

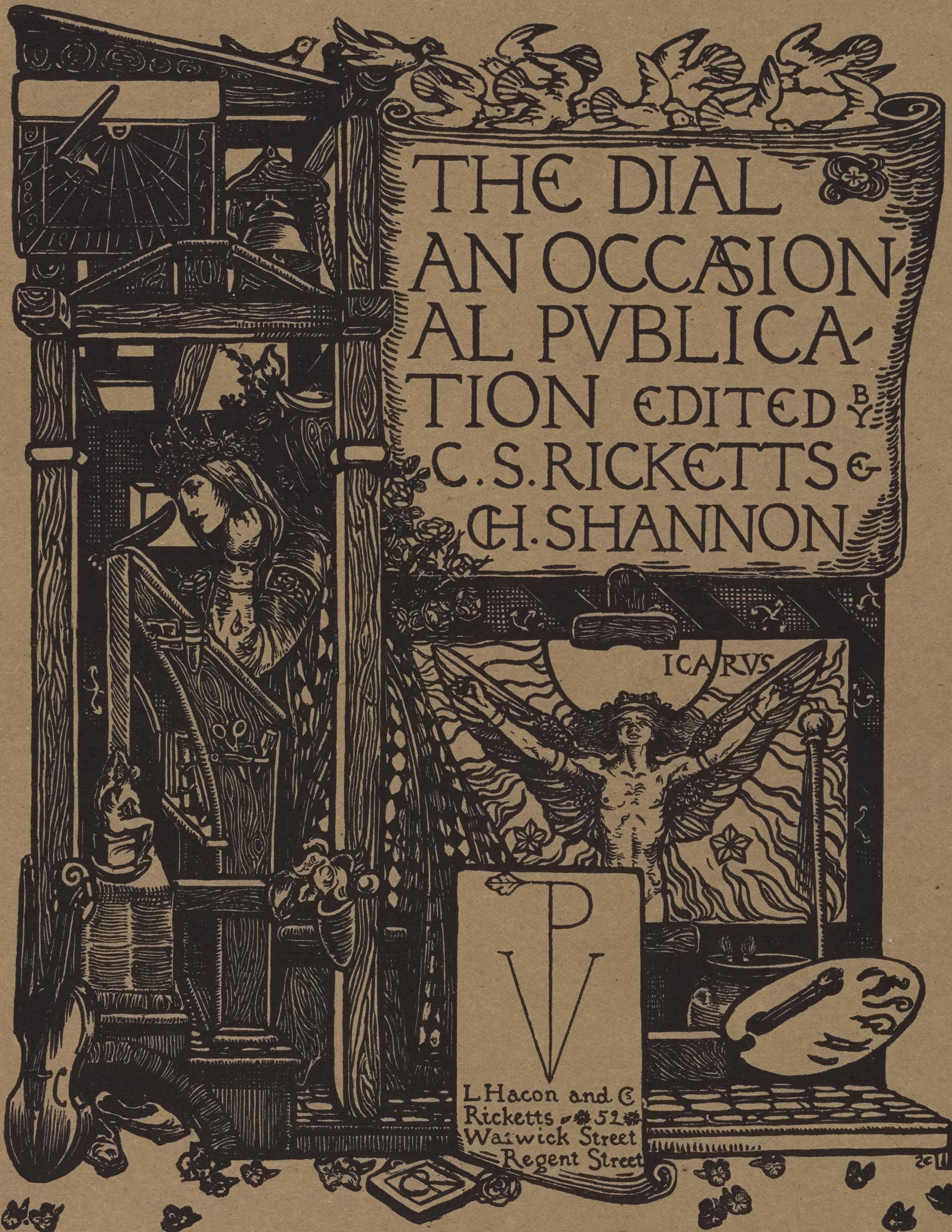


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THE DIAL NO IV MDCCCXCVI  
ART CONTENTS

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## THE FLYING FISH

### I

MYSELF am Hang, the buccaneer,  
Whom children love and brave men fear,  
Master of courage, come what come,  
Master of craft and called Sea-Scum ;

Student of wisdom and waterways,  
Course of moons and the birth of days :  
To him in whose heart all things be  
I bring my story from the sea.

The same am I as that sleek Hang,  
Whose pattens along the stone quay clang  
In sailing time ; whose pile is high  
In the mart when the merchants come to buy ;

Am he who lounges, blue-cotton dressed,  
With petticoat, and a sailor's vest ;  
Am he who dissimulates therein  
The beard you see adorn my chin ;

Am he who cumpers his lowly hulk  
With refuse bundles of feeble bulk ;  
Turns sailor's eyes to the weather skies ;  
Bows low to the master of merchandise ;

Who hoists his sail with the broken slats ;  
Whose lean crew is scarcely food for his rats ;  
Am he who creeps from tower-top ken  
And utmost vision of all men.

Ah then ! am he who changeth line,  
And no man knoweth that course of mine ;  
Am he, sir Sage, who sails to the sea  
Where an island and other wonders be.

