially the small double vermilion; the majority do not compare with many of the fine discarded pelargoniums which florists complain they can not sell, for the simple reason that they do not raise them. The fuchsia has some fine and striking forms; the majority are undesirable. The heliotrope is desirable for its fragrance, though it withers quickly when cut. The *Freesia* is an easily grown and beautiful flower that should be forced as abundantly as the *Convallaria* for cutting. *Daphne Indica* and *odora* one can not well do without, and equally valuable for fragrance are the climbing Madagascar *Stephanotis* and some of the jasmines.

Among other desirable climbers possessing fragrance should be included some of the passion flowers and the showy yellow Brazilian *Allamanda*. A few specimen plants of the fragrant Chinese azalea are always ornamental, and useful for cutting; some of the rose-colored kinds are among the gayest of greenhouse flowers, notably the old variety “Rosette.” A somewhat difficult hot-house plant to grow is *Alstrœmeria ligtu*, with white and scarlet flowers appearing during February, and possessing a strong scent of mignonette. The pure waxy white flowers of the *Eucharis*, or lily of the Amazon, are invaluable for cutting, the robust bulbous plants being easily raised, and producing their flower-trusses in great luxuriance. For cutting, the numerous species of narcissus can scarcely be equaled; from the many beautiful bunch-flowered varieties of the *tazetta*, and the glorious blooms of the large trumpeters, to the smaller hoop-petticoat daffodil and golden campernelle jonquil. A plant seldom seen under glass, but an excellent plant, notwithstanding, is the common sweet-scented yellow day lily (*Hemerocallis flava*), than which few flowers are more beautiful either in the garden or greenhouse. Where one has sufficient space, the garden lilac may be advantageously grown in the greenhouse, care being taken not to force it too fast, or the trusses soon droop when cut.

Naturally, no greenhouse is complete without the chrysanthemum, which, defying the first frosts without, makes us forget the approach of winter within. I still grow the old-fashioned small-flowered white, yellow, and maroon pompons. Of recent years hybridizing has produced an innumerable quantity of large, loose *outré* forms among the Chinese and Japanese sections. In many cases this has been done at the sacrifice of bloom and

beauty of color. Dingy brown disks have crept into the flowers; and the chrysanthemum may be said to have deteriorated rather than improved under too much cultivation.

# IX.

# A BLUE-VIOLET SALAD.

Ce fut un beau souper, ruisselant de surprises.
Les rôtis, cuits à point, n'arrivèrent pas froids:
Par ce beau soir d'hiver, on avait des cerises
Et du Johannisberg, ainsi que chez les rois.
THÉODORE DE BANVILLE, ODES FUNAMBULESQUES.

THE dining-room is large and lofty, having been planned with special reference to ventilation, spaciousness, and the attractive views it commands of the copse, the garden, and the rising and the setting sun.

If it is pleasant to dream in the well-furnished library, if it is a delight to muse and study amid harmonious surroundings, how much more important it is that the great nursery of a pleasing frame of mind, the dining-room, should by its inviting surroundings and the care and intelligence bestowed upon its adjuncts, the kitchen and the wine-cellar, contribute equally to the felicity of the house and home!

With the exception of the ball-room, the dining-room should be the most spacious apartment of the house. For is it not the most occupied and visited? Three times daily, at least, the inmates assemble here; and in the case of entertainments I observe it is invariably a shrine to which the guests repair with almost one accord. To be sure, the host and hostess are not entirely neglected, and the flow of conversation is never wholly restrained in the drawing-room. Yet I have never failed to notice, where a large assemblage of invited guests is present in any house, how powerful a magnet the dining-room possesses. This not only to the sleek and rubicund

among the sterner sex—men who are known for their fondness for good cheer; but even to the slim and ethereal among the gentler sex, as well. Pale sylphs whom one would scarcely suspect capable of an accomplished play of a knife and fork, staid matrons, blooming rosebuds, and elderly dames, all seem no less fascinated with the charms of the dining-room. It is the source and dispensator of joy when its appointments are perfect—the one room of all rooms of the house which may not be abolished.

How may I enjoy the other portions of my house if the dinner be poorly served and the environments amid which it is partaken be dismal or unattractive? The dinner should be the diapason to pitch one in the right key for the evening, whether it be the perusal of a favorite author, a moonlight stroll, a ball, or a symposium with one's friends. Carlyle's dining-room, I venture to say, was a gloomy one; or his cook, lacking a happy turn for an *entrée*, served him with ponderous *pièces de résistance*, thereby the more intensifying his natural acerbity and want of geniality. Is the German invariably happy, overflowing with *Gemüthlichkeit*? He has three hundred and sixty-five soups, one for every day in the year. Is the Frenchman proverbially polite and effervescent? His delicate *ragoûts* and fragrant Bordeaux are a constant tonic to his spirits. "Repose is as much the result of a well-organized digestion as of a quiet mind," observes the axiomatic and irrefutable author of the 366 Menus. Thrice blessèd he who has a good conscience and a good cook. Your conscience may be as clear as a mountain brook, however, but without a good digestion life becomes a weariness.

A pleasant dining-room and a well-appointed kitchen, therefore, become among the most important factors in the happiness of the household—the best means of defeating that *ennui* which, according to Schopenhauer, fills the moiety of a man's life. The Savarins, the La Reynières, and the Baron Brisses can never be too many. "I regard the discovery of a new dish," said the late Henrion de Pensey, the magistrate (according to M. Royer Collard), of whom regenerated France has most reason to be proud, "as a far more interesting event than the discovery of a star, for we always have stars enough, but we can never have too many dishes; and I shall not regard the sciences as sufficiently honored or adequately represented among us until I see a cook in the first class of the Institute."

They manage these things better in France, though the art of gastronomy of late years has advanced as rapidly in this country, perhaps, as any of its

sister arts. It is no longer a burden to approach the dinner-table; and while we may not have transposed the maxim that Harpagon deemed so noble, nevertheless, it may be affirmed, in the strict sense of the expression, that we no longer "eat to live." For is not this among the highest of arts—a sauce "that, when properly prepared, will enable one to eat an elephant?" as Grimod de la Reynière observes in the Almanach des Gourmands. With an abundant supply of herbs and flavorings, a hygienic appreciation of their virtues, and a refined, discriminating taste, all is possible. The "palate is flattered" and the stomach is not fatigued. If the cook or the person who employs him would only carry out the advice the Almanach prescribes, in order that the cook's palate may retain its exquisite sensibility, and the trained papillæ of his tongue forever command their cunning!

These fine savors, these subtle aromas of a delicious dish, delicate as the fragrance of a wild flower, and companions of the liquid essences of the Gironde, the Côte d'Or, the Marne, and the Rheingau—when conceived and executed by a true priest or priestess of the range, how they refresh the jaded spirits and turn the lowering winter sky into *couleur de rose*! It remained for a woman, the late Mrs. Mary Booth, to give to posterity the most delicious epigram that has yet been uttered regarding dinners and dinner-giving: "A successful dinner is the best thing which the world can do in the pursuit of pleasure. It is the apotheosis of the present, and the present moment is all we can call our own." Neither let us forget for a single instant, where dinner-giving is concerned, the golden maxim of Baron Brisse: "A host whose guest has had to ask for anything is a dishonored man!"

Let the dinner be served in a well-lighted, spacious, and pleasantly furnished room; let the chairs be easy, the guests not less than eight nor more than ten (*les dîners fins se font en petit comité*), the linen spotless, the service faultless. Let the wines not exceed four—a light hock, redolent of the fruit of the Riesling; a glass or two of Montepulciano or of Pichon-Longueville, two *flûtes* of half dry champagne (cider rather than "*brût*") or sparkling dry Saint-Péray; and for the after-taste—the last taste of sweets—the perfumed sunshine of Sauternes, Lafaurie, or La Tour Blanche of a well-succeeded year, iced to snow. "A glass of wine," Richard Sheridan used to say, "would encourage the bright thought to come; and then it was right to take another to reward it for coming." Let the courses not exceed seven,

including the salad; let the room be well ventilated; the flowers mildly stimulating rather than cloying in their fragrance; let the repast not exceed two and a half hours in duration—and, for the present at least, we are—

> Notes in that great symphony
> Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic spheres.

The senseless practice of decanting wine can not be too strongly condemned. A delicate wine seems never the same as when poured from the bottle in which it has ripened and in which it has concentrated its odors. The practice, moreover, is incongruous; for even he who decants his "claret" would not think of needlessly dissipating the bouquet of his hock. As for the matter of sediment being avoided by decanting, decanted wines are invariably seen in a clouded condition, their bloom having been brushed off by the very process of decanting. By laying all bottles on their side, with the label uppermost, while they remain in the repose of the cellar, and then placing them upright a day or a few hours before they are required, the question of sediment is at once disposed of. Then, if the wine be carefully poured, label upward, it wells forth as limpid as a woodland spring.

Equally to be censured is the increasing custom of serving wine in colored glasses—a fashion inaugurated by the gentler sex in order to add a supposititious life to the table. Apart from the great mistake of thus masking the color of the wine itself, and thereby impairing its attractiveness to the eye, there is no color produced by the most cunning artificer in glass which approaches the colors extracted from the skin of the grapes themselves.

What green Bohemian glass may equal in hue this golden green of Liebfrauenmilch that so enhances the flavor of these speckled trout which but yesterday were swimming amid the waving water-cresses of the stream?

Or shall I obliterate the lovely color of Bordeaux which, captivating the sense of seeing, thus additionally heightens through the imagination the exquisite bouquet and flavor of the grand growths of the Médoc? Disguised in an opaque receptacle, how may I enjoy the liquid gold of Sauternes or the deep violets and purples which dance and gleam in a glass of Côte Rôtie? Yet more than clear crystal is required in the ideal wine-glass. The most delicious nectar loses half its virtues if drunk from a thick glass or a sharp, rough rim, as the foaming juice of Champagne is deprived of its greatest

charm—its bewitching, mantling life—when served in the flat tumbler that deadens its sparkle and its bead.

It was not without just reason that Boileau declared:

> On est savant quand on boit bien;
> Qui ne sait boire ne sait rien.
>
> Who drinketh well his wisdom shows;
> Who knows not drinking nothing knows.

And Jean le Houx, in the dedication of his sparkling Vaux de Vire—anacreontics which are unique in the languages—asserts that his best verses were produced by drinking good wine, while inferior wine was responsible for the poorest. It would be interesting to know what special wines inspired the incomparable tribute to his nose—

> ... Duquel la couleur richement particippe
> Du rouge et violet,

or whether it was white or red wine that drew forth the frolicsome stanzas addressed to Magdaleine.

Le Houx deserves to be classed among the great philosophers. It is to be regretted, however, that his philosophy did not extend to dining as well as wining—though, for that matter, the eight little 18mo volumes of the Almanach des Gourmands,[11] justly classed by Monselet among the great forgotten books, leave nothing to be desired on the subject of epicurism in its most infinitesimal and far-extending details. The humor and *verve* are exquisite, while La Reynière's style might come under the definition of Remy Belleau-"well-coupled and properly sewn words, graces and favors of a well-chosen subject, and I do not know what happy chance (*et ne sçay quel heur*), which truly accompanies those who write well." Only, the Almanach is in prose. With all due regard for Berchoux and his poem in four cantos, La Gastronomie, the editions of which are almost as numerous as the stars in the Milky Way, the French genius is yet to appear who may do full justice in verse to the pleasures of the table.

11. Almanach des Gourmands. Servant de Guide dans les Moyens de Faire Excellente Chère; Par un Viel Amateur. Troisième Édition. A Paris 1804-1812.

Le Houx, how fine his touch! and how melodiously he plays upon all the strings of the œnologistic harp!

I am brave as a Cæsar in wars where they fight
With a glass in the left hand and jug in the right.
Let me rather be riddled by drinking my fill
Than by those cruel balls that so suddenly kill!

'Tis the clashing of bottles to which I incline;
And the pipes and the rundlets, all full of red wine,
Are my cannon of siege, which are aimed without fault
At the thirst, the true fortress I mean to assault.

---

'Tis far better in tumbler to shelter one's nose,
Where 'tis safer than in a war-helmet from blows.
Better leader than trumpet or banner is sign
Of the ivy and yew bush that show where there's wine.

It is better by fireside to drink muscadel
Than to go on a rampart to mount sentinel.
I would rather the tavern attend without fail
Than I'd follow my captain the breach to assail.

All excesses, however, I hate and disclaim,
Not a toper by nature, but only in name.
Jolly wine, bringing laughter and friendly carouse,
I have promised, and ever will pay you my vows.[12]

12. Translation of J. P. Muirhead, M. A.

And in another of his mirthful, vinous phantasies:

To flee from my sadness, yet stay in one place,
I take horn and staff, and I practice the chase.
Catch, catch!
Drink, drink!
Hip, hip!
Catch, catch!
Keep watch
Lest it slip!

My game is the thirst, which I don't want to catch.
But only to make it decamp with dispatch.

The goblet's my bugle, which splendidly sounds
When I lustily blow; the bottle's my hounds.

The table's my forest and hunting-field green
When close set with covers for friends and me seen.

I blow on my bugle, and, loud though he cry,
Thirst soon will break cover, or else he must die.

O sweet-sounding bugle, mouth-instrument dear!
This pastime is charming when bedtime is near.
Catch, catch!
Drink, drink!
Hip, hip!
Catch, catch!
Keep watch
Lest it slip![13]

13. Translation of J. P. Muirhead, M. A.

But Le Houx's charming eulogies are by no means confined to wine. Cider, among the most refreshing and prophylactic of summer beverages when well made, evokes almost equally the playful strains of his lyre. Not less renowned than the juice of the apple of Devonshire is the potent apple juice of Normandy, and even in his reference to this there constantly occurs the oft-repeated refrain:

Drinking is sweeter than a kiss to me.

The true *raison d'être* of the Vaux de Vire, it may be stated, was a jealous wife. Since the time of Le Houx there have been other jealous spouses that have driven their husbands to the bottle or to something worse; but none have done so with such smiling effect as the wife of the wine-loving lawyer-poet of Vire.

With the wine at the proper temperature (and this point it is the bounden duty of the host to personally superintend), a few well-prepared courses partaken of with congenial friends amid pleasant surroundings will prove far more agreeable and leave more grateful remembrances than the most elaborate banquet. In dining, more than in anything else, quality rather than quantity paves the way to happiness. The *petit*, and not the *grand dîner* is the grace of the table. Like many of the accidental things of life—the chance meeting, the suddenly conceived excursion, the unexpected visit from out-of-town friends—it is often the impromptu repast which inspires the most delightful souvenirs.

It was years ago, though I remember it as distinctly as if it were yesterday, when I found my friend St. Ange, after an absence of many months, ensconced in the library, La Gastronomie in one hand and the epicurean epigrams of Martial in the other.

A Julienne soup, some smelt with a tartare sauce, sheep's tongues *à la Jardinière*, quail, and an endive salad were to compose the dinner. My guest's rosy face took on an added luster. His eyes brightened perceptibly at the mention of the quail.

"Let me prepare them!" he exclaimed. "I will show you how to make a *salmis* of quail that is not down in the cook-books; it is composed as you would blend and form an exquisite perfume:

> Thy crown of roses or of spikenard be;
> A crown of thrushes is the crown for me.[14]

I term it a *salmis à la bourgeois gentilhomme*; like Molière's *comédie-ballet*, it is piquant and full of delightful surprises. Give me the quail, the shallots, the truffles, the mushrooms, and you will never forget me!"