After six days we sight the coast ;  
And my palace top ; (should the sailor boast)  
Sail rattles down ; and then we ride,  
Mean junk and proud, by my palace side.

For there lives a junk in that ancient sea,  
Where the gardens of Hang and his palace be ;  
O my fair junk ! which once aboard  
The pirate knows no living lord.

Its walls are painted water-green  
Like the green sea's self, both shade and sheen,  
Lest any mark it. (The pirate's trade  
Is to hover swiftly and make afraid.)

Its sails are fashioned of lithe bamboo,  
All painted blue as the sky is blue,  
So it be not seen till the prey be nigh.  
(Hang loves not that the same should fly.)

In midst of the first a painted sun  
Gleams gold like the celestial yon.  
In midst of the second a tender moon,  
That a lover might kiss his flute and swoon,

Or maid touch lute at sight of the third,  
Pictured with all the crystal herd.  
So the silly ships are mazed at sight  
Of night by day and day by night :

For wind and water a goodlier junk  
Than all that have ever sailed or sunk.  
Which junk was theirs : none fiercer than  
My fathers since the fall of man.

So cotton rags lays Hang aside ;  
Lays bare the sailor's gristly hide ;  
He wraps his body in vests of silk,  
Ilk is as beautiful as ilk.

Then Hang puts on his ancient mail,  
Silver and black, and scale on scale  
Like dragons', which his grandsire bore  
Before him, and his grandsire before.

He binds his legs with buskins grim,  
Tawny and gold for the pride of him.  
His feet are bare, like his who quelled  
The dragon ; his feet are feet of eld.

His head is brave with a lac wrought casque,  
The donning which is a heavy task ;  
Its lappets are spiked like a dolphin's fin ;  
'Tis strapped with straps of tiger skin.

The passions of his fathers whelm  
The heart of Hang when he wears their helm.  
Then Hang grows wrinkled betwixt his eyes,  
He frowns like a devil, devilwise.

His eyeballs start, his mask is red  
Like to the last judge of the dead ;  
His nostrils gape ; his mouth is the mouth  
Of the fish that swims in the torrid south.

His beard the pirate Hang lets flow.  
He lays his hand on his father's bow ;  
Wherewith a cunning man of strength  
Might shoot a shaft the vessel's length.

I have another, of crimson lac,  
Of a great man's height, so the silk be slack.  
The bolt departs with a brazen clang.  
'Tis drawn with the foot, and the foot of Hang.

Such house and harness become me when  
I wait upon laden merchant men ;  
'Twixt tears and the sea, 'twixt brine and brine,  
They shudder at sight of me and mine.

Of the birds that fly in the furthest sea,  
Six are more strange than others be ;  
Under its tumble, among the fish,  
Six are a marvel passing wish.

First is a hawk, exceeding great ;  
He dwelleth alone, he hath no mate ;  
His neck is bound with a yellow ring ;  
On his breast is the crest of an ancient king.

The second bird is exceeding pale,  
From little head to scanty tail ;  
She is striped with black on either wing,  
Which is roselined, like a costly thing.

Though small the bulk of the brilliant third,  
Of all blue birds 'tis the bluest bird.  
They fly in bands ; and, seen by day,  
By the side of them the sky is gray.

I mind the fifth, I forget the fourth,  
Save that it comes from east and north ;  
The fifth is an orange, white-billed duck ;  
He diveth for fish like the god of Luck ;

He hath never a foot on which to stand,  
For water yields and he loves not land.  
This is the end of many words,  
Save one, concerning marvellous birds.

The great-faced dolphin is first of fish,  
He is devil-eyed and devilish.  
Of all the fishes is he most brave :  
He walks the sea like an angry wave.

The second, the fishes call their lord.  
Himself a bow, his face is a sword :  
His sword is armed with a hundred teeth :  
Fifty above and fifty beneath.

The third hath a scarlet suit of mail.  
The fourth is naught but a feeble tail.  
The fifth is a whip with a hundred strands ;  
And every arm hath a hundred hands.

The last strange fish is the last strange bird.  
Of him no sage hath ever heard ;  
He roams the sea in a gleaming horde,  
In fear of the dolphin and him o' the sword.