14. Martial. Elphinston's translation.

There were four larded quails, freshly roasted.

He took a piece of unsalted butter the size of an egg, placed it in the porcelain sauce-pan, and allowed it to liquefy. When it began to bubble, he put in two shallots and two sprigs of parsley finely minced, stirring until browned, adding a teaspoonful of sifted flour. When well incorporated, he supplemented this with two cupfuls of bouillon, a pinch of salt, and for the

*bouquet garni* a third of a bay-leaf, two cloves, a small piece of cinnamon, a pinch of thyme, a dash of allspice and the merest trifle of nutmeg. Next he added two sliced truffles of Périgord, the juice of a can of button mushrooms, a tablespoonful of cognac, a tablespoonful of water, and a wine-glass each of Chablis and St. Julien.

His face glowed, his hazel eyes sparkled, and every little while he tasted of the savory *liaison*.

After pouring in the wine, he allowed the sauce to boil until reduced to the desired consistency. The can of mushrooms was then added; and about ten minutes before serving, one of the quail was permitted to simmer in the perfumed sauce. Immediately previous to placing the *salmis* in the chafing-dish, and decorating it with *croutons*, he dropped in a pepper-corn and stirred briskly.

"*'Voilà qui est bien;' c'est parfait, mon cher!*" he said with a smile; "*le salmis a bien réussi!*

"I always use a good many herbs and seasonings," he continued, "though I employ them only in very small quantities. By using them, infinite variety of flavorings may be produced, and they are, moreover, a great tonic to the stomach if dealt out by a judicious hand. Hence the superiority of good French cooking; variety is the spice of digestion. Indeed, pleasing savors or sapid impressions usually exert the greatest influence upon the function of digestion. If they are good and agreeable, the secretion of the gastric juice is abundant, mastication is prolonged, deglutition and chylification are easy and rapid. If they are bad or repugnant, mastication becomes a labor, deglutition difficult, and a distressed feeling is the inevitable result.

"Perfection in cooking consists in rendering all such substances as may be utilized for food as agreeable to the taste as they are easy to digest. The cook, therefore, besides possessing a palate of extreme delicacy, should be thoroughly acquainted with the hygienic properties of all the herbs and seasonings he employs, and this equally with reference to their effect upon the stomach as with regard to their pleasing impression upon the organ of taste. All spices and kindred stimulants should be used with the utmost tact and discrimination.

“But the pleasures that flit about the well-appointed table—the appetite which is, after all, the best of sauces and that leads to good digestion and consequent health and enjoyment of the other pleasures of life—depend upon more than the *chef* and the *cuisine*. Back of the most seductive dish and piquant sauce, there remains the capacity to enjoy them, which is alone to be attained in its fullest measure by regular habits (habits as regular, at least, as rational pleasure and recreation will allow); and that greatest and purest of tonics and prophylactics—exercise in the open air.”

In due time the *entrée* was partaken of. The impromptu *chef* had upset the kitchen from casserole to *pot-au-feu*, but his *salmis* was worthy of Carème.

There was a great bunch of double violets on the table, the lovely dark blue variety (*Viola odoratissima fl. pl.*) with the short stems, freshly plucked from the violet frame of the garden, and the room was scented by their delicious breath.

A bowl of broad-leaved Batavian endive blanched to a nicety and alluring as a siren’s smile was placed upon the table. I almost fancied it was smiling at the violets. A blue-violet salad, by all means! there are violets, and to spare.

On a separate dish there was a little minced celery, parsley, and chives. Four heaping salad-spoonfuls of olive oil were poured upon the herbs, with a dessertspoonful of white-wine vinegar (the best in the world comes from Orléans, France), the necessary salt and white pepper, and a tablespoonful of Bordeaux. The petals of two dozen violets were detached from the stems, and two thirds of them were incorporated with the dressing. The dressing being thoroughly mixed with the endive, the remaining flower petals were sprinkled over the salad and a half-dozen whole violets placed in the center.

The lovely blue sapphires glowed upon the white bosom of the endive! It was the true sequence of the *salmis*.

A white-labeled bottle, capsuled Yquem, and the cork branded “Lur Saluces,” was served with the salad. You note the subtle aroma of pine-apple and fragrance of flower ottos with the detonation of the cork—the fine vintages of Yquem have a pronounced *Ananassa* flavor and bouquet that steeps the palate with its richness and scents the surrounding atmosphere.

Now try your blue-violet salad.

Is it fragrant? is it cool? is it delicious? is it divine?

# X.

# FOOTSTEPS OF SPRING.

... The yong Sunn
Hath in the Ramm his halvè cours yrunn.
CHAUCER.

In the earlier year when the chill winds blow
The breath of buds with the breath of snow,
And the climbing sap like a spirit passes
Through trunks unscreened from the noonday glow,
O'er the wind-frayed weeds and the withered grasses
And the leaves that linger in layered masses,
March, the Master of Hounds, doth go
To hunt the hills and the wet morasses.
C. H. LÜDERS.

Y books, my flowers, and my colorful interior surroundings do much to relieve the monotony of the long winter months. Not until *Aries* appears for his accustomed charge upon the spring do I yearn intently for its advent. Then the days seem the longest—the tedious days of waiting; the longest days, which are to come, will be the shortest. For the days may not be measured by the length, but by the flight of the hours and the beauty they bring; the sun and the shadows shorten the longest day.

Does not a restlessness come to man with the ascending sap in the trees, when he likewise would cast off the inertia that has possessed him, and respond to the magical touch of the sun? There is much that is beautiful in the mythopœic representation of the seasons. All winter, says the legend, the sweet sunshine is chased by the relentless storm, now hiding beneath the

clouds, now below the hills, showing herself for a moment merely to flee again. But, finally becoming bolder, the Sunshine advances to meet the Storm, who, captivated by her beauty, woos her as he pursues her, and wins her for his bride. Then is there great rejoicing upon the earth, and from their union are born plants which spring from its surface and spangle it with flowers. But every autumn the Storm begins to frown anew, the Sunshine flees from him, and the pursuit begins again.

Is not the sunshine, more than anything else, the prelude to spring? How it sifts and permeates through the windows into one's very being, this first March sunshine! Looked at from within it is already spring without, so luminous the atmosphere and so soft the shadows. Perfectly aware am I that it may not continue and that the storm will cause the sunlight to hide itself again, just as it has done so often before when it merely gleamed for a moment from the edge of the cloud. Even now the fickle sun sinks behind a sharp dark band in the west. The mole must retreat to his burrow; to-morrow the storm and the snow! At least the flowers will be shielded from the chilling blasts, and Nature work her own reward. Still must the north wind beat ere the south breeze may blow. But how, while it lasts, the sunlight warms where it falls, drawing a scarlet aureole from the maple, setting the snow-banks free, and liberating the ice-locked streams.

Every morning now must the Sun rise earlier to fulfill his task. The buds of a million forests long for his touch, hillsides of spring beauty and violets are eager for his approach, the flowers in every meadow and woodland are awaiting his alchemy. Already the willow catkins have stirred at his caress. The shrubby dogwood has felt his force, and kindles into flame. The wands of the golden willow are gilded anew; the red horn of the great aroid is peering from the mold.

Think of his task! To clear the earth of its coverlet of snow and clarify the streams; to burst the chrysalis and put forth the leaves; to push up the grass blades and perfume the flowers; to breathe upon and resuscitate all the dormant world of vegetable and animal life. The leaflets upon leaflets and fern fronds upon fern fronds the sunshine must unfold; the acres of grain and the clover fields it must fall upon; the myriad fruits it must ripen!

Lo! how marvelous the task; a smile and a summons for all!

Down in the hollows of the wood where the wind-flowers grow, under the meadow-grasses where the blue flag and lily bulbs wait, below the waters to bid the marsh marigolds and arrowheads rise, into the farthest swamps where the orchid hides, in waste places where tares and teazles crowd, on countless hillsides and in countless valleys must the sunbeams penetrate and quicken to awakened life. And all this gradually, little by little, day by day, hour by hour, bringing forth each blossom at its appointed time, giving the butterfly his wings, providing the bee his sustenance. What is there here on earth to compare with the miracle of returning spring, the labor and strength of the Sun? The power of Hercules a trillion fold is concentrated in the rays that are loosing the fetters of the streams to-day. Lo! the marvel of the renascent year, when Earth renews her youth and Nature is born again.

The March days pass, and more and more is the Sun's strength felt. His vassals, the showers and the south winds, he calls to aid him in his task; and at once the grasses and larches turn green and arbutus and bloodroot are fanned into bloom. A mile away the sunshine lights the hills; a league away it burnishes and warms the river. Daily the beams stream upon the earth and reveal fresh treasures. Swiftly a shadow steals along the hills. The tempered April rain falls from the gray April sky. Responsive, the sward assumes a brighter green, the daffodil a richer gold. The sap mounts to the topmost branches and penetrates the minutest twigs. Day by day the naked sprays are feathered by the pushing buds. A scarf of green is flung across the copse. The shadblow silvers the woods, columbine and cranesbill throng the slopes, and hepatica and dog-tooth violet nod to the quickening breeze of spring.

The spring days pass, but the miracle remains; hourly a new marvel is wrought by the sunlight and the shower. The oriole appears and orchards burst into bloom; the wood-thrush sings and the dogwood and wild thorn join the flowering pageant. The warm perfumed breath of the new year floats upon the air—the breath of flower and grass and expanding bud. Nature's color-box opens anew; her brush is laid upon each petal with what consummate address and variety!—pink upon the petals of the peach, a flush on the cheek of the apple bloom, a gloss of gold upon the buttercup. The Trillium thrusts up its snowy triangles, the gold-thread its white stars, and banks become purple with violets. Tiny polypody and oak-fern replume

the stumps and bowlders. From the frost-smitten meadows and waste places rise fresh pennants of green. Unfurled is the flag of spring. And the hues and odors that are still in embryo and the sunshine is preparing—all the sweets of June and the infinite beauties of midsummer, the wealth of the roses, the clover bloom, the labyrinthine tangle of wild flowers, even to the asters and colored leaf of autumn. The foam and surge of the apple bloom are but a wave of the color and fragrance that is to be. Æons ago the March sunlight fell upon the flowers and primeval nature. Vegetation welcomed it then as it welcomes it now. Next year and the next year and centuries hence will it fall upon the earth and work out the miracle of spring. Is it not new and ever beautiful, this vernal resurrection? That we, too, possessed this subtle alchemy and might extract this elixir from the April sun!

How the wings of the doves glisten and mirror the rays as I watch them floating by my windows! I love my flock of doves—the dove is so associated with the relentment of the elements and the olive leaf of spring. A monotonous life they lead in their diurnal circlings round the barn and their self-same route over their circumscribed domain—a monotonous life, at least, it appears to the observer, while probably the very reverse to them. Every load of grain which comes to the neighboring barns they may note from their vantage-ground and meditate upon its special virtues. The droppings of the barley now being stored in yonder granary undoubtedly form as weighty a subject to them as the fluctuations in the market do to the maltster himself. Then the incertitude which must attend the obtaining of their supply of food naturally furnishes them with a constant source of speculation; besides, who but they themselves may know what petty bickerings and jealousies form the daily routine of their inner life? The jaunty leader of the flock who curves his iris neck so proudly may be the humblest of hen-pecked fathers in the privacy of his home; and what appears to be the approving cooings of devoted dames may be only a prosaic homily on the part of his exacting wives.

My flock of doves seem alway idling and courting the sunbeam. Now, apparently, they are drifting aimlessly upon the air; again they veer suddenly, to turn a gleaming wing for me to admire. With what indescribable grace the circling forms hover over the eaves after each of their tours of investigation, the swiftly fanning wings seeming to cease their motion simultaneously as the flock alights, and once more preens its iris in

the sun. Indecision is a characteristic of my flock of doves—always uncertain of the direction they would take, and apparently never satisfied for more than a passing moment with their surroundings. No sooner have they flown to the meadow beyond the copse than they are back again; and scarcely have they perched upon the roof or discovered fresh pickings ere they take flight in another direction, to return as quickly. Is it that they, like the rest of us, are never content, and that much must have more? I should like to quote them a lyric from John Wilbye's Second Set of Madrigals, which possibly they may not have heard:

I live, and yet methinks I do not breathe;
I thirst and drink, I drink and thirst again;
I sleep, and yet do dream I am awake;
I hope for that I have; I have and want;
I sing and sigh; I love and hate at once.
Oh tell me, restless soul, what uncouth jar
Doth cause in store such want, in peace such war?

RISPOSTA.

There is a jewel which no Indian mines
Can buy, no chymic art can counterfeit;
It makes men rich in greatest poverty,
Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,
The homely whistle to sweet music's strain:
Seldom it comes, to few from heaven sent,
That much in little, all in naught—Content.[15]

15. The student of French poetical literature will notice the marked resemblance in expression of a portion of this lovely lyric of fourteen lines and the following prettily turned *quatorzain* by a singer of the sixteenth century:

Ie vis, ie meurs: ie me brule & me noye,
I'ay chaut estreme en endurant froidure:
La vie m'est & trop molle & trop dure.
I'ay grans ennuis entremeslez de ioye:

Tout à un coup ie ris & ie larmoye,
Et en plaisir maint grief tourment i 'endure:
Mon bien s'en va, & à iamais il dure:
Tout en un coup ie seiche & ie verdoye.

Ainsi Amour inconstamment me meine:
Et quand ie pense auoir plus de douleur,
Sans y penser ie me treuue hors de peine.

Puis quand ie croy ma ioye estre certeine,
Et estre au haut de mon desiré heur,
Il me remet en mon premier malheur.

Œuures de Louize Labé Lionnoize. A Lion par Ian de Tournes, M.D.LVI. Auec Priuilege du Roy.

The first of the migratory flocks have come. Is it the robins or the bluebirds first, or the omnipresent song-sparrow scattering his notes like a shower? Warm as the scarlet of his wings is the greeting of the starling from his haven in the reeds; and ah! how sweet the carol of the meadow-lark from the distant fields. Again I hear the warble which the blackbird dropped when flying over the autumnal stubbles, only it has a cheeriness that is alone brought forth by sunshine and the lengthening days. Little flutings and grace notes rise from sheltered thickets and sunny hollows—assemblages of snow-birds, Canada sparrows, and red-polls practicing their *Fruehlingslied*. The white-throated sparrow's silver strain I hear on every side, the very beat of the spring-tide and song of the sunshine. Even the voice of the crow has a softer tone. From my study windows I watch the sable hosts returning to their roost in the distant wood. I see them slowly filing by during the winter, at the appointed hour, but less numerously, and seldom audibly. Now they voice their passage; their shadows cast a sound. From time immemorial they have occupied a roost in the same wood, their numbers apparently neither increasing nor diminishing. The first squads fly over early in the evening, re-enforcements arriving continually until dusk. They come from all directions, the total assemblage numbering perhaps a thousand. Above the tree-tops, for half an hour before dark, there ascends a

weird chorus of evening, composed of every shade of corvine *basso*, and *basso profondo*. Borne from afar on the still evening air, the hoarse notes come to me mellowed and subdued—a fitting *ave* of the darkening day.