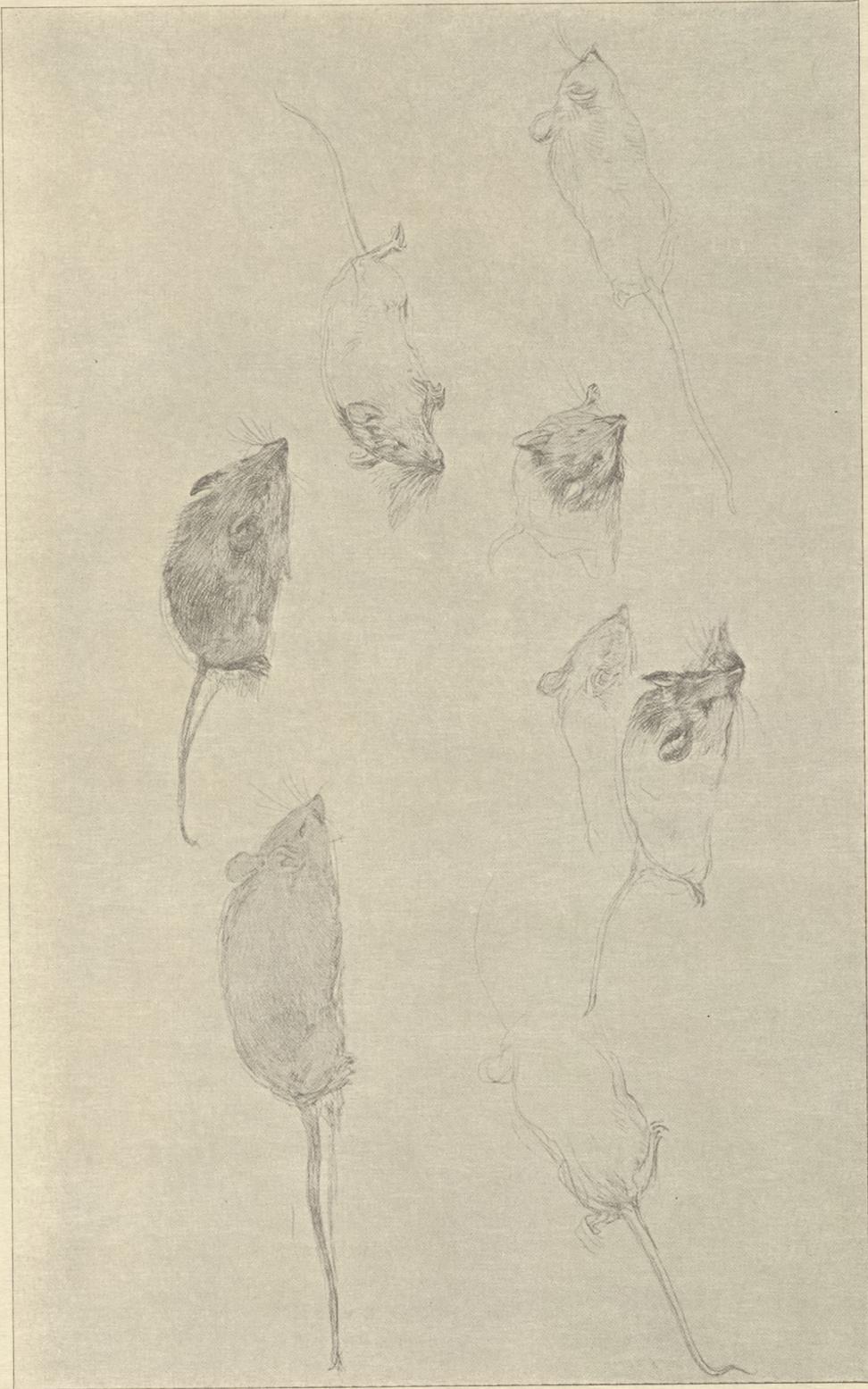
He leaps from the sea with a silken swish.  
He beats the air, does the flying fish.  
His eyes are round with excess of fright,  
Bright as the drops of his pinions' flight.

In sea and sky he hath no peace,  
For the five strange fish are his enemies.  
And the five strange fowls keep watch for him.  
They know him well by his crystal gleam.

Oftwhiles, sir Sage, on my junk's white deck,  
Have I seen this fish-bird come to wreck ;  
Oftwhiles (fair deck !) 'twixt bow and poop,  
Have I seen that piteous skyfish stoop.









Scaled bird, how his snout and gills dilate,  
All quivering and roseate!  
He pants in crystal and mother of pearl,  
While his body shrinks and his pinions furl.

His beauty passes like bubbles blown ;  
The white bright bird is a fish of stone.  
The bird so fair, for its putrid sake,  
Is flung to the dogs in the junk's white wake.

## II

Have thought, son Pirate, some such must be  
As the beast thou namest in yonder sea.  
Else, bring me a symbol from nature's gear  
Of aspiration born of fear.

Hast been, my son, to the doctor's booth  
Some day when Hang had a qualm to soothe?  
Hast noted the visible various sign  
Of each flask's virtue, son of mine?

Rude picture of insect seldom found,  
Of plant that thrives in marshy ground,  
Goblin of east wind, fog or draught,  
Sign of the phial's potent craft?

'Tis even thus where the drug is sense,  
Where wisdom is more than frankincense,  
Wit's grain than a pound of pounded bones;  
Where knowledge is redder than ruby stones.

Hast thou marked how poppies are sign of sin?  
How bravery's mantle is tiger skin?  
How earth is dark and dumb with care?  
How song is the speech of all the air?

(Thou hast? Thou'rt wise in thy sailor kind.  
Not every fruit is known by its rind.)  
I've a truth distilled and strained and casked;  
Thou hast brought the symbol it sorely asked.