Later, the first swallow races by, with the first moth in his bill, urged on the wider wings of the south wind—the first swallows, rather; for there is not only one but a score coursing through the ether, exultant in the freedom of existence. Do they, indeed, drop from the sky some bland spring morning—spirits of dead children revisiting their homes—as the fanciful Roman legend has it? How swiftly they cleave the air with their forked tail and sickle-shaped wings! We marvel at the soaring of the hawk, balancing himself in an ever-widening and ascending circle, ever tracing the curve of beauty. We wonder at the agility of the humming-bird, and his power of suspension in mid-air over a flower. But the hawk barely flaps a pinion, sustained through some inexplicable agency in overcoming the natural force of gravity; and the humming-bird every little while rests from the friction of the air. Is not the perpetual flight of the swallow, his unceasing motion and incessant turning upon himself a greater wonder?

I stand on the margin of the stream just before an impending shower, when a concourse of hirundines is intent upon the capture of its prey. The surface is dimpled by the constant rising of feeding trout, and brushed every now and then by a bird drinking on the wing. It is a favorite haunt of both fly-catchers and swallows, lured by the rich insect fauna that congregate above the still expanse of water, the ephemerina dancing their joyous dance of an hour. The stream is scarcely a rod and a half wide. It is almost overarched with bushes and trees, and abounds with curves. There are at least forty swallows hawking over it, all chasing above the glassy surface, ceaselessly coming and going, swift as missiles sprung from a sling. Yet not a catkin of the alder tangle or blade of the rushes is so much as grazed by a wing; not a barbule of one bird ruffled by the feather of another, amid all their lightning turns and curvatures. It is the same in their chase over a field when attracted close to the earth by insects. It is the same in their coursing through the air which I see through my windows, only they have but their fellows, and no other objects to avoid. Yet even then their flight is a perpetual wonder.

Sacred to the *penates* the swallow was rightly held; it were a Vandal who would harm them. Beloved wherever they roam the sky, Procne has,

nevertheless, been comparatively neglected by the Muse, while Philomela has received the greater homage. Is not the swallow's warble sweet, associated as it is not only with the swallow's beauty, but with our very houses and barns and the blue sky that bends above them? Best known of all individual "pursuers of the sun" is the bird mentioned in the fifth stanza of the Elegy:

> The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed;

and his companion of the Winter's Tale, wheeling between daffodils and violets. Keats's line is among the most expressive that have been written on the bird:

> Swallows obeying the south summer's call.

Hood's simile is also fine:

> Summer is gone on swallow's wings.

Gay, in The Shepherd's Walk, has the swallow do graceful duty as a weather-prophet:

> When swallows fleet soar high and sport in air,
> He told us that the welkin would be clear.

Athenæus has referred as happily to the bird as any of the old Greek poets in a fragment, The Song of the Swallow:

> The swallow is come, she is come to bring
> The laughing hours of the blithesome spring—
> The youth of the year and its sunshine bright—
> With her back all dark and her breast all white.

From the Fables of Lessing I learn that the swallow was originally as harmonious and melodious a songster as the nightingale, until, becoming wearied of dwelling in lonely thickets to be heard and admired only by peasants and shepherds, she forsook her humble friends and took flight to the town. But, in the mad rush of the city, men found no time to listen to her

heavenly lay, forgetting which, by and by, instead of singing she learned to build.

I recall no reference to the swallow, however, comparable to Charles Tennyson Turner's, in one of his many lovely sonnets, Wind on the Corn. Not only the swallow himself is there, wheeling and curveting in all his buoyant grace, but the wind which accelerates his speed, and the rippling wheat field he loves to woo. The sonnet must be read in its entirety, and to recall it calls for no apology; it becomes the more beautiful the more frequently it is read:

> Full often as I rove by path or stile
> To watch the harvest ripening in the vale,
> Slowly and sweetly, like a growing smile—
> A smile that ends in laughter—the quick gale
> Upon the breadths of gold-green wheat descends;
> While still the swallow, with unbaffled grace,
> About his viewless quarry dips and bends—
> And all the fine excitement of the chase
> Lies in the hunter's beauty; in the eclipse
> Of that brief shadow how the barley's beard
> Tilts at the passing gloom, and wild rose dips
> Among the white-tops in the ditches reared;
> And hedgerow's flowery breast of lacework stirs
> Faintly in that full wind that rocks the outstanding firs.

Truly Boileau was right in his affirmation—a faultless sonnet is in itself worth a long poem; and Asselineau—fine sonnets, like all beautiful things in this world, are without price. No less beautiful is Turner's companion sonnet, A Summer Twilight—an *intaglio* cut in green jade—where the bat's flitting shadow, instead of the swallow's flashing wing, imparts life and motion to the scene.

The first lady-bugs, called forth by the grateful warmth, have left their hibernacle. The first wasps and blue-bottle flies are buzzing and bumping against the south window panes. I catch the first *tremolo* of the toads and piercing treble of the *hylodes*.

My first green bullfrog, too, "whom the Muses have ordained to sing for aye." Again I hear his grand diapason, just as I heard it last year and every year before as long as I can remember. Apparently from the same place in the marsh, amid the pond-weeds and water-plantains, where he suns himself

and dozes by day, and launches his *maestoso* at night. I wonder if it is really the same frog, with his great yellow ears and blinking eyes, and if ever he grows old? It is the old voice from the old place, more powerful and sonorous than the voices of his fellows. What a fine time he has of it—slumbering in the ooze throughout the winter, while I am shaking with the cold; cool and comfortable throughout the summer, when I am sweltering with the heat; with nothing to do but bask and bathe, or thrust out his long tongue for the flies that are foolish enough to think him asleep. I heard him just two days earlier this year than last, May 14, ten days later than the first swallow to make his presence known. It is said he must thrice put on his spectacles ere he permanently deserts his couch in the mire—i.e., look through the ice three times before he rises with triumphant song. He is invariably the latest of the spring choristers, and at once his magnificent *basso* completes the vernal pastoral.

I wish I might obtain the recipe of his spring bitters. Is it water-cresses or water-plantain? It is evident he grows younger with advancing years. "The croaking of frogs," said Martin Luther, "edifies nothing at all; it is mere sophistry and fruitless." But, unlike the frog, Luther did not relish a Diet of Worms; and I am not sure that the woodcuts of the old reformer do not resemble the head of my friend of the swamp, whose melody floats so serenely through the summer dusks. Horace, generally correct, was wrong with respect to the frog:

> ... Ranæque palustres
> Avertunt somnos.

The frog's is a somnolent voice if heard at a proper distance. One should not expect harmony from wind instruments in the first row of the orchestra chairs. If one's frogs annoy one, he should remove his swamp or his house. The orchestra of Nature calls for its bassoon and its cymbals—the bullfrog and the cicada.

A new poet has recently appeared in the Dominion. Among his many poems of pronounced freshness and beauty is one on the frog—more strictly speaking, five poems, for the panegyric consists of five connected sonnets. Not alone does this graceful lyrist and keen interpreter of Nature place the frog as the grand diurnal musician of spring, but he accords him a no less exalted place as a soothing minstrel of the estival night. I should be

guilty of ingratitude to my resonant friend of the swamp did I not append the fourth sonnet of the musical quintet:

> And when day passed and over heaven's height,
> Thin with the many stars and cool with dew,
> The fingers of the deep hours slowly drew
> The wonder of the ever-healing night,
> No grief or loneliness or rapt delight
> Or weight of silence ever brought to you
> Slumber or rest; only your voices grew
> More high and solemn; slowly, with hushed flight,
> Ye saw the echoing hours go by, long-drawn,
> Nor ever stirred, watching with fathomless eyes
> And with your countless clear antiphonies
> Filling the earth and heaven, even till dawn,
> Last risen, found you with its first pale gleam,
> Still with soft throats unaltered in your dream.[16]

16. Among the Millet, and other Poems. By Archibald Lampman. Ottawa: J. Durie and Son. 1888. Pp. 151.

Clearly Horace was at fault. The Greeks thought better of the musical piper of the marsh; but it has remained for the Canadian poet to chant more sweetly of him than Theocritus and Aristophanes.

After the treble of the *hylodes*, suddenly the first bee hums by in quest of the awaiting flower. The first butterfly flutters past, the first night-hawk booms, the first bat hunts against the crimson afterglow, and, behold! it is spring. "The weather of the *Renouveau*," old Ronsard hymned it—the miracle of the sunshine, the south wind, and the shower.

# XI.

# MAGICIANS OF THE SHELVES.

# I.

Around the hardest cark and toil lies the imaginative world of the poets and romancists, and thither we sometimes escape to snatch a mouthful of serener air.—ALEXANDER SMITH, DREAMTHORP.

Let that which I borrow be survaied, and then tell me whether I have made good choice of ornaments to beautify and set forth the invention.... I number not my borrowings, but I weigh them. And if I would have made their number to prevaile, I would have had twice as many.—MONTAIGNE, OF BOOKES.

F my rugs and porcelains are a study and delight in color, what shall I say of my books, these manifold colors and hues of the mind that rejoice the inward eye? When what François de Sales terms a "dryness of soul" comes over me, are not the genii of the library alway ready to instruct and charm? Not a myth, but a reality is the fabled lamp of Aladdin, luminous still on many an immortal author's page.

"*Un bon feu, des livres, et des plumes, que de ressources contre l'ennui!*" exclaims De Maistre. With a well-chosen library, even sickness loses its sting, and often a good book may prove a more efficient remedial agent than a physician's draught. Somewhere among the volumes there exists a balm for nearly every ill—books to stimulate and books to soothe, books for instruction and books for *ennui*. Every mood of the mind should be reflected from the library shelves, just as Bacon holds it that in the royal ordering of gardens there ought to be gardens for every month in the year. Books there should be in abundance that may be read again and again; books that may be taken in installments, every page of each one of which is a golden page; books to pore over as a miser conns his gold; books to be dipped into, or looked at "with half-shut eyes." From each page or each chapter of a good book there should be extracted a beautiful thought, as the wind in passing through a wood draws from each tree a musical note. That we possessed the memory of Scheherazade and could remember the books we have read!

No doubt, books are the great instructors, though Gautier's idea is an excellent one, that each college possess a well-equipped ship to make the

voyage around the world to read the universal book, the best written book of all. Unfortunately, every one may not sail round the world, but very many of us must be content, like De Maistre, with a voyage around our room. And wise, far-seeing Pascal long ago told us that nearly all our troubles arose from our not knowing how to remain in our own room. Perhaps, on the whole, this is among the pleasantest ways of journeying. You have but to step on board one of the numerous crafts in waiting, and with no further trouble than that of turning over the pages, set sail for any port of the universe. All this with a merely nominal price for passage, and relieved of every discomfort of travel.

May I not, with Symonds, muse upon the staircase of the Propylæa and wander through the theatre of Dionysus? Do I not visit the most romantic of all castles with Thomson? and what wood so cool and shadowy to stroll in as the forest of Arden? With Jennings I ramble among the Derbyshire hills and breast the breeze of the Sussex Downs; with Hamerton I float down the Unknown River; and with Higginson rock in a wherry and lounge about the Oldport wharves. Arm in arm with sweet Mariette, Murger again leads me through the Latin Quarter and the old lilac-scented gardens of the Luxembourg. Reposing in my easy chair, I may almost make the tour of the world in the sprightliest, most instructive company it is possible to imagine —Dumas *père*, in his inimitable Impressions de Voyage, is my guide, philosopher, and friend. The delightful dinners he invites me to, the delicious wines he sets before me, the sparkling anecdotes that are ever bubbling from his entrancing pen! I mount his easy Pegasus with De Amicis, and exchange the blinding snow for soft Andalusian sunshine. What an entertaining *raconteur* I have in Francis Francis to explain the traditions of manor and castle, and discourse upon British scenery; and what lovely trout I catch when, rod in hand, I follow him By Lake and River! Hawthorne raises his wand, and I am sauntering through the Borghese gardens. With Jefferies I accompany lovely Amaryllis at the Fair; and with Robinson I wander through an Indian Garden and listen to the bulbul’s song. There is no dust, the sun does not glare, I require no waterproof or courier in these easy voyages. I turn the enchanted pages, and the sun shines for me at just the right angle. My rambles never fatigue, however long the lane or steep the hillside. I need not worry over the arrival or departure of trains, dispute with landlords, or bother with luggage. At a signal, my ship is in waiting, ready to stop at the port I designate; in an hour

a smooth roadbed carries me across a kingdom, without a delay, without a jar. There can be nothing more delightful than these imaginary journeys.

"The ever-widening realm of books!" Over two centuries ago, echoing the voice of the ancients, Henry Vaughan decried against their constantly increasing multitude:

> ... As great a store
> Have we of books as bees of herbs, or more;
> And the great task to try, then know the good,
> To discern weeds and judge of wholesome food,
> Is a rare scant performance.

What a sifting there must be among them some day, as the volumes continue to accumulate—the mediocre cast aside to make room for the meritorious! Will there not eventually be some invention to preserve old books, an enamel for musty tomes, as wood is vulcanized or bodies are embalmed? Or must many works now existing in numerous volumes be reduced to extracts to find shelf-room for them all?

But to those who may be anxious regarding the accumulation of books, De Merrier offers this consolation: "The indefatigable hand of the grocers, the druggists, the butter merchants, etc., destroy as many books and *brochures* daily as are printed; the paper-gatherers come next; and all these hands, happily destructive, preserve the equilibrium. Without them the mass of printed paper would increase to an inconvenient degree, and in the end chase all the proprietors and tenants out of their houses. The same proportion is to be observed between the making of books and their decomposition as between life and death—a balm I address to those that the multitude of books worries or grieves."

What works will survive, and what books shall we read? "If the writers of the brazen age are most suggestive to thee, confine thyself to them, and leave those of the Augustan age to dust and the bookworms," says the transcendentalist of Walden. "Something like the woodland sounds," the same author observes, "will be heard to echo through the leaves of a good book. Sometimes I hear the fresh emphatic note of the oven-bird and am tempted to turn many pages; sometimes the hurried chuckling sound of the squirrel when he dives into the wall." "In science read by preference the newest works; in literature the oldest. The classic literature is always

modern. New books revive and redecorate old ideas; old books suggest and invigorate new ideas," says Bulwer. For knowledge of the world and literature, for polished grace of diction, for elevated and refined thought, and for the rhythm of beautiful prose, Bulwer might have called attention to his own essays, individual in the language. The publisher is yet to be thanked who will present Life, Literature, and Manners in a worthy and convenient form.

We read and learn and forget from the classics and the modern novelist as well. I sometimes wonder how posterity will regard the great writers of the present generation—whether Holmes will hold a more exalted place a century hence, or the Scarlet Letter fade. Will a mightier Shakespeare rise, and a sweeter Tennyson sing? And instead of sending posterity to Addison and Goldsmith for beautiful style, will the twenty-first century mentor refer the reader to a Spectator of an age that is yet to dawn?

The multitude of books one should read! It takes one's breath away to think of the titles. They are as innumerable as the buttercups of the meadow. Think of them! the miles and leagues of folios, quartos, octavos, duodecimos, 16, 18, 24, and 32 mos. on every conceivable subject that are sent out every year! The rows and rows of shelves, fathoms deep, of old books in numberless editions, cut and uncut, in cloth, parchment, sheep, pigskin, and calf, reposing in the book-stalls and libraries! Books grave and gay, comic and serious, storehouses of knowledge that are constantly shifting hands; others precious beyond price that are buried out of sight, their beautiful thoughts unread! The tons and tons of printed pages, in poetry and prose, awake and asleep in the public and private libraries of the great cities! They are as clover-tops in a field.

"The best hundred books!" Who shall single them out from the mighty multitude? It is like attempting to name the most beautiful flower, the most lovely woman—no one may know them all, and every one has his preferences. In life, art, and the study of literature it is at best a difficult question to point out the right way, as there are numerous considerations which require to be left largely to the discrimination of the person most concerned.

To decide on the merits of a work one may not take another's opinion; one must needs read, mark, and digest it for himself. The reader who

blindly submits to the dictum of another rarely does so to advantage. Far better to please one's self and scout the arbiters. Every person should form his own estimate of the merits or demerits of a work. When Robert Buchanan terms the author of such exquisite verse as Les Tâches Jaunes, and such finished prose as La Morte Amoureuse "a hair-dresser's dummy of a stylist," how is one to be governed in the choice of his reading, save from the standpoint of his own taste! Because Sir Oracle admires Gil Blas and the Pantagruel, is no reason why you should do so, and because a Taine may proclaim Pope a purloiner and a mere juggler of phrase it does not necessarily follow that the Essay on Man is not one of the brightest jewels of the language. Wisest is he who maps out his own course of study and reading. The predication of others can not make that pleasing to him which is in utter variance to his tastes and sympathies. "A literary judgment is generally supposed to be formed by canons of criticism," remarks Van Dyke, "but the canons are generally individual canons, and the criticism is but the synonym of a preference."

Often the bell-wether leads the flock astray. Carlyle would have had A Midsummer Night's Dream written in prose, and declared that Tennyson wrote in verse because the schoolmaster had taught him it was great to do so, and had thus been turned from the true path for a man. Emerson was always interested in Hawthorne's fine personality, but could not appreciate his writings, while, equally strange, the author of the exquisite Prose Idyls extols the labored Recreations of North. Holmes "never felt to appreciate Irving as the majority look upon him," and thinks the Sketch-Book "an overrated affair." Fitzgerald did not like In Memoriam, The Princess, or The Idyls, and wished there were nothing after the 1842 volume. In Memoriam has the air, he says, of being evolved by a poetical machine of the very highest order. Voltaire thought the Æneid the most beautiful monument which remains to us of all antiquity. Peignot, in his erudite Traité du Choix des Livres, terms the Georgics the most perfect poem of antiquity, thereby echoing the opinion of Montaigne, who pronounced it "the most accomplished peece of worke of Poesie."

Edmund Gosse finds Tristram Shandy dull; Bulwer asserts that only writers the most practiced could safely venture an occasional restrained imitation of its frolicsome zoneless graces. Possibly Horace Walpole comes

nearer the mark in referring to it as a very insipid and tedious performance, though he might have defined it as a remarkable work on obstetrics.

Skipping Don Quixote and the Vicar of Wakefield, and not having read Die Wahlverwandtschaften, Jane Eyre, My Novel, Rob Roy, The Three Musketeers, The Scarlet Letter, Charles O'Malley, and how many others! La Harpe terms Tom Jones "the foremost novel of the world" (*le premier roman du monde*). So, I believe, does Lowell. Wilkie Collins, shortly before his death, gave the honor to The Antiquary. The same renowned critic (La Harpe), considered the Divine Comedy "a stupidly barbarous amplification" (*une amplification stupidement barbare*); Mézières, another French critic, thinks it deserves to be termed "the epopee of Christian peoples" (*elle mérite d'être appelée l'épopée des peuples chrétiens*).

"We read the Paradise Lost as a task," growls Dr. Johnson. "Nay, rather as a celestial recreation," whispers Lamb. "I would forgive a man for not reading Milton," Lamb naïvely adds, "but I would not call that man my friend who should be offended with the divine chit-chat of Cowper." Again, though I myself may see much to praise but less to please in Paradise Lost, infinitely preferring Lycidas, the Allegro, and the Penseroso, I may, nevertheless, admire Lamb; and though I may recognize the worth of Mézières, I may dislike the Divine Comedy. All of us may not care for the Pilgrim's Progress or Hudibras; and some may prefer Cellini's or Rousseau's autobiography to Boswell's biography,—it is not always so easy to read and admire the books one should read and admire from another's standpoint.

What two persons look at things precisely the same? Human thought and human opinion are as varied as the expression of the human face. "There never was in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs or two grains. The most universal quality is diversity," observes Montaigne. "An opinion," says the sparkling author of Bachelor Bluff, "is simply an angle of reflection, or the facet which one's individuality presents to a subject, measuring not the whole or many parts of it, but the dimensions of the reflecting surface. It is something, perhaps, if the reflection within its limits is a true one." There are particular writers that, never widely popular, will always have their particular admirers, and we all of us have our special subjects or predilections that we wish to know most about, or are most interested in.

"*L'histoire c'est mo gibier en matière des liures, ou la poësie que i'ayme d'vne particulière inclinatio*" (history is my game in the chase for books, or poetry, which I especially dote upon), again observes Montaigne. Montaigne is so quaint he should be mused over in an old edition; it is like gathering mushrooms from an old pasture on a hazy autumn day. Plainly, it is out of the question to read everything even on a single subject, and many good books are practically unattainable. The Book-Worm, perched upon his ladder with a duodecimo in one hand, a quarto under his arm, and a folio between his knees, has at least four sealed volumes. Each person will read preferably such books as are in keeping with his tastes and line of thought, though he will greatly stimulate and enlarge his thought by also reading books diametrically opposed to his taste. The somewhat prosy mind will be benefited by familiarity with the poets; the super-poetic is improved by the balance and adjustment to be found in the study of works of reason and criticism.

But even then we may not read "the best hundred books" of some one else's choosing. "We are happy from possessing what we like, not from possessing what others like," La Rochefoucauld remarks; and his maxim is pertinent to the library. Tastes will ever differ in books and in bindings, in epics and in lyrics. Many nice people one knows, but one has not the time, neither does one care to make bosom friends of them all. Or, to cite Goldsmith, "Though fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few." Seldom do we admire in age that which captivates us in youth, and that which moves us in one mood may not appeal to us in another.

The most omnivorous book-worm can read comparatively little. Those who read slowly and digest what they read—if there is time in life to read slowly—may read still less. There is much in Bulwer's sentence: "Reading without purpose is sauntering, not exercise. More is got from one book on which the thought settles for a definite end than from libraries skimmed over by a wandering eye. A cottage garden gives honey to the bee, a king's garden none to the butterfly."

A happy remark with reference to the best-hundred-books controversy is that credited to Herman Merivale-"those books which everybody says everybody else must read, but never reads himself." "We praise that which is praised much more than that which is praisable," is a pithy saying of La Bruyère. Charles Lamb included in his catalogue of "*books which are no*

*books* generally all those volumes which ‘no gentleman’s library should be without.’” The author of that delicious anonymity, A Club of One (A. P. Russell), the failure to read which should send the delinquent to Coventry, is more of a philosopher than many of the professed literary law-givers. It is true he presents a list of his favorite books, but the list numbers considerably over two hundred, and these are delicately suggested, and not dictated in a perfunctory way; I have no doubt he has since added two hundred more. He must have read and remembered ten times a hundred to write the volume in question, and ransacked whole libraries to compose the companion volumes, Library Notes and In a Club Corner, veritable mines of sparkling sayings, sententious precepts, and literary anecdote.

Dana and Johnson have selected Fifty Perfect Poems with excellent judgment, no doubt, though who was responsible for the insertion of numbers forty-three and fifty is not stated in the preface. The Elegy, the Ode on a Grecian Urn, The Lotus Eaters, and a half-dozen other selections every one must have included in a similar collection. But beyond this dozen or so of immortal poems that by no possibility might be omitted, it is safe to say that almost any other anthologist would have gathered *Chrysanthema* totally different—so varied are individual tastes both in poetry and prose. The fifty best poems and the hundred best books to Dobson may not be the hundred best books and the fifty best poems to Gosse or Lang. The marvel is how Johnson and Dana could agree.

The scholar and the student who live for their books, the author, the man of elegant leisure, or the bibliophile may be benefited by a very large library, and share their benefits with the world; though there is often no little truth in what Gérard de Nerval said of the latter in a perverted sense of the term: “A serious bibliophile does not share his books; he does not even read them himself for fear of fatiguing them.”

“The amateur is born,” Derome goes on to say in Le Luxe des Livres; “he holds the Muses captive. If books could speak they would pronounce him a hard jailer. The bibliophiles ruin themselves in their calling, neglecting their duties to their families. Such are not men of letters, they are *bibliotaphes*. They bury their books, they do not possess them.... The luxury of bindings is extended to profusion. It is the *fête* of red morocco and tawny calf.” La Rousse thus defines the term bibliotaphe: “From the Greek *biblion*, book; *taphô*, I inter, I hide. 1. He who lends his books to no one, who buries them,

inters them in his library. 2. A reserved portion of a library where precious works or works that one does not wish to communicate are locked up." Nodier made still another discrimination, that of the *bibliophobe* whom he thus describes: "The *bibliophobe* would see nothing out of the way in burning libraries. He sells the copies that are dedicated to him, and *does not return the service*."

Between the *bibliophile* and the *bibliomane* Nodier draws this distinction: "The bibliophile chooses his books, the bibliomane entombs them; the bibliophile appreciates, the other weighs; the bibliophile has a magnifying glass, the other a fathom measure." But the close consanguinity which exists between the book-lover and the book-collector; the narrow strip dividing *terra firma* from the dangerous marsh ever lighted by *ignes-fatui* that lure the pursuer on and on, is well defined by Burton in the introduction to The Book Hunter, where, referring to the class for whom the volume was written, he finds it difficult to say whether he should give them a good name or a bad, whether he should characterize them by a predicate eulogistic or a predicate dyslogistic.

We all know of the man who paid a fabulous sum for a copy of a very rare work, only to consign it to the flames on receiving it, in order that his own copy might have no duplicate. This is an exceptional form of the bibliolythist, or book-burner. Among this class are included authors ashamed of their first writings, authors who have changed their political or religious views, or who have eulogized a friend who has become a bitter enemy. There exists another form of the bibliolythist which Fitzgerald has omitted from his Romance of Book-Collecting—the "burking" of a work by one who has been assailed. I know of a standing offer from a gentleman of three dollars apiece for every copy that booksellers send him of a certain volume which retails for a fifth of the price. The work contains a reflection on one of his ancestors, and as soon as the volumes are received they are burned. But the book-burner is by no means a modern institution, Nero and Caliph Omar still remaining the greatest of bibliolythists.

I would suggest as another desirable term to add to the lexicon of the bibliopholist the term *bibliodæmon*, or book-fiend—a designation expressive of something more than the ordinary significance of "book-borrower," innocent enough, no doubt, in some of his milder forms, but exasperating to the last degree in his most depraved phases. The borrowing

of a reference book or a volume, a chapter or a page of which may touch upon a subject that one desires to consult merely for the time being, is a matter apart. So also is the exchange of books between friends, or the borrowing of a work not readily procurable, the recipient on his part standing ready to return the courtesy, and forthwith restoring the volume unsullied.

Promptness in returning and scrupulous care of a volume are the tests which distinguish the comparatively harmless form of the borrower from the aggravated and exasperating one. The miserly practice of borrowing books, books from which the well-to-do borrower seeks to derive pleasure or benefit without returning a just equivalent, simply to shirk the trifling cost of the volume he covets, deserves the severest stricture. Such are library dead-heads and defaulters to publishers and authors. It is this form of the bibliodæmon who retains desumed copies for an indefinite period, trusting the loan may be forgotten; and who, deaf to all ordinary appeals and reminders, only relinquishes the volume—frequently maltreated—when virtually wrested from him at his home. The celebrated French bibliophile Pixérécourt had inserted on the frontal of his library-case these pertinent lines:

> Tel est le triste sort de tout livre prêté:
> Souvent il est perdu, toujours il est gâté.
>
> Each book that's loaned the same sad fate o'ertakes—
> 'Tis either lost or sent back with the shakes.

There really exists no reason why books should be loaned—there are always the public libraries in which the borrower may ply his trade.

A former shepherd of the printed flocks in the library of a neighboring town relates an incident illustrating a singular form of book borrowing, the offender being a divine. Passionately fond of books, he would take them home, forgetting to return them, and when interrogated would always find a happy excuse, the store of borrowed books meanwhile accumulating. "A scholar and a man of exemplary character and fine sensibilities, I did not wish to wound his feelings by an imperative demand, being convinced from what I knew of him, that it was a slight lesion rather than a fracture of the mind which caused the delinquency. I therefore awaited his departure, and

one morning, driving to his home with a buggy and a basket, I took possession of the borrowed volumes. He never referred to it. I do not think he even missed them. His passion was the joy of first readings, and he was proverbially forgetful."

My scintillant and learned friend the Doctor, who for years graced the Greek chair at the University, and whose name is a household word among scholars, as his presence is a ray of sunlight wherever he appears, contributes this supplement to the lexicon of the book-lover. The general reader will skip this passage; the bibliophile will thank him:

*Bibliodæmon*: a book-fiend or demon.

*Bibliophage* }
*Bibliocataphage* } a book-eater or devourer.

*Biblioleter* }
*Bibliopollyon* } a book-destroyer, ravager, or waster.
*Bibliophthor* }

*Biblioloigos*: a book-pest or plague.

*Bibliolestes* }
*Biblioklept* } a book-plunderer or robber.

*Bibliocharybdis*: a Charybdis of books.
*Biblioriptos*: one who throws books around.

# XII.

# MAGICIANS OF THE SHELVES.

# II.

As wine and oil are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding and many civil virtues be imported into our minds from foreign writings.—MILTON.

It is pleasant to take down one of the magicians of the shelf, to annihilate my neighbor and his evening parties, and to wander off through quiet country lanes into some sleepy hollow of the past.—CORNHILL MAGAZINE, RAMBLES AMONG BOOKS.

IT was held by Disraeli that literature is in no wise injured by the bibliophile, since though the worthless may be preserved, the good is necessarily protected, he no doubt having in mind the death of the collector and subsequent sale of his library. For though the bibliophile may stint his family and hoard his golden leaves and tooling, at least he abhors dog's-ears and keeps his treasures clean. La Bruyère, who gave us the delightful maxim, "We only write in order to be heard, but in writing we should only let beautiful things be heard," referred to these accumulations as "tanneries," condemning fine bindings, one of the few false dogmas uttered by the sprightly, entertaining author of Les Caractères. Fine bindings not only preserve but beautify fine books; and to the sentiment of La Bruyère I prefer that of Jules Janin: "*Il faut à l'homme sage et studieux un tome honorable et digne de sa louange.*" ("The wise and studious man should have a volume worthy of his praise.")

In Edouard Rouveyre's instructive and beautifully-printed manual on bibliography, the question of bindings is summed up in a sentence, fine bindings naturally referring to books that are worthy of beautiful and permanent coverings: "Binding is to typography what this is to the other arts; the one transmits to posterity the works of the scholar, the other preserves the typographical production for him.... The binding of the amateur," he continues, "should be rich without ostentation, solid without heaviness, always in harmony with the work that it adorns, of great finish in its workmanship, of exact execution in the smallest details, with neat lines, and a strongly conceived design."[17]

17. Connaissances Nécessaires à un Bibliophile, par Edouard Rouveyre, Troisième Edition. Paris, Ed. Rouveyre et G. Blond, 1883, 2 vols.

“The binding of a book,” the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone succinctly observes, “is the dress with which it walks out into the world. The paper, type, and ink are the body in which its soul is domiciled. And these three, soul, body, and habiliment, are a triad which ought to be adjusted to one another by the laws of harmony and good sense.” Nor should the book-lover neglect to carry out the rules relative to binding laid down by Octave Uzanne in his Caprices d’un Bibliophile: “A book should be bound according to its spirit, according to the epoch in which it was published, according to the value you attach to it and the use you expect to make of it; it should announce itself by its exterior, by the gay, striking, lively, dull, somber, or variegated tone of its accoutrement.”