(Thou'rt wise, son Hang; mayhap thou know'st  
Though truth be much, its sign is most?)  
How deep man's heart, in its symbol truth  
Is hidden;—and this is the art of sooth.

A tree is the sign most whole and sure  
Of aspiration plain and pure,  
Of the variation one must wend  
In search of the sign to the world's wide end.

Thy fish is the fairest of all that be  
In the throbbing heart of yonder sea.  
He says in his iridescent heart :  
I am gorgeous-eyed and a fish apart ;

My back has the secret of every shell,  
The Hang of fishes knows me well;  
Scales of my breast are softer still,  
The ugly fishes devise my ill.

He prays the maker of water-things  
Not for a sword but cricket's wings ;  
Not to be one of the sons of air ;  
To be rid of the water is all his prayer.

All his hope is a fear-whipped whim,  
All directions are one to him.  
There are seekers of wisdom no less absurd,  
Son Hang, than thy fish that would be a bird.

JOHN GRAY.

## THE REDEMPTION OF DURTAL\*

**H**UYSMANS has treated the subject of repentance; rarest of all perhaps in pure literature. The *degree* of the treatment, if such an expression may be used, makes the new book peculiar; certainly as prose and fiction: the penitent being a man of profound baseness; the spiritual progress being narrated both as far as an author dare, and as exhaustively as skill and patience are capable.

The friends between whom he isolated himself intellectually, des Hermies and Carhaix, dying within two months one of the other, Durtal is thrown upon silence and solitude. From the desolation immediate upon his loss, by way of a projected life of Blessed Lidwine, he comes to a point of spiritual uncertainty, that is to say, to the only spiritual situation possible for him. Then begins the story of any conversion in the world's memory, not restricted to the era of grace.

Durtal, with his history of the Maréchal Gilles de Rais, Durtal, who goes the length of digging up the Satanism of the Middle Age from modern cloaques of revolting depravity, whose vanity it would have been to be the last possible recipient of grace, is the object of an "attouchement divin." This is the spiritual crisis well known to what is called Mysticism, the science which, for want of a name, has taken this most misleading of all names. The germ once planted grows with irresistible force, so assumes the direction, so absorbs the attention, of Durtal, that suddenly he is aware only of the fact that he *believes*, as he says, with not a trace in his memory of any step by which he has passed from the lethargy of decay to the anxieties of a living growth.

Then it is a ravenous pursuit of all the spiritual writings the Romance languages hold, from Saint Denys the Areopagite to Father Faber (a reservation later), a restless pilgrimage through all the churches of Paris. The torment ensues; the struggle of habit with the inexorable, unknown impulse; till agony drives Durtal to an earlier acquaintance, the abbé Gévresin. Follow the conferences of the two men, the one deeply skilled in the malady, the other floundering in all the helplessness such a patient can exhibit. The great stage is reached when, through means of the abbé's monitions, Durtal, at length pushed by a power he feels has taken possession of his very will, goes into a retreat with the Trappistes, makes his confession, is absolved and communicates. The ten days passed at La Trappe occupy half the book.

The record is closely consecutive; digressions are few and under the direct warranty of M. Huysmans' art. The bridge-work from LÂ-BAS is such as might be expected from so accomplished a writer; the solidification of the setting in which Durtal has to move bears the cachet of the Magician. Elaborate information, pitiless visual observation, a rare sensibility, under the play of an obstinate method, which advances fearlessly upon the longest category, ready at each shift with a more

\* J. K. Huysmans, "LÂ-BAS." Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1891. J. K. Huysmans, "EN ROUTE." Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1895.

exasperated epithet, lacerate every scene, make nervous and vibrant each foot of the panorama before which the haggard, despicable hero is for ever hounded.

Above all, what is seen is through the eyes of Durtal; the comments upon the scene are those of the deteriorated Sensitive. M. Huysmans has not hesitated, in the enthusiasm of his subject, to expose the genus scriptor as few who know the truth have the courage to do, priggish, vulgar. Here is the perfection of the attempt less perfect before, to present the baggage of the écrivain with his finical person; M. Huysmans evidently agreed with his friends' verdict on LA-BAS in this feature, for now complete fusion has repaired the earlier fault.

Choice must be recognised in the circumstance of Durtal's conversion being brought about in the lap of the Church. Hence (and of course it could have been effected *directly*) applause falls to the judgment of M. Huysmans. What a bait to his talent the modern, actual aspect of the Church, its agglomerations of styles and traditions! The sensitiveness of Durtal discerns a whole new facet of a mysterious gem at any moment when he is set down to assist at an office. Hearing the voice of a priest whom he cannot see, he can speak of "la vaseline de son débit;" and at the same time find the due expression of the plain-chant a worthy pursuit of a life-time. Its architecture and structural accessories; its images, music, liturgies; the orders of religious, their dress, rules, even pronunciation; the amount of light, the smell, the quality of the worshippers; nothing about the Church which is not of deep interest. But nearer yet to the author's purpose the Church is of vital importance to Durtal; during the period of his spiritual convalescence it gives him *something to do*. Without its insinuations, its constant allurements, its demands upon the laborious attention of the sufferer, it is safe to say EN ROUTE could not have been written; as it is M. Huysmans is obliged to resort to a fully pardonable deceit, and simply omit to mention what Durtal did with the great part of his day.