With regard to the book-cases themselves, their height should depend upon that of the ceilings, and on the number of one’s volumes. For classification and reference, it is more convenient to have numerous small cases of similar or nearly similar size and the same general style of construction than a few large cases in which everything is engulfed. With small or medium-sized receptacles, each one may contain volumes relating to certain departments or different languages, as the case may be; by this means a volume and its kindred may be readily found. Thus one, or a portion of one, may be devoted to bibliography, another to the philosophers, another to poetical works, another to foreign literature, another to reference works, another to books relating to nature, art, etc.

The style and color of the bindings, also, may subserve a similar purpose; as, for instance, the poets in yellow or orange, books on nature in olive, the philosophers in blue, the French classics in red, etc. Unless methodically arranged, even with a very small library, a volume is often difficult to turn to when desired for immediate consultation, requiring tedious search, especially if the volumes are arranged upon the shelves with respect to size and outward symmetry. This may be avoided by the use of small book-cases and a defined style of binding. I refer to the general style of binding; variety in bindings is always pleasing, and very many books one procures already bound and wishes to retain in the original covers. Books, moreover, which are in constant or frequent use should not be placed in too tender colors. Volumes become virtually lost and inaccessible in the vast walnut sarcophagi in which they are frequently entombed, and lose the attractive look they possess when more compactly enshrined. Above all things, the

book-case should be artistic, artistically plain, except for the richness of the carving. Black walnut I should banish, unless employed exclusively for somber old folios, to accentuate their antiquity. Neither the library nor the study should appear morose or exhale an atmosphere of gloom.

In a room ten and a half to eleven feet high, five feet is a desirable height for the book-cases. Besides the drawers at the base, this will afford space for four rows of books, to include octavos, duodecimos, and smaller volumes. In some of the cases three shelves may be placed—the shelves, of course, should be shifting—to include folios, large quartos, and octavos. Where the ceilings are twelve feet high, six feet is a better proportion, this height affording five or four shelves, according to the size of the volumes. By leaving the top of the book-case twelve to thirteen inches wide, ample space will be allowed for additional small books, porcelains, and *bric-à-brac*. It must be borne in mind that tall book-cases, in addition to the inaccessibility of the volumes on the upper shelves, leave little if any space for pictures on the walls above them; and that, though books assuredly furnish and lend an air of refinement to an apartment, they still require the relief and complement of other decorative objects.

The cultured business man who may have the taste but lacks the time for extensive reading, the average man or woman who reads for recreation, may derive more benefit from a small library comprised of the best books carefully chosen than from the average large library. "*Quid prosunt innumerabiles libri quorum dominus vix totâ vitâ suâ indices perlegit?*" ("Of what use is an innumerable quantity of volumes whose owner may scarcely read the titles during his lifetime?") Seneca justly reasoned. It is not so much the dinner of innumerable courses as a few dishes well prepared. Except to those who read quickly and assimilate readily, the large library is apt to consist for the most part of "uncut edges" in the layman's sense of the term.

A good library is rarely suddenly formed. Moreover, if it could be, it were not half as satisfactory as a library added to by degrees, the growth and gradual increase of years. Again, some of the works that were considered a rare treat half a century since are no longer a treat to-day. They have become old-fashioned in the same sense as a garment. The critical eighteenth-century essay in its entirety, the old style metaphysical airing of some pet hobby, or didactic wool-drawing now seem rather ponderous

productions. At present one does not even care to read all of the joint productions of Addison and Steele (particularly the latter's essays), an averment that would have placed one under a ban twenty years ago. Yet even in Johnson's day the Rambler was more extolled than perused, the publisher complaining that the encouragement as to sale was not in proportion to the raptures expressed by those who read it.

With the increasing pyramids of books, selection must become proportionately more and more restricted. Equally is this the case with poetry. Many of the ancient bards still figure in the editions of the English poets—only to sun their gilded backs on the library shelves and seldom have their pages turned. It were absurd to assert that the Spectator and numerous other productions of a former day will ever become closed volumes. Curiosity, and their fame also, would always cause them to be read by futurity did not their merit preclude the possibility of their ever sinking into oblivion. It is very probable, however, that at no distant day many of the immortals will exist in abridged editions. Some authors, like Montaigne, on the other hand, can never be cut down; their redundancies and embroideries are their charm.

To our forefathers time was more lenient than it is to us. Somehow the days and the nights were longer, and the old-time reader appeared to find more leisure and a brighter oil with which to pursue his literary browsings and point his antitheses. "There is a certain want of ease about the old writers," Alexander Smith remarks (and I recall no one who has expressed it so musically before), "which has an irresistible charm. The language flows like a stream over a pebbled bed, with propulsion, eddy, and sweet recoil—the pebbles, if retarding movement, giving ring and dimple to the surface and breaking the whole into babbling music."

"When I looked into one of these old volumes," Thoreau characteristically says, "it affected me like looking into an inaccessible swamp, ten feet deep with sphagnum, where the monarchs of the forest, covered with mosses and stretched along the ground, were making haste to become peat. Those old books suggested a certain fertility, an Ohio soil, as if they were making a *humus* for new literatures to spring in. I heard the bellowing of bull-frogs and the hum of mosquitoes reverberating through the thick embossed covers when I had closed the book. Decayed literature makes the richest of all soils."

In this age of hurry and concentration who has the time to wade through the hundred volumes of Voltaire? It is even a task to go through his anthology, Élite de Poésies Fugitives, in the pretty little two-volume Cazin edition, there are so many more shells than pearls. But one's time is well repaid after all, if only for the sake of finding and holding one such exquisite bit of airy verse as M. Bernard's Le Hameau. Is it original, or a translation? The German poet Gottfried Bürger's Das Doerfchen and this are one and the same, except that the latter is somewhat condensed, though equally beautiful. Following M. Bernard's idyl is a panegyric in verse by Voltaire addressed to M. Berger, "who sent him the preceding stanzas," Voltaire's tribute beginning:

De ton Bernard
J'aime l'esprit.
C'est la peinture
De la nature.

Bernard, Berger, and Bürger; or Bürger, Berger, and Bernard would at first sight seem to be in a tangle. But in rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,

I praise my dear
Sweet village here,

undoubtedly should be returned to the German poet.

In the case of nearly every prolific author some few volumes represent his finest thought. I grant every one has or should have a favorite author, one who stands to him on a higher pedestal than all others,—an author whom he reveres and loves, and who must be read in every line that was the emanation of his brain. But for one to read every page of Thackeray, Bulwer, Goethe, Dumas, and the host of celebrated romancists, poets, essayists, and philosophers, delightful and instructive though they be, is a simple impossibility.

To return to the change in literary taste, and to instance a marked example, consider Wilson, or Christopher North. "Fusty Christopher," Tennyson termed this pompous *arbiter elegantiarum*. The tables have been turned since the editor of Blackwood reviled the poet-laureate, and the

animus of the criticism on Tennyson might now be applied to its stultified author. What magazine of the present could be induced to publish North's rhapsodies? An installment would seriously damage The Atlantic, Scribner's, or even Maga itself. How tiresome his ceaseless alliteration, his deluge of adjectives, his stream of similes, his invective, his bathos!

Many portions of the Noctes, it is true, are marvels of imagination and erudition, and some of his angling conceits are worthy of Norman MacLeod. Others, especially his selections as collected and published by himself under the title of The Recreations, are crusted over with algæ of self-conceit. It is the peacock who consciously struts. Pepys's reiterated "I" and quaint egotism are never tiresome; Wilson's pompous first person plural becomes a weariness. They used to give us Baxter's Saints' Rest to parse, in the olden school days, and I could not help but think that if the saints had such a horrible time, how fortunate it was we lived in a more advanced period. No doubt the schoolmaster might have given us worse books to parse; and, unquestionably, we should be duly grateful that The Recreations were not included. From the *a priori* to the *a posteriori* would have been so much harder sailing! Has not even the long-spun panorama of The Seasons lost something of its charm? Or, rather, should it not be read in an old edition?

Good editions of good books, though they may often be expensive, can not be too highly commended. One can turn to a page in inviting letterpress so much easier than to a page of an unattractive volume. The fine shades of meaning stand out more clearly, and the thought is revealed more intelligibly when clothed in fitting typographical garb. Often it becomes a positive labor to follow many a pleasing author in the small or worn types and poor paper with which the publisher mercilessly thrusts him into the world. The reader has virtually to work his passage through the pages and take frequent rests by the way.

Poor illustrating is even worse. Who may appreciate the beauties of The Talking Oak in the edition where Olivia is portrayed in the act of kissing a giant bole whose girth scarcely equals her own? One must ever afterward associate an oak with a fat Olivia. Apparently the artist never read Sir Thomas Wyatt:

> A face that should content me wondrous well
> Should not be fair, but lovely to behold,

or William Browne:

> What best I lov'de was beauty of the mind,
> And that lodgd in a Temple truely faire.

How dreadful, too, are many of the works illustrated by Cruikshank and Crowquill, which some profess to set such store by because they are held at such a premium by the book dealers!

Nearly as reprehensible as poor illustrating is pilloring the unfortunate author in the stocks of some atrocious color that must develop a cataract if gazed at long and fixedly. "I have been well-nigh ruined by the binder!" exclaimed one of the bright writers and literarians of the day; and before attempting to read one of his most entertaining volumes I stripped it of its frightful garb and clothed it in becoming attire. Otherwise one might not follow the ideas, the glaring blue and hideous figure of the original cover asserted themselves so strongly.

One should always endeavor to procure a good edition to start with; it is inconvenient to change editions. You come to associate certain favorite passages of a well-conned author with their place upon certain pages, so that you may instantly turn to them. The passages look strange to you in strange types, and you almost require to be introduced anew. With a change of page the mere thought itself remains the same, only it seems to have altered its expression. Let those who will, prate about a thought being a thought wherever it may exist. Some thoughts there are so airy and delicate they require to be read by one's self—they lose a portion of their fragrance if repeated or obtained second hand. They should be savored by the eye and heard only by the inner ear. "The dark line" of the sun-dial "stealing imperceptibly on—for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by"—is more sharply defined upon the page of The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple, the page where I first saw it, than it can ever appear to me upon any other page. Again, many flowers one enjoys most upon the uncut stalk. They may not be plucked and retain the full aroma they distill amid their natural surroundings. So that a quoted sentence from want of

connection often loses much of the charm it presents upon the author's page. And yet, on the other hand, quotation, when judiciously employed, not unfrequently places the author quoted in his most favorable light, while forming equally a pleasing complement to the page of the writer himself. Montaigne's *fleurons* of citation, woven from his scholastic and inexhaustible loom, what were the Essays without them?—limpid brooks and springs ever pouring their sparkling waters into the meandering, smooth-flowing river of the text. Merely by the change of type, quotation relieves the monotony of the page, while, with great writers, apt citation lends added emphasis and beauty to the thought, just as the art of damascening enriches a fine blade.

Good editions are everything in reading. Even the fragrant mint of Lamb possesses a heightened pungency to me when gathered along the cool, broad margins of a London imprint. Not only the mind through the personality or charm of the thought expressed, and the ear through the harmony and lucidness of the style with which it is uttered; but equally the eye, in the outward garb with which the thought is clothed, should be gratified in reading a beautiful book. The printer it is who contributes the finishing touches and heightens the reflective surface. Elia's buoyant, playful graces have, perhaps, received their most exquisite and appropriate setting in the two little volumes of the Temple Library, printed by the Chiswick press, the smaller being preferable to the large-paper edition.

It is pleasant to have some authors both in an early and a late edition. If I desire the notes, the full-page illustrations, and an amplified text, I choose the edition of The Complete Angler illustrated by Stothard and Inskipp and annotated by Sir Harris Nicholas. If I wish to get still nearer Walton—to hear more plainly his birds contending with the echo, to pluck his culverkees and ladysmocks, to smell his primroses, and admire the very "shape and enameled color of the trout it joyed him so to look upon," I read him in the old spelling and old font of the fac-simile reprint of the first edition. Moreover, for the sake of making comparisons, it is often desirable to have an early as well as a late edition of a favorite author. So subtle, indeed, are the niceties of reading they may scarcely be defined. How delightful the mere cutting of the edges of the book one longs to read, and the occasional dip into the pages as you turn the leaves!

Of a few favorite authors it is desirable to possess two copies, one in an inexpensive form to take when traveling. A trunk-maker is yet to appear who will contrive an apartment that will enable one to pack books so they may receive no possible injury—the one thing Addison's Trunk-maker of the Upper Gallery neglected. Besides, apart from the friction in its receptacle, a valuable book is liable to other injuries, or loss while traveling. The traveling volume should be small, securely bound, light in the hand, and not too bulky for the pocket.

But an old book of all books for true delight! The pleasure of reading Chaucer or Spenser is doubled by the types and the associations of the past. The foxed and faded pages are like the rust on antique bronzes, the lichens on an old wall.

In the preface to Wheatley's The Dedication of Books reference is made to this fascination which is conferred by an ancient font upon an ancient page. "There is," remarks the author, "a delicate flavor of antiquity and a certain quaint charm in the old print of the books from which many of the dedications have been drawn that seems to depart when the same sentences are printed in modern type, and we are apt sometimes to wonder what it was that we originally admired. The bouquet has fled while we were in the act of removing the cork from the bottle." Present, too, with the charm of the olden page itself is the thought of who may have first turned the pages when the book you are reading was in its fresh and spotless leaf, and whose hand it was that traced the annotations which embroider its margins.

To revert in parentheses to the sun-dial, Mrs. Gatty's monograph, recently republished and extended,[18] contains thousands of mottoes and references to the clock of nature taken from numerous languages, but none equal to Lamb's apostrophe. So far as references to the passage of time are concerned, there can be none more expressive than Ronsard's lines:

18. The Book of Sun-Dials. Collected by Mrs. Alfred Gatty. New and enlarged edition. London: George Bell and Sons, 1889. Pp. viii, 502.

> Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, madame!
> Las! le temps non: mais *nous* nous en allons.[19]

19.

Time goes, you say? Ah, no!
Alas, Time stays, *we* go!
(Austin Dobson's translation.)

Singularly, the beautiful sonnet in which these lines occur was one which had been cast aside by Ronsard from the later editions of his works, and was only reprinted in Buon's edition of 1609. Still more singular it seems that the "Prince of Poets" should have remained comparatively unappreciated for two centuries until reintroduced by St. Beuve. Am I mistaken in thinking there is a pronounced resemblance between this sonnet and Shakespeare's "When I do count the clock that tells the time"?

Chaucer's—

For tho' we sleep, or wake, or rome, or ride,
Ay fleeth the time, it will no man abide,

and Spenser's—

Make hast, therefore, sweet Love, whilst it is prime,
For none can call again the passèd time,

are as fine as any of the allusions by the classic poets who have festooned and intertwined the passing hour with rosebuds and asphodels.

I find the Book of Sun-Dials a delightful volume to take up when in a meditative mood. It needs, withal, a still room and a still hour to be read in, an environing quietness like the whisper of the gnomon itself. Then rambling through the pages, the present becomes absorbed by the past as you muse over the icons of the dials and moralize upon the quaint inscriptions. Transcribed in large Italic type, the mottoes stand out with the vividness of an epitaph graven upon a tomb, voices from posterity preaching from the perennial text:

As Time And Houres Passeth Awaye
So Doeth The Life Of Man Decaye.

Often as you contemplate the time-posts and their *intaglios* do they absorb the attention afresh, casting new shades of meaning from the sentient styles.

They transport you into gardens where old-fashioned flowers and historic yew-trees grow, they conduct you through old churchyards among neglected graves, they deliver their homilies from weather-beaten walls, and their pathos appeals from many an ancient sanctuary and moss-grown lintel. How noiselessly, how serenely they mark the flight of time! It is Time itself inaudibly counting the hours; the day suavely balancing its silent periods. They mirror primitive time, removed from the present turmoil, when the sun was the pendulum and the shadow the index-hand. Associated with Nature by ties the most endearing, by the golden sunshine, the murmuring breeze, and the songs of birds, the dial becomes, as it were, a reflective facet of external Nature in her gracious moods, its very shadow representing sunlight, the sunlight absent where the shadow is not. The sun-dial has molded itself to grace, and with rare exceptions its mottoes are happily chosen, attesting hours of meditation in forming an epigram or shaping a poetic fancy to blend with the shifting shadow. Certainly many of the sentiments collated in the monograph referred to are of more than passing interest. Their pathos and their quaintness set one dreaming.

Among the many inscriptions which arrested me while first turning the leaves, a few may be appended without, I trust, fatiguing the reader. Let her or him moralize a moment, and consider life from the standpoint of the dial, now grave, now gay; now lively, now severe. Though Time hurries mankind it has apparently not hurried the dials in choosing their inscriptions. It is rather a case of *festina lente* than *hora fugit*. Some are as terse as an epigram of Martial or a proverb from Job; others sweet as a hymn of Watts or a stanza from The Temple. Thus, light and shadow are felicitously blended in the tale a dial tells on a house at Wadsley, near Sheffield, the moralist preaching from a niche in the wall:

Of Shade And Sunshine For Each Hour
See Here A Measure Made:
Then Wonder Not If Life Consist
Of Sunshine And Of Shade.

I Mark The Moments Trod For
Good Or Ill

has been the burden of the vertical dial at the priory, Warwick, since 1556.

Lifes But A Shadow
Mans But Dust
This Dyall Sayes
Dy All We Must

says the dial on the Church of All Saints, Winkleigh, Devon.

I Am A Shadow, So Art Thou
I Mark Time, Dost Thou?

is inscribed on an old horologium in the Grey Friars' churchyard, Sterling.

Sweetly fragrant are the lines incised on the four sides of a stone dial in a flower-garden at South Windleham:

I Stand Amid Ye Summere Flowers
To Tell Ye Passage Of Ye Houres.
When Winter Steals Ye Flowers Awaye
I Tell Ye Passinge Of Their Daye.
O Man Whose Flesh Is But As Grasse
Like Summere Floweres Thy Life Shall Passe.
Whiles Tyme Is Thine Laye Up In Store
And Thou Shalt Live For Ever More.

Pretty, also, are the lines by James Montgomery beneath a vertical dial in Burneston, Yorkshire:

Time From The Church Tower Cries To You And Me,
Upon This Moment Hangs Eternity:
The Dial's Index And The Belfry's Chime
To Eye And Ear Confirm This Truth Of Time.
Prepare To Meet It; Death Will Not Delay;
Take Then Thy Saviour's Warning—Watch And Pray!

One of the mottoes has an echo of Sidney:

Time As He Passes Us Has A Dove's Wing
Unsoiled And Swift, And Of A Silken Sound.

"The Night Cometh" is neatly amplified upon a plate that supports a cross sun-dial on a stone pedestal upon the terrace of the hospital of St. Cross, Rugby:

The Passing Shadows Which The Sunbeams Throw
Athwart This Cross, Time's Hastening Foot-Steps Show;
Warned By Their Teaching Work Ere Day Be O'er,
Soon Comes The Night When Man Can Work No More.

One motto reads Unam Time (Fear one hour); another, Unam Timeo (One hour I fear). Two others read, Heu Quærimus Umbram, Heu Patimus Umbram (Alas! we pursue a shadow), (Alas! we endure the shadow). Eheu Fugaces is marked upon a Yorkshire plate, and Labuntur Anni on Burnham Church, Somerset. The shortest mottoes are Redeme, J'avance, Remember, Irrevocabile. A beautiful stone sun-dial still casts its shadow in the old garden of Gilbert White, and is figured in Macmillan's edition of the Natural History of Selborne. This is not mentioned in Mrs. Gatty's comprehensive work, and I can not determine from the illustration whether it bears a motto. Each To His Task, taken from White's Invitation would be an appropriate inscription.

One of the quaintest inscriptions mentioned in the Book of Sun-Dials is that which looks from the wall of a church at Argentière, near Vallouse. It was scarcely composed in an hour, and loses much in the translation:

Cette Montre Par Son Ombre Montre
Que Comme L'Ombre Passent Nos Jours.

(This marker marks by its shadow that our days pass away like a shadow).

There is much of moral coloring in these two lines:

Haste Traveller, The Sun Is Sinking Low
He Shall Return Again, But Never Thou.

And is this not altogether lovely?

Give God Thy Heart, Thy Hopes, Thy Gifts, Thy Gold,
The Day Wears On, The Times Are Waxing Old.

And so one might go on quoting the old moral, shadowed by different texts. Perhaps Sterne expresses it as pithily as any epigrammatist, "life" being but another term for time: "What is the life of man! Is it not to shift from side to side? from sorrow to sorrow? to button up one cause of

vexation, and unbutton another?" But Sterne deals with the shadow only, while the gnomon of the dial presents its side of sunshine equally with its side of shade, however somber the tone of the inscription. Doubtless Nature preaches more truly than man. Life is not all composed of shadow, nor all of sunshine; and if we but cultivate the spirit of contentment, possibly we have solved its sternest problem.

But may contentment, after all, be had for the striving? "Whatever it be that falleth into our knowledge and jouissance," reasons Montaigne in the fifty-third chapter of the First Book, "we finde it doth not satisfie us, and we still follow and gape after future, uncertaine, and unknowne things, because the present and knowne please us not, and doe not satisfie us. Not (as I thinke) because they have not sufficiently wherewith to satiate and please us, but the reason is, that we apprehend and seize on them with an unruly, disordered, and a diseased taste and hold-fast." And, again, in the twelfth chapter of the Second Book: "All of the Philosophers of all the sects that ever were doe generally agree on this point, that the chiefest felicitie, or *summum bonum*, consisteth in the peace and tranquillitie of the soul and bodie:—but where shall we find it?"

Somewhere, slumbering upon the shelves, there exists a golden book of a former century, written by a learned French philosopher-pantologist, entitled L'Art de se rendre heureux par les Songes (The Art of rendering one's self happy by Dreams). A unique volume and the labor of a lifetime, its present owner and the fortunate possessor of the secret has never been discovered; and, alas! a reprint does not exist. Contentment—is this but another name for Illusion?—is a bird of passage who, soaring high in the empyrean, must be secured on the wing. Numberless those who would ensnare him, and innumerable the lures set to turn his evasive pinion. But he flies not in flocks; and, dimly outlined against the distant sky, he is ever flitting onward, far out of range. Some one, farther on, who seeks him not, perchance looks serenely upward, and unconsciously charms him down....

My fair and gracious reader, is it you?

# XIII.

# AUTHORS AND READERS.

There must be both a judgment and a fervor; a discrimination and a boyish eagerness; and (with all due humility) something of a point of contact between authors worth reading and the reader.—LEIGH HUNT, MY BOOKS.

A truly good book is something as natural and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East.—THOREAU.

CERTAIN selfish satisfaction I enjoy in reading a fine limited edition of a classic, or a choice work that is difficult to procure. It is like possessing a gem of an uncommon color, a piece of old Chinese glaze, or any rare art object. If the work itself possess intrinsic value I am sure of my investment, while I rejoice in its attractive guise. Reading thus becomes more than a pleasure; it is an exquisite luxury. I marvel who secures all the "number 1's" of the large-paper editions. Some bibliotaphe must have a monumental collection, for nobody ever sees one.

"The passion for first editions, the purest of all passions," some one remarks. I confess I do not share this passion in its intensity, in all cases, unless the first edition be superior in letterpress or form, or a later edition has been altered, condensed, or enlarged to its disadvantage. The classics in first editions, and the "old melodious lays" in first folios by all means, if you can afford and procure them; Gibbon, Macaulay, Scott, Dickens, and the rest of the historians and novelists in the easiest, most attractive page to read and hold in the hand, whatever the edition. This with reference to

literature proper, and not to scientific works, of which latter the latest edition is naturally to be preferred.

I sometimes find myself picturing the author behind the page. Lang and Dobson, are they as merry as the songs they sing? Phil Robinson, is he half so pleasant a companion in the flesh as on the printed page? Bullen, who edits the old poets with such consummate taste, is he as jolly as the Elizabethan lyrics ever swarming on the tip of his tongue? Higginson, so tender and musical in his polished prose, I wonder does he lose his temper when the *sauce piquante* proves a failure? The brilliant, entertaining philosopher of A Club of One, is he philosophical enough to eschew colchicum for his gout; and, I marvel, is he enrolled among the Brotherhood of the Merry Eye?

Perhaps the author is most charming, for the most part, between the covers. On paper he is always on his good behavior, his personal facets shaped so as to catch the most favorable light. Knowing him and meeting him in every-day life you might find him cold, arrogant, opinionated—an altogether disagreeable companion. Forgetful of the flight of time, he might be prone to argument or backbiting. He might be deaf or color-blind, and always late at his engagements. He might be constantly straddling a hobby-horse. He might be an incorrigible whistler, or possess an ungovernable temper. All his petty weaknesses and foibles he conceals, or tries to conceal, on the printed page.

Thus, Joseph Boulmier:

> Oui, les hommes sont laids, mais leurs œuvres sont belles;
> Les hommes sont méchants, mais leurs livres sont bons.
>
> Men are unlovely, but their works are fair—
> Ay, men are evil, but their books are good.

If, as has been asserted, he is the best author who gives the reader the most knowledge and takes from him the least time, surely the olive crown should be awarded the composers of the compilations, the digests, and the anthologies, often the fruit of decades spent in poring over manuscripts and print. Little do we consider the pains they have cost. What an amount of rummaging through faded manuscripts, what ransacking of musty folios

and plodding through by-ways of the past has it not required to produce Bullen's smiling volumes from the song-books, masques, and pageants of the Elizabethan Age, and his other rarer anthologies, Speculum Amantis and Musa Proterva. The works themselves of very many of the authors quoted would be a veritable labor to wade through, with few fragrant flowers of poesy to perfume the way. All this the compiler spares us, and with catholic taste gathers a blossom here and a blossom there from the vast fields of little-known song. Equally does Mr. Bullen deserve the thanks of every lover of lyric poetry for his collection of Campion's works, and the Chiswick press the tribute of all admirers of beautiful printing for the frame in which Campion's "golden cadence" has been set.

By reading Hazlitt's Gleanings in Old Garden Literature I am saved the fatigue of perusing countless uninteresting tomes on the subject. He has extracted the honey for me from innumerable flowers. Yet my Parkinson, my Gerarde, my Evelyn, my Bacon I must read between the lines myself; it is to the dull books he has been the bee for me. To gather the sweets is often a difficult and always a laborious task. Not these plodding compilers, the class who are referred to in the wise old precept, the source of which I have never been able to trace: "Those who do not practice what they preach resemble those sign-posts in the country which point out the weary way to the traveler without taking the trouble of traversing it themselves."

Without doubt, among the most beloved of books are those written for pure love of the beautiful, distinct from literary ambition or posthumous fame, especially when to this is added a sympathetic, lucid, and unconscious style, such as we love to linger over in The Complete Angler or White's Selborne. Walton himself has epitomized this charm in a line introductory to his angling idyl: "I wish the reader also to take notice that in the writing of it I have made myself a recreation of a recreation."

Johnson has said books that you may carry to the fire and hold readily in your hand are the most useful, after all. Before Johnson, and long before printing was dreamed of, an old Greek proverb held that a great book was a great evil, and Martial wrote:

> Buy books that but one hand engage,
> In parchment bound, with tiny page.

Assuredly, the little book is a delight. It is a joy in the hand when well bound, and may serve to take the place of fire-arms in a public conveyance where one otherwise might find himself at the mercy of an uncongenial or too loquacious passenger. But the life of the library were dull were it confined to the 18 and 24 mos. Let each book and each subject have its appropriate setting, and let there be variety of sizes. The majesty of the shelves were fled without the thick quarto and tall old folio.

Apart from De Bury, Dibdin, Disraeli, Burton, Didot, Janin, the bibliophile Jacob, and other universally known bibliographical writers, there are innumerable pleasant books on books. Of such, in addition to those previously alluded to, may be specified Lang's Books and Bookmen and The Library; The Pleasures of a Bookworm and The Diversions of a Bookworm, by J. Rogers Rees, delightfully written volumes attractively printed by Elliott Stock; Alexander Ireland's Book-Lover's Enchiridion; Saunder's The Story of Some Famous Books; Wheatley's The Dedication of Books, and How to form a Library, the latter three volumes likewise daintily printed by Elliott Stock in the series of The Book-Lovers' Library.

In A Club Corner, by A. P. Russell, a volume previously mentioned, is largely devoted to books and authors. A store-house of literary and bibliographical information exists between the covers of Library Notes, and Characteristics, by the same author. Books and how to use Them is the title of an instructive and entertaining small duodecimo by J. C. Van Dyke, librarian of the Sage Library, New Brunswick, N. J., a writer deep versed in books, but not shallow in himself. Brander Mathews's Ballads of Books, or Lang's recast of this volume, is a most excellently chosen collection of poems relating to books. Every one will read with pleasure Percy Fitzgerald's The Book Fancier, or the Romance of Book-Collecting, a work replete with curious information. The French scholar has a host of kindred works to choose from, all written *de cœur*; for in France the passion for books, book-collecting, fine letterpress, and fine bindings exists to a greater degree than anywhere else. It was a Frenchman, the famed *bouquineur* Nodier, who worried through life without a copy of Virgil "because he could not succeed in finding the ideal Virgil of his dreams."

What instructive, sparkling volumes are these: L'Enfer du Bibliophile, Mes Livres, Connaissances Nécessaires à un Bibliophile, Derome's Le Luxe des Livres and the two beautifully-printed and entertaining volumes,

Causeries d'un Ami des Livres, Le Petit's L'Art d'Aimer les Livres, Peignot's Manuel du Bibliophile, Octave Uzanne's Caprices d'un Bibliophile, Mouravit's Petite Bibliothèque d'Amateur, Jacob's Les Amateurs de Vieux Livres, and how many more!

I know of no more fascinating volume of its class, however, than De Resbecq's Voyages Littéraires sur les Quais de Paris, Paris, A. Durand, 1857. The contents are in the form of letters from an indefatigable hunter of the book-stalls along the Seine to a fellow-bibliophile in the provinces. Daily, through summer's sun and winter's cold, he continues the chase, scenting the spoils of the stalls like a harrier beating the ground for game, chatting with the book dealers, and philosophizing as he scans the volumes. Among the many prizes which persistent foragings secured was a copy of that rarest of the Elzevirs, the Pastissier François. The volume had been denuded of its covers, but had the engraved title-page, the celebrated *scène de cuisine* with the range, the tables, the cooks, and the fowls entirely intact. "The box in which this jewel reposed, its interior in perfect preservation, contained no price-mark.

"'How much?' said I to the merchant.

"'Well, for you, six sous; is it too dear?'"