Having chosen the Church, M. Huysmans shows further wisdom in keeping his hero to an orthodox route. Here again he tacitly asks indulgence of the interested reader, and surely not in vain. As a matter of fact, Durtal, as we have been brought to know him, could not have been kept away from the Heresies. M. Huysmans' caution, in view of this certainty, is extreme. Though one or two German mystics (out of scores) are named, Dr. Tauler, Suso, the two Eckharts and Catherine Emmerich, not one (save the last) is suffered more than a mention by Durtal, for the reason that these are the door of ceremony to the most absorbing of the heresies. Durtal among die Brüder des freien Geistes! Durtal with the history of der Gottesfreund vom Oberland in that valise of his, with the chocolate and the laudanum! The most remarkable "attouchement" ever recorded, that of Tauler, cannot be alluded to. Catherine Emmerich, for reasons, falls across the hard boundary; she is almost alone in this century a mediæval visionary and stigmatisée; the passion of her life and utterances is all an excuse, in face of a tactic









however severe. But doubled discretion has to forbear carefully from mention of Clemens Brentano ; lest Durtal, studying the voluminous diary of nine years' daily intercourse with the illuminated sister, should recognise himself in Clemens, himself with more aplomb, more verve, and lose his road beyond hope.

The whole scheme of this history required a certain harshness, dryness, poverty. Much had to be sacrificed to the purpose of making a novel of such a subject. This accounts for here and there the begging of a question. M. Huysmans holds the novel form to be almost as exacting as that of the sonnet. The length of the book determined from the outset within the limit of half a page, the need for proper balance of all the considerations the novelist has to bear compels him to set his face sternly against any but the most urgent situations. Add to all the proper restrictions of the form M. Huysmans' deliberate rejection of the symbol. This is the writer of *MARTHE*, of *EN MÉNAGE*, the unflinching realist, whose faith is that his system can employ all possible subtlety.

One example of dexterity in turning humble circumstance to beauty, of skilful determination, by simple refinement of observation, of the hour, the vibration of the atmosphere, the pulse even of the supposed observer : *Le temps était tiède, ce matin-là ; le soleil se tamisait dans le crible remué des feuilles ; et le jour, ainsi bluté, se muait au contact du blanc, en rose. Durtal, qui s'appêtait à lire son paroissien, vit les pages rosir et, par la loi des complémentaires, toutes les lettres, imprimées à l'encre noire, se teindre en vert.*

One brilliant episode suffers quotation by its shortness :

*Il faisait nuit noire ; à la hauteur d'un premier étage, un œil de bœuf ouvert dans la mur de l'église trouait les ténèbres d'une lune rouge.*

*Durtal tira quelques bouffées d'une cigarette, puis il s'achemina vers la chapelle. Il tourna doucement le loquet de la porte ; le vestibule où il pénétrait était sombre, mais la rotonde, bien qu'elle fût vide, était illuminée par de nombreuses lampes.*

*Il fit un pas, se signa et recula, car il venait de heurter un corps ; il regarda à ses pieds.*

*Il entra sur un champ de bataille.*

*Par terre, des formes humaines étaient couchées dans des attitudes de combattants fauchés par la mitraille ; les unes à plat ventre, les autres à genoux ; celles-ci, affaissées les mains par terre, comme frappées dans le dos, celles-là étendues les doigts crispés sur la poitrine, celles-là encore se tenant la tête ou tendant les bras.*

*Et, de ce groupe d'agonisants, ne s'élevaient aucun gémissement, aucune plainte.*

This can only delight, not surprise, coming from the master of this mode. And though it will inform no one, the flawlessness must be noted of the nevrothy which is so important a feature of the book.

Of the study of Durtal himself one feels that, isolated, it would have been more interesting than the whole presentment as it stands. The fragment of a spiritual career is exact enough to support the application of the

gauge, the maxim actually cited : La Mystique est une science absolument exacte. It is necessary to remember that what is given us is really only a fragment ; not, as the ignorant are certain to say, the whole course and exhaustion of spiritual operation in a man ; a fragment, to speak truly, quite elementary, and scarcely spiritual at all in results.