I recall few more delightful books for the bibliophile than Jules Richard's beautifully-printed small volume L'Art de Former une Bibliothèque, published by Edouard Rouveyre, Paris, 1883. His advice to the collector, which terminates the preface, is well worth transcribing:

"Always distrust your enthusiasm.

"Distrust the enormous prices at which certain original editions of secondary authors are quoted. For acknowledged genius one can afford to pay generously, but for the others, how many disappointments the future has in store!

"Never pay a high price for a book you do not know.

"Verify the titles, the pagination, the tables, and count the plates, if it is an illustrated book.

"The same observation holds good for editions on extraordinary paper of books absolutely ordinary. Whatman and vellum require to be well placed

in order to sustain their value.

“One knows when he begins to collect, one never knows when he will cease; therein consists the pleasure.”

A work of much interest is that of Philomeste Junior (Gustave Brunet), published in four small *brochure* volumes severally entitled La Bibliomanie en 1878, 1880, 1881, 1883, ou Bibliographie Rétrospective des Adjudications les Plus Remarquables faites cette Année, et de la Valeur primitive de ces Ouvrages. It is in France that bibliomania seems to have reached its apotheosis. La Bibliomanie furnishes some interesting facts with regard to the steady advance in the prices of certain classes of French books. “Fashion dictates her laws for the choice of books as for the toilet of fashionable ladies; they are without appeal.” To be the happy possessor of a cabinet in which are enshrined a dozen tomes of unexceptional condition, illustrated by celebrated eighteenth-century artists like Eisen, Gravelot, Moreau, Marillier, and bound by Du Seuil, Padeloup, Derome, or Trautz, calls for an elastic portemonnaie.

To cite a few examples of the advance in French books, paralleled also in English books, a copy of Manon Lescaut (1753) sold in 1839 for 109 frs., in 1870 for 355 frs., in 1875 for 1,335 frs. The edition of Montaigne’s Essays: Bourdens, S. Millanges, 1580, two parts in one octavo vol., sold for 24 frs., in 1784. The same copy recently sold for 2,060 frs. Another edition of the Essays, 1725, 3 vols. 4to, with the arms of the Maréchal de Luxembourg, brought 2,900 frs. for the “arms.” Still another edition, Paris, 1669, 3 vols., 12mo, a poor edition, brought 1,960 frs. at the Cormon sale, Paris, 1883. It had the stamp of the golden fleece, the insignia of Longpierre, a mediocre poet, and the purchaser paid for the fleece. The edition of 1595, Paris, chez A. l’Angelier, 1 vol., infol. veau, brought 1,100 frs., in 1881. A “clean and sound copy” of this edition in the original calf was quoted in a recent London catalogue at £12 12*s.*, another London dealer pricing a copy of the same edition soon afterward at £60.

The edition of 1588, Paris, Abel l’Angelier, in 4, mar., Du Seuil, was recently quoted by Morgand who is termed *la bourse des livres*, at 4,000 frs. This was the last edition published during the author’s lifetime, and the first to contain the third book. It was marked on the frontispiece “fifth edition,” though only three are known to have preceded it. The library of

Bordeaux possesses an example of this edition filled with annotations and corrections by the hand of Montaigne. Up to the present time, no editor of the Essais has availed himself of these resources, of inestimable value from the point of view of the study of the text of Montaigne. It would be of more than passing interest to know whether in these corrections the author mitigated his observation with regard to authors correcting their work.

A copy of the Pastissier François, bound by Trautz, was purchased not long since by a French amateur for 4,100 frs. In 1883 a copy sold for 3,100 frs., at the sale of M. Delestre-Cormon, Paris. "This *broché* copy, uncut (extremely rare in this condition), cost its owner 10,000 frs.; it has suffered a justifiable reduction. Despite the entire absence of interest it presents, this volume being the least known of the Elzevir collection, it has often obtained enormous prices, but they are not sustained; it has been recognized that its rarity has been exaggerated."

Among the numerous causes, especially in France, which operate in the value of a volume are previous distinguished ownership, and the garb of an illustrious binder. In books the habit frequently makes the "monk." It is sufficient for a mediocre work to be emblazoned with the crest of Pompadour or to have been fingered by Du Barry to make it worth its weight in gold. All their *légèretés* are freely forgiven by the bibliophile in view of the lovely bindings with which they clothed their books. Of recent years, as is well known, the Greek and Latin classics have found far less favor than they did a few years since. In France, and equally in England, the craze is for first editions of standard works, for rare works, for works formerly belonging to some distinguished personage, for rare or beautiful bindings, and for special beauty of letterpress or illustration.

A late illustrated catalogue, issued by Bouton, the New York bookseller, furnishes some interesting facts with regard to the increase in the price of books in this country. If we consider the rapidly advancing taste for literature in America, it is safe to predict that it will not be long before rare and valuable books will be as generally sought for here as they are in France and England, and become as well distributed as are the choice treasures of the world of art which find the highest competition in the metropolis of the New World.

Reviewing the book trade of the past thirty years, a retrospect shows that year by year the competition for rare and standard books has become more keen and the older ones necessarily more and more difficult to procure. “In the English book-centers,” says the reviewer, “besides a large home demand, the purchases for the United States and the English colonies keep up a steady stream outward, and first editions must sooner or later become unattainable, as they will ultimately find a place in public institutions.” Comparing the prices quoted in early catalogues with those of to-day, for instance, a copy of the Abbotsford edition of Scott’s works, 17 vols., handsomely whole-bound, priced twenty-five years since at $125, is now priced at $225. The Pickering Chaucer, then priced at $10, is now held at $30. Major Walpole’s Anecdotes, priced $22.50, is in the present catalogue at $75. Rowlandson’s Dance of Death at $6.50 and the Dance of Life at $1.75 have advanced to $75, for the three volumes. In catalogue No. 2 a fine copy of Purchas’s Pilgrims is quoted at $175. A similar copy would now command $500. In Catalogue No. 3 a fine copy of the Nuremberg Chronicle is priced at $35; in the present catalogue a copy is priced $150. Based upon an experience of over thirty years, the reviewer asserts that, however fashion may change and this or that class of books come into or pass out of vogue, good sterling books of real merit will always be in demand, while the first editions of the works of great writers will continue to rise steadily in value, and will be prized as long as the English language is spoken.

*La chasse aux bouquins* is not without its disappointments and surprises. Time and again one misses the mark, finally to secure a rare prize. A captivating title is not always a safe target. Appearances are deceitful in book-titles, and the old book catalogues have very winning ways. The two bound volumes of Les Trois Mousquetaires, which I picked up in a book-stall along the quay at Paris years ago, contained a pencil drawing of Porthos inserted between the fly-leaf and title-page of Volume I, worth a hundred times their cost. Fortunately, they had escaped De Resbecq. Whether Edouard Olin, the artist whose name figures below, ever exhibited a picture in the *Salon* subsequently, I do not know. But his Porthos is a marvel of conception and execution that would have delighted Dumas and that would honor Détaille.

A German catalogue was the means of procuring me, at half the original cost of the volume, a clean and perfect copy of Joseph Boulmier's Rimes Loyales. Paris: Poulet-Malassis et De Brosse, 1857. The copy contains on the false title the author's *ex dono* to Mademoiselle Andréa Bourgeois, and on the reverse of the title-page, in the same singularly neat handwriting, signed "J. B.," is a poem of six stanzas, scarcely exceeded in beauty and finish by any from the pen of the author of Rimes Loyales or Les Villanelles. The lines are entitled Du Haut de Montmartre, the first and sixth stanzas being identical, and reading as follows:

> L'aigle n'habite pas au fond de la vallée
> Il choisit pour son aire une cime isolée,
> Et c'est de là qu'il part, libre et capricieux.
> Le poète est semblable à l'aigle magnanime:
> Il aime les hauteurs où l'air vif le ranime,
> Où, plus loin de la terre, il est plus près des cieux.

A friend and Tom Folio, who devours the old book catalogues, saw this advertisement a short time since in an English pamphlet: "Machiavelli (Nicolo). Opere, 11 vols., 4to, whole-bound russia extra, gilt edges, with portrait, *printed throughout on blue paper* (only eight copies so made), a most superb set. Milan, 1810.... £4." He cabled for it and secured it. It proved a blue diamond. Within a week after receiving it he was offered two hundred dollars for the work. Within a fortnight he disposed of it for three hundred dollars, a sufficient advance to make a large addition to his library.

Many tempting and deceptive titles occur under the heading of "Curious" and "Facetiæ," but experience will cause one to fight shy of catching titles and annotations unless one knows the work to be meritorious. Frequently the gold is in the tooling, and the pure ore concealed beneath an unattractive cover. Perhaps the windfalls are more than offset by the disappointments. Inviting volume after inviting volume will present itself when one is not in the humor, thrusting itself before you in the book-stalls and auction sales, mutely appealing to you to become its possessor, only to elude you when you earnestly desire it.

But auction sales are dangerous, and are apt to lead to lapses and excesses that one would not commit in calmer moments. There it is difficult to decide dispassionately, while the lots invariably bring far higher prices than if obtained in the ordinary way. Even those of stern judgment are led

into purchases they afterward regret, carried away by the excitement of the moment. The seductive voice of the auctioneer, the passion for possession, the rivalry of the bidders, and the excitement of the hour, all exert their influence and combine to weaken even the most stoical and wary. The fly is placed temptingly upon the current, and instantly it is seized.

Again, you dive into the foreign book pamphlets, where a coveted treasure is catalogued, almost inevitably upon application to find it "sold," the prize is so far out of reach. But how elated you are when you do secure a long-sought prize, and after repeated attempts a tall old copy in perfect condition and in lovely first letterpress rewards your endeavors!

Sainte-Beuve speaks of "the smiling and sensible grace of Charles Lamb." I am inclined to think the latter's characteristic good humor was in part due to the facility with which he procured the rare old editions he loved. They were easier to lift from the shelves in Lamb's days than now, and the old book-dealer possessed far less "Imperfect Sympathies" than the hardened modern Autolycus.

My interpretation of Montaigne by Florio, "thick folio, large copy, old calf, neat, scarce, 1632," and its predecessor of 1613 that lend such dignity to their companions in old calf, were not obtained without persistent efforts. Sometimes I think many of my old books are not unlike Sir Roger de Coverley's fox, whose brush cost him fifteen hours' riding, carried him through half a dozen counties, killed him a brace of geldings, and lost above half his dogs. But one's rare editions need no brass nails to record their bewitching title-pages or mark their place amid the vistas of the shelves.

Preferable to the editions of 1613 and 1603 is the later edition, the former lacking the index, though containing the fine portrait of the translator by Hole. Florio's strong and masterly English has well reflected the original. I regard his translation as far superior to the more generally accepted version by Cotton. Cotton is frequently more literal; but Florio, despite not unfrequent interpolations and slight departures, comes nearer to the coloring and picturesqueness of the text. Take the spirited passage of the hare and the harrier, for instance:

> Ce liéure qu' vn leurier imagine en songe: apres lequel nous le voyons haleter en dormant, allonger la queuë, secoüer les jarrets, & representer parfaitement les mouuemens de sa course: c'est vn liéure sans poil & sans os.—Book II, chap. xii.

> The *Hare* that a *Grey-Hound* imagines in his sleep, after which we see him pant so whilst he sleeps, stretch out his Tail, shake his Legs, and perfectly represent all the motions of a Course, is a *Hare* without Furr and without Bones.—Cotton's translation.

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> That Hare, which a grey-hound imagineth in his dreame, after whom as he sleepeth we see him bay, quest, yelp, and snort, stretch out his taile, shake his legs, and perfectly represent the motions of his course; the same is a Hare without bones, without haire.—Florio's translation.

Equally well rendered, and an excellent specimen of the translator's style, is the passage of Volumnius referring to the election of certain Roman citizens as consuls: "They are men borne unto warre, of high spirits, of great performance, and able to effect anything; but rude, simple, and unarted in the combat of talking; minds truly consulare. They only are good Pretors, to do justice in the Citie that are subtile, cautelous, well-spoken, wily, and lip-wise." Florid and redundant, Florio nevertheless employed his words as Walton did his frog; and in numerous passages he out-Montaignes Montaigne, his vocabulary, as Montaigne says of the Italian cook's, being "stuffed with rich, magnificent words and well-couched phrases; yea, such as learned men use and employ in speaking of the Government of an Empire."

Speaking of Florio's rendition, the sonnet Concerning the Honour of Bookes—

> Since honour from the honorer proceeds,

etc.—is well known. Not so familiar, however, the preceding lines, likewise prefixed to the editions of 1613 and 1632, and relating equally to books. The sonnet, which has no name attached and which was naturally attributed to the translator, is now generally thought by critics to be by his friend Daniel, "of whom it is abundantly worthy, and, indeed, most characteristic in sentiment and diction," observes David Main. The somewhat extended eulogium of author and translator is worth transcribing for those who may not be familiar with it. It corroborates, withal, a view regarding the increasing multitude of books, a multitude increased a thousand-fold since Daniel's time, that I have previously touched upon. Relating as it does to the French philosopher, it may well be diffusive.

But no extended transcription of an old author can stand out upon a modern page with the vividness it does in a well-preserved old edition. Apart from the charm of antiquity, the old edition has an added virtue which the new edition lacks—the odor that clings to a venerable tome, a fragrance as of the everlasting or *immortelle* of the autumn fields, lingering amid its ancient leaves. Nor is this altogether fancy; the faded pages recall the ashen hue of the flower, and like it they survive to preach the sermon of immortality.

Daniel's lines are thus inscribed: "To my deare brother and friend M. John Florio, one of the Gentlemen of her Majesties most Royall Privie Chamber":

Books, like superfluous humors bred with ease,
So stuffe the world, as it becomes opprest
With taking more than it can well digest;
And now are turnd to be a great disease.
For by this overcharging we confound
The appetite of skill they had before:
There be'ng no end of words, nor any bound
Set to conceit the Ocean without shore.
As if man laboured with himselfe to be
As infinite in writing, as intents;
And draw his manifold uncertaintie
In any shape that passion represents:
That these innumerable images
And figures of opinion and discourse
Draw'n out in leaves, may be the witnesses
Of our defects much rather than our force.

---

But yet although wee labour with this store
And with the presse of writings seeme opprest,
And have too many bookes, yet want wee more,
Feeling great dearth and scarcenesse of the best;
Which cast in choicer shapes have been produc'd,
To give the best proportions to the minde
Of our confusion, and have introduc'd
The likeliest images frailtie can finde,
And wherein most the skill-desiring soule
Takes her delight, the best of all delight,
And where her motions evenest come to rowle
About this doubtful *center of the right*.

---

Wrap *Excellencie* up never so much
In Hierogliphicques, Ciphers, Caracters,
And let her speake never so strange a speech,
Her *Genius* yet findes apt discipherers:

And never was she borne to dye obscure,
But guided by the Starres of her owne grace,
Makes her owne fortune, and is ever sure
In mans best hold to hold the strongest place.
And let the *Critick* say the worst he can,
He cannot say but that *Montaigne* yet
Yeelds most rich peeces and extracts of man;
Though in a troubled frame confus'dly set,
Which yet h'is blest that he hath ever seene,
And therefore as a guest in gratefulnesse,
For the great good the house yeelds him within
Might spare to tax th' unapt convoyances.
But this breath hurts not, for both worke and frame

But this breath hurts not, for both work and frame,
Whilst England English speakes, is of that store
And that choice stuffe as that without the same
The richest librarie can be but poore
And they unblest who letters doe professe
And have him not: whose owne fate beats their want
With more sound blowes than *Alcibiades*
Did his Pedante that did *Homer* want.