All through, Durtal remains deeply ignorant of what is taking place, when a very small amount of insight in the study of the books with which he thinks himself saturated should at least sometimes inform him. All the utterances of the saints he has the fortune to fall among are servilely reported by him, with never a word of spiritual criticism on his part, not even the most rudimentary. We do not find him ever admitted to the simplest "communion of saints ;" the impulse within him, the "touche divine," the "angelic influx," the "Kingdom of God," Goethe's "dämonische," to cite a few of its thousand names, never says to Durtal directly anything more complicated than: Do what this man tells you. He is always in the wretchedness of his spiritual beggary. What really surprises is that he should not blunder upon the first truth of an awakening, that he must go back over the way by which he came. Usually this is easy to a man who has been so wicked as Durtal ; the keen quest of infamy being extra physical in some aspects, a mode of inverted spiritism, in a manner to make a spiritual process seem known already the moment it is suggested.

He is found constantly looking, stupidly, for a miracle to take place in him, a violent destruction of his past, the swift summoning to being of some fruit of long, laborious growth. The "attouchement" is not miracle enough for him. He craves, in his peculiar vulgarity, in the vanity of his worthlessness, a theatrical sign, an explosion of redemption and miraculous repair, an alchemistic operation in favour of his rag of spiritual disposition.

The only reflection he can make upon the contemptuous refusal of the abbé to work in his behalf as he considers himself entitled is a culinary : tous ses conseils se réduisent à celui-ci ; cuisez dans votre jus et attendez.

Herein is seen the fidelity of the author already remarked, not to let wriggle out of sight the radical vulgarity of Durtal. His basest sophistry does not make him contemptible enough ; the real bitter drop he is forced to swallow again is his vulgarity : . . . ces messes gargotées comme l'on en cuisine tant à Paris . . . ils me verseront à pleins bols leur bouillon de veau pieux ! . . . Ses chantres y barattent une margarine de sons vraiment rances !

Durtal has much to say upon all the graces and exquisitenesses, a great deal about the Primitives ; for every sound he will have an epithet at all hazards, often drawn from a mute source. But at every few pages the reader falters upon the reiterated signature of one of these unpleasant metaphors. Durtal, further, had exhausted the *paregoric* virtues of the Gospels. Saint Bonaventura condense en unesorte d'*of meat* des modes pour méditer sur la communion. The reward of translating this criticism upon Saint Bonaventura is the image of a little tin box containing a disgusting chemical aliment.

The Trappistes were right who told Durtal that every wonder was small beside the fact of his being in any disposition of penitence soever. The

great thing for Durtal was to be kept ignorant of his real state and prospect ; it would have been very little encouraging for him to know. His confessor at La Trappe told him that he had been so sick that one might say of his soul : Jam foetet ; he did not tell him that no other thing could be said of his body. The body of Durtal is as lost as is possible ; there is no more hope for that. The soul of Durtal has to make a journey so long that a view of it would ruin him. At the point of utmost progress in EN ROUTE he is at the beginning of the purgative life. In a very long time he will still be at the beginning.

JOHN GRAY.

A PRAYER TO VENUS.

MARVELLOUS Venus, listen, please,  
For all comes back to me again,  
While in the limes the pilfering bees  
Hum, as once did each suburb-lane  
Where loitered idle mercenaries.

For thou wast very good to me  
Long since when war was in the land  
And with loud quarrels soldiery  
Made it unsafe for girls to stand  
Changing their chatter fair and free.

Then was I precious in all eyes ;  
And to thine own men would compare  
Her charms, who, with a prim disguise  
Of glee that knew they needs must stare,  
Noticed no jot their courtesies.

For one, my lover recognized,  
I fancied no neglect too much,  
And overweening tantalized  
Him, till my sister's hand would touch  
Mine, pitying so where I despised.

We slept in one room, she and I  
With cousin Portia, and they had  
The double-bed ; for I would lie  
Distant, but desperately sad,  
Upon a pallet separately.

How oft, disdainingly friendly chat,  
I stripped apart and slipped to bed—  
A queen who could not stoop to that—  
Whose heart, dead for each 'Dear' they said,  
With every kiss went pit-a-pat.

Between chill sheets I lay and ached,  
And heard their twin breaths tuned to sleep ;  
Nor might my longing's thirst be slaked  
By tears which crossed my cheeks, in deep  
Self-pity hushed for fear they waked.

Past cornice pillarets I watched  
The moon's proud progress, till I rose  
And slow the lattice-door unlatched :  
The lamp shook, but I kept it close  
Lest from their dreams they should be snatched.









When I looked forth, all—all was white,  
The up-hill fields, the well-worn road ;  
Clover with scent had filled the night ;  
Though far Vesuvius' crater glowed,  
Hay-cocks seemed snow in that wan light.

Nor thought I if, nigh yon fierce glare,  
Watching the wild spark fly the flame,  
Thou, wrapped at full length in thy hair,  
Musedst how many maids, who came  
To no good end of love, there were.

All wintry—save one leafy mass  
A gust left fondling, to escape,  
Kiss my feet cold as in mown-grass  
Dead flowers, and thence from heel to nape,  
Estranging skin and gown, to pass.

“The moon's is sheer attractiveness”  
I thought “—Gives light but doth not love :  
Beauty was meant, may be, to bless ;  
But can it e'er be blessed enough ?  
Day's is such spend-thrift kindness :—

Swallows with grace, from hammock-huts  
Cemented neatly to the wall,  
Plunge through light, where the pigeon struts,  
As gem-like plumes could never fall.—  
Sleep on mere prettiness Night shuts,

Nor brooks a bird her realm serene ;  
'Twixt mirror-waters and the moon  
No forward females intervene,  
Nor lass nor lad with lilted tune  
Vexes complacence in their queen.”

I closed the shutter, and then turned  
With face which, like the moon come close,  
Wan from my mirror vaguely yearned ;  
Then screamed with bare foot on a rose—  
His gift which last eve had been spurned.

They woke—I leapt back into bed :  
They stared about still dazed with dreams.  
“ Ah, did you hear it too ? ” I said,  
Feigning to wake at mine own screams,  
Squeezing my smarting foot which bled.

At first we listened breathing hard,  
Then talked ten minutes at the most ;  
They guessed 'twas some cat in the yard,  
But I was sure it was a ghost :  
Their dreams were very little marred.

I learned, while they new slumber drank,  
My heart had found a voice which wooed  
Pillows to life : as drowsed I sank,  
Mine seemed plump roosting doves who cooed,  
And my head cuddled into rank.

Then dreams through calm night didst thou fling—  
Tumultuous birds of passage, borne  
From Paphos, battling on the wing  
Past Pompeii, till red, at dawn,  
Showed villa-rooves with blood-shedding.

My feather-head to penance woke—  
Sore plots to hide sheets stained by blood—  
With furtive kisses to revoke  
Threats that thy trampled deep-wronged bud  
Made, flushed like highly-angered folk.

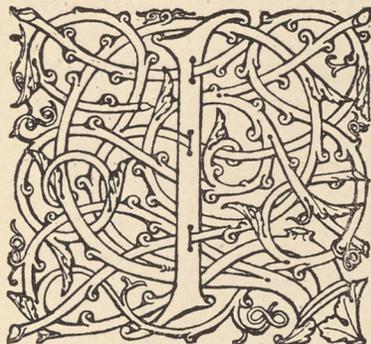
Of such portentous rain the talk  
Was awed to whisper all day long—  
I saw poor mother white as chalk,  
When my joy burst the gates of song ;  
For he had won me on our walk.—

Marvellous Venus, crowned by time  
My locks are white as moon-lit snow,  
My children's chubby children climb  
Up by my knees, to sit and crow  
Perched on the ruin of my prime.

For one thing I petition thee :—  
While generations from these rise,  
Let me ne'er lack heiress, to be  
Like, as maid may, to her whose eyes  
For peril far surpass the sea.

T. STURGE MOORE.

## THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE



IN one of the sweetest valleys of Cumberland, far up beyond that celebrated vale of Troutbeck—in fact, a very beautiful valley—lived a careful and sincere sheep. The mountains were not crested with flame at dawn, nor veiled with mist at evening, in vain for her. In her vale and about it Nature was at once radiant and sober. On the one hand an isle-strawn mere lay laughing, cradled in the bosom of the mighty hills: these were stern of temperament and laughed but seldom; even when repentant skies crowned them with rainbows about their tangled foreheads, they drew down their brows, and, recalling their Point of View, still frowned. The grandeur of their awful steeps was sweet in harmony where mosses and scant grass cloaked them; and stranger where the patches of bracken mottled their gray nakedness. Leftward and deeper yet, the fairest, smoothest valley, with fields so green, so green; green touched according to the season with pink, with mauve; touched with yellow, with gold; touched with I know not what of all that was loveliest and best. Torrents rushed in gorges of the steep slopes, bubbling and all but dust for their violence, or loitering in cool, deep, faintly swirling pools, shaded or open to the magic sun, whose rays came to play with the rilllets in pure fire, or damped through shimmering green of fern frond and dainty leaf. And down below, a timid riband of peace parting the giants who had stood threatening one another since the world was founded, ran a very brook of Eden; its purity mocked the bluest noon, its glance was brighter than rain in summer: it was paved with gold sand and silver pebble. Along its woolly fringes the brightest flowers grew on stalks more slender than anywhere else; and here the richest moths balanced themselves on the quivering stems, forecasting in secret accident the blossoms of Paradise. With the single exception of glaciers, no beauty was wanting in this valley which a sheep could think of to desire.

In the fulness of accomplished time God sent this sheep a lamb for her own. Herself was white, as often depicted in literature; God had given her lambkin black legs and tail, a black face and most dutiful eyes. Long the sheep tended and watched her young, suckling it with joyous, over-brimming tags. Then tenderest grass was alternated (of tender grass there was no lack in that fat vale). Sometimes the lamb grew faint and querulous, trotting after his mother with cries not all content. Then the sheep tinged her kindness with severity; for she was sincere, and the time comes when a lambkin must think of becoming a lamb.

“My child,” she would say, “admire the Beauties of Nature,” and thereon would follow indications suited to a juvenile understanding, the contours of the crags against green or blue, the swooning dip of the kindly hills. So the lambkin became a lamb, wise in his order, wotting well for what he had been born into the world.

In the valley there was an old father. He never spoke to the lamb, but

he looked as though he knew a great deal. The lamb was afraid of him, for he had a terrible way. He was horned; that was not curious, but each of his horns grew out in a spiral from his head; and his manner was, when he looked, to look through this spiral with one forbidding eye. No wonder the lamb was afeared.

At night all the sheep, with their lambs and the old father, went to their fold which lay lower down, a rock-piled fortress of two apartments, one of which was larger than the other. The lamb did not know why, but always the whole flock went into one of the rooms, generally the smaller; they never shared them. The openings were very narrow, for one only to pass at a time, but the sheep always went through two, and sometimes ten, abreast. All rose very early in the morning; and with restored energy scrambled high up the slopes, so that looking over their shoulders from time to time they could see the level sun driving loitering night down the vale.

"I have been wondering all night, mamma," said the lamb one morning, with that mealiness of demeanour proper to obedient children, "I have been wondering all night. . . ."

The sheep looked earnest, for he had slept soundly.

"I have been wondering all night whence I came into this happy valley, to be my mother's joy by filial obedience, and admire the Beauties of Nature."

The sheep was not embarrassed for an answer. But she looked round with care, that marked circumspection might give the lamb a sense of the dignity of their conversation. The direct answer was simple: that he came from God; but, considering the extreme youth of her child, she said, pointing with her ear:

"Do you not see yonder, where the mere head of a lamb is seen above the herbage, or yon where head and shoulders are seen, or there again added a white fleecy back; and here are you and I walking about, free and happy, the fairest of God's creatures. Therefore, my son, let us eat, and from time to time look about us to admire the Beauties of Nature. The mountains, children of time, are emblems of eternity; the white, shining lake we see down there is a symbol of truth. The sky above us is a beautiful figure of changing life, which is always blue again sooner or later, however many clouds cross its bright face. Lastly for the present, the grass, for ever green, means love, which is the best of all. Now, son, let us eat."

This wisdom filled the lamb with such sobriety and reflection that he knelt down to eat his breakfast; and, as it was more convenient, so continued for a long time. The sheep said nothing, but seeing these things, she thought with her heart.\*

"And whither, mamma," asked the lamb, on another occasion, "if the question be a right one, do we go?"

"The question is a right one," answered the sheep gravely, "and in a sense the answer is writ on all we see about us, on every feature of the face of pious, happy Nature. And, with more precision, thus much may be said: If we are good and eat a great deal, we go away singing in joyous bands, led by piping hinds and tanned boys, into valleys more fair than this, though

\* Vauvenargues: Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.









now that may not seem possible, where grass is greener and moist, though the sky above is always blue. It has been wisely said that there is no telling the wonder and contentment which await us."

These assurances almost completed the lamb's education, at least, so far as his mother was concerned; but still they conversed together as loving dam and dutiful child. One day the pasturer came into the fold, and taking the lamb, not without rudeness, painted a fine legible "P. F." on his white back. The lamb resented this and showed a certain quarrelsomeness, objecting to his mother that a red "P. F." was a blot on the face of Nature.

"Peter Fancy," laughed the sheep, in matronly banter, "there are other things beside Nature, Sir Peter."

Then, little by little, the lamb trotted less and less closely at his mother's heels. On occasion he was known to dictate to her, and his observations were sometimes conducted without her connivance, and communicated first by him to "people of his own age." He gave himself moods, being sometimes archaic, and sometimes merely pastoral. And last of all, when by chance they met, mother and son conversed only in monosyllables. The lamb had found his own pursuits, and he followed them.

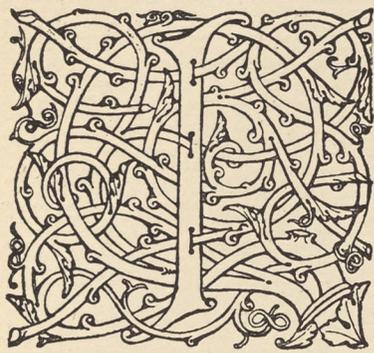
JOHN GRAY.

ON A PORTRAIT BY TINTORET  
IN THE COLONNA GALLERY

AN old man sitting in the evening light  
Touching a spinet ; there is stormy blow  
In the red heavens, but he does not know  
How fast the clouds are faring to the night :  
He *hears* the sunset as he thrums some slight  
Soft tune that clears the track of long ago ;  
And, as his musings wander to and fro  
Where the years passed along, a sage delight  
Is creeping in his eyes. His soul is old,  
The sky is old, the sunset browns to gray ;  
But he, to some dear country of his youth  
By those few notes of music borne away,  
Is listening to a story that is told,  
And listens, smiling at the story's truth.

MICHAEL FIELD.

## THE WRITING ON THE WALL



It was when Sandro Pazzo had seen Diana Rossi for the third time, upon his fourth visit to the painter Bonaventura, that