My 1603 folio Florio bound by Roger Payne, my Foppens's Elzevir with autograph and annotations of Molière, my 1580 Bourdens edition placed in its robe of honor by Derome—all these my ship contained among her precious stores.

# XIV.

# THE PAGEANT OF THE IMMORTALS.

Hi sunt Magistri qui nos instruunt, sine virgis et ferulis, sine cholorâ, sine pecuniâ. Si accedis, non dormiunt; si inquiris, non se abscondunt; non obmurmurant, si oberres; cachinos nesciunt, si ignores.—RICHARD DE BURY.

Pour peu qu'il soit tenu loin du chaud et du frais,
Qu'on y porte une main blanche et respectueuse,
Que le lecteur soit calme et la lectrice heureuse ...
Un livre est un ami qui ne change jamais.
JULES JANIN.

HAVE two chairs for my reading—a stiff one for books I *have* to read; a luxurious one for books I like to read. My luxurious chair is of dark-green leather, a seat to sink into, modeled after the easy arm-chair of the Eversley Rectory, known from its seductive properties as "Sleepy Hollow." When I find a volume more than usually delightsome, I call in an extra chair for a foot-rest, so the body may possess the same ease as the mind. And yet the delight a volume affords depends largely upon the mood in which the leaves are turned, and the printer who has turned the leaves.

A fondness for reading the old book catalogues is apt to prove not only an expensive luxury, but consumes a great deal of time. For no catalogue may be hastily skimmed through. The least attractive list, composed largely, it may be, of works on theology, mineralogy, theosophy, or jurisprudence, may contain the precise book you are searching for. The most attractive lists must naturally be perused carefully. In fact, reading catalogues is like reading books—even with attentive reading one is liable to skip a title, or, at

least, overlook its real significance, just as one may not always grasp the true meanings of an author upon first perusal. Then, one subject or one title leads to another, and the catalogue must be reread. Even when you have made out your list, it occurs to you that half or three quarters of the lot you have selected will undoubtedly be "sold"; and having left out a number you really desire, you go over the catalogue still more carefully a third time for "substitutes." Not only this, but the catalogue differs from a book in that it can not wait or be put off. It must be studied immediately it is received; or some one else gets the advantage, as some one else living nearer by generally does.

If the business you have on hand prevents your devoting the necessary time to the catalogue or catalogues, you are haunted with the feeling that it contains a prize, and that you may not catch the first mail. Indeed, should any of the lists contain, at anything like a reasonable figure, that scarce old Herbal, an ancient angling tome, or a certain edition of Les Caractères, which you have long been searching for, you ought to telegraph for it without a moment's delay. You know Smith will read his list the minute he receives it. He is already far richer in La Bruyères than you are, and never ceases collecting them. And although he already has the edition you desire, it is ten to one if he sees it offered at a bargain in fine antique binding he will duplicate it. There is no such contingency as his skipping it. He never skips—he secures and exults. His library shelves groan with La Bruyères. Were he rich he might be forgiven; but all his prizes have been hooked by careful angling, and are a triumph to his skill and monumental industry.

Charles Asselineau, in the unique little volume L'Enfer du Bibliophile, draws a sharp line between the true book-hunter, who makes use of his own knowledge, patience, and industry, and the hunter by proxy, who bags his spoils through cunning other than his own-"the rich and lazy amateur who only hunts by procuration and trusts to the care of an accomplished professional to whom he gives *carte blanche*, and who despises him—ay, who despises him, as the game-keeper and poacher always despise the indolent and unskillful master who triumphs through their skill." The opening sentence of the volume is worthy of Sterne: "*Oui ... l'enfer!* is it not there that one must arrive sooner or later, in this life or in the other; oh all of you who have placed your joys in voluptuousness unknown to the vulgar?"

On the other hand, you have the alternative of neglecting your business and attending to the catalogues. In any case, the book catalogue is an attraction and a bane. If you are niggardly and only order a volume or two, you are generally disappointed; if you are in a liberal mood, and order a number, thinking you will only obtain a few, you are likely to get a lot of books that will deprive you of getting others you really require. Then the works one continually sees that one can not afford, the columns of temptations all crying, "Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing"—the Paris catalogues in particular, so rich in their *embarras de richesses*. There is a stanza of Clough's that may be cited as pertinent to book-hunting:

> They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,
> And how one ought never to think of one's self,
> How pleasures of thought surpass eating and drinking,
> My pleasure of thought is the pleasure of thinking
> How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho!
> How pleasant it is to have money!

Possibly the old book catalogues are sent as a lesson in self-control, and to teach one to endure disappointment as patiently as human nature will allow.

Not the least interesting volume of my library is my herbarium. Still every pressed flower retains much of its original color, reviving the scene of many a pleasant ramble. Commencing with the first cluster of spring beauty and white shad-blow spray, and ending with the last purple aster and blue gentian of autumn, it is thus a sentient floral calendar—a fragrant anthology of the seasons. It is one of my pleasantest volumes for winter reading, every flower of which is a chapter written by Nature herself. This involucre of white dogwood, for instance, becomes a vernal landscape riotous with bloom, while these feathery mespilus blossoms bring up the April hillsides sprinkled with hepaticas and violets. This bunch of trilliums recalls a distant beechwood in early May carpeted with the snowy triangular flowers and misty with the beech's unfurling leaves.

And this pink lady's-slipper!

Once more I trace the sinuous curves of the Wiscoy and am lulled by the drowsy murmur of the stream. How cool the water swirls beneath the overarching hemlocks, and how it is churned into foam in the deep, dark pool at the tail of the rapid, where I know the big trout I hooked and lost the

previous year is waiting for another taste of my "cochybondu"! It is just at the base of the steep shaded hillside where the sun never penetrates. If my trout chooses to display his rubies and chrysoberyls he must thread his way up the current or float down to the meadow far below. When I have hooked and basketed him, another big fellow will occupy his place in the same deep, dark pool.

It is the choice spot of the stream within a reach of half a mile, and invariably holds the strongest fish and most accomplished taker of *ephemeræ*. His pannier must needs be large, so many flies and midges and worms and bugs and beetles drift past his lair, and are sucked in by the eddy into his awaiting maw. The sudden dive of a water-rat proclaims a rival angler, who may also have his eye on my trout, and bring him to bag, perchance, if I miss him to-day.

An aroma of mint, mingled with the fragrance of wild flowers and ferns, follows me along the banks; and there, in the swamp where the partridge drums, my pink lady's-slipper gleams. The twisting roots of the hemlock plunge deep into the pool; and with a slap of his red tail the big trout rises just beyond them in the foam-flecks of the eddy, precisely where he rose the previous year. How the water growls round the bank it has mined, and chafes and scolds at the obtruding prongs! And how picturesquely, too, the old hemlock leans over the stream, shading the trout for the last time! Another athlete and trained fly-catcher must lead the somersault acts hereafter; for a day at least the small fry may rest secure. But, alas! with a sudden rush, my trout has wound the leader fast around the hemlock's roots, as he has wound so many leaders before; and, with a farewell flash of his encarmined sides, I seem to hear his parting message: "*Multæ lapsæ inter truttam et bascaudem sunt!*" The pressed flower remains to remind me of the struggle and my June holiday.

Looking now at the pink lady's-slipper from the Wiscoy woods, I am glad, after all, I did not take my trout, however great a triumph his capture might have afforded me at the time. For, if the water-rat has not caught him meanwhile—and the maxim the trout flung at me virtually precludes this possibility—he is undoubtedly still swimming in his favorite pool. Granting I had caught him and that a fish of equal size had taken his place, it would yet be another trout, not *my* trout which I hooked and lost. The stream flows

more musically and more limpid to me knowing he is still stemming the current, and that he regained his freedom.

This spike of cardinal flowers carries me a hundred miles away; and once more am I drifting down the Oswego River on a hazy autumnal afternoon, indifferent whether the great green bass rise or not, so golden is the September day. It is enough to be idling beneath the roar of the rapid, to mark the different hues of the water, the play of the slanting sunbeams, the undulations of the wooded shores. Surely the landscape needs no more. Ah, yes! just that bit of color skirting a still bayou, the flame of cardinal flowers and their reflected images below. What an illustrated volume! the imperial folio of the seasons! And what a succession of illuminated pages it discloses from the rubric and the preface until the last leaf is turned! every subject indexed and paged by the grand author, Nature; its types as fresh as if they had only run through one, instead of thousands of editions.

In dreams do I behold in all the great libraries the procession of the books that nightly emerge from the seclusion of their shelves—countless flowers from the Muse's hill and garlands from the meadows of the classics. At a signal from the most antiquated tome, I see a sudden movement among their ranks, and hear a rustling of innumerable leaves, as the souls of the immortals are quickened into life, and the spirits of old authors assemble for converse. Platoons of majestic folios, some in calf, some in sheep, and some in stamped pigskin appear, columns of venerable and vellumed quartos, tiers of tall octavos, troops of lovely Elzevirs, Aldines, and sedate black-letter editions file by with measured tread. Volumes black with age move with step as elastic as those clothed in more modern garb. Indeed, old and young seem to be indiscriminately mingled, without regard to costume or richness of attire. Only, I observe that the procession is composed solely of the dead.

I notice, moreover, that it is only the books of real merit or great renown that are called to take part in the pageant; and that the participants vary with each succeeding night, appearing entirely without regard to chronological order, though all the beautiful world of *belles-lettres*, philosophy, and science that has charmed and instructed mankind throughout the ages, forms the processional. Thus a copy of Plato and a first folio of Shakespeare pass by, side by side, followed by The Canterbury Tales and the Faerie Queen, hand in hand. Or is it Goethe's Faust and Plutarch's Lives? It is

sometimes difficult to catch the titles, so numerous are the volumes that take part. As the eye becomes accustomed to the dimness, the titles are more easily traced, and I distinctly recognize Horace and Virgil, Milton and Keats, Herrick and Hood, Montaigne and Pascal, Lamb, Thackeray, Cervantes, Molière, Theocritus, Dante, Schiller, Balzac, Dumas the Elder, Pope, Burns, Goldsmith, Addison, Hawthorne, Bulwer, Dickens, Irving—until the eye is dazed at the multitudinous names. Night after night the procession forms and the participants vary—there are so many volumes to take part, so many that may not be overlooked. Richard Jefferies, his beautiful thoughts scarcely dry on the page, I note has just been called forth from the shelves, and Thoreau has already marched with Walton and Gilbert White.

Although not assisting in the pageant itself, there are, I perceive, numerous volumes that, nevertheless, appear to be in communication with such of their companions as have responded to the signal. Beckoning glances from those below are answered every now and then by faint responses from the volumes above, their leaves as yet unfoxed by Time. Of these latter there are many, and I soon perceive that they bear the names of living authors of note who must wait until their earthly life is spent ere they too may answer the roll-call and take rank with the immortals. How, apparently without volition of their own, as if touched by an unseen hand, the leaves of In Memoriam rustle and the pages of The Autocrat flutter!

The only participants I see that seem to be out of place assemble once a year in solemn conclave, conversing, it is true, but wearing a dejected look. Countless volumes, these, principally first and rare editions, many bound in lovely leathers, exquisitely gilded, lettered, and tooled, bearing innumerable stamps and monograms, coats-of-arms, and ancient book-plates. Many of them I recognize as having seen before in high spirits, discoursing with their companions during the hour of the nightly pageants. This yearly and unusually large gathering, characterized by its extreme gravity, puzzled me at first, until I discovered it was composed of the ghosts of borrowed books, unhappy in their covers, lamenting the loss of their former possessors who had once cherished them so fondly. I see, too, Boccaccio’s Il Decamerone, Brantôme’s Dames Galantes, Balzac’s Physiologie du Mariage, La Fontaine’s Contes with the Eisen, De Hooge, and Fragonard plates, and in yonder soiled, foul-smelling tome I perceive the smutty old satirist and

Doctor-Franciscan Rabelais. Why he should be called out at all, seems a mystery, his pitch is so defiling, and his boluses are so nauseating.

Some participants there are which at first baffled my comprehension. These, though perfectly composed themselves and mingling freely with their fellows, nevertheless appear to excite an inordinate curiosity among their companions which is never gratified. The titles they bear are plainly discernible; but only when the march becomes sufficiently animated to cause a violent fluttering of the leaves can I catch a glimpse of the author's name on the title-page. Then I discover these numerous tomes invariably reveal the name of a most voluminous and versatile author, whose personality it is impossible to fathom, an author writing with equal facility in all languages and on all topics, in poetry and in prose, persistently preserving his *incognito* under the name of "Anon."

I see, also, participating in the pageant semi-annually, and on these occasions directing, as it were, the imposing march of the volumes, numerous men of middle and advanced age that seem to exhale an odor of musty tomes. Occasionally these pause in their march before some one of the shelves to take down a volume which I have not before seen in the procession, handling it with reverential care, as if conscious of the gems it enshrined. Sometimes it is a volume by a living author of note; again it is an encyclopædia or concordance, or a special number of some dusty periodical that has long lain unopened. On inquiry of my informant, I learned that this human element consists of the painstaking custodians who had the volumes in keeping, the scholarly and unappreciated librarians who devoted so much labor to the cataloguing and classification of their charges.

Abruptly close the clasps of the most venerable tome. Again I hear the rustling of pages and folding of covers, as each volume returns to its accustomed place and once more sinks into hallowed slumber. The librarian of one of the great libraries where the nightly pageant forms scouted the idea of his charges leaving their retreats. "Would I not hear them?—besides the dust remains undisturbed!" he replied. But a dead author makes no noise and leaves no tell-tale traces when he quits his tenement of print. Books, so eminently human, in the natural course of things must have their ghosts. Of course, the librarian's candle would dissipate them, as mists are dispersed by the sun.

# EPILOGUE.

Was ich besitze, seh' ich wie im Weiten,
Und was verschwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten.

What I possess, I see far distant lying,
And what I lost, grows real and undying.
GOETHE, FAUST.

In the hearts of most of us there is always a desire for something beyond experience. Hardly any of us but have thought, Some day I will go on a long voyage; but the years go by and still we have not sailed.

—RICHARD JEFFERIES, THE OPEN AIR.

ONCE more the spring, the sunshine, and the youth of the year. As much of contentment, perhaps, as the majority may find within the confines of brick and stone my house has yielded me throughout the long months of winter. Grateful I am for the comfort it has afforded—its warmth, its luxury, its cheer. Yet ever with the return of spring and the song of birds, the house becomes merely secondary to the grounds, the garden, and the charms of external nature.

Again I lounge on the grass-plot overlooking the river. Once more I watch the sparkle of the water and inhale the scent of the wild honeysuckle, sentient with the sweet breath of the summer. The bees hum, the wood-dove calls, the soothing roar of the rapids rises and falls. Again, through the morning haze, I note the pleasure craft idling on the breast of the river; while yonder, her painted canvas unfurled, a strange craft is slowly rounding a curve of the shore.

Did I say my ship had come? Alas! the wood-dove only murmured in his dream, and my ship sailed past to deposit her precious stores at the harbor

of my more fortunate neighbor.

My ship was, after all, only one of the castles in Spain that we are always building—and “these are but my fantasies.”

- Transcriber’s Notes:
  - MIDI and MP3 files have been provided for both music examples. Click on the links to the right of “Listen” to hear the music. **Whether this works depends on your browser. If you don't hear the music, you will probably find the music file in your downloads folder. ePub and Kindle readers don't currently support embedded music.**
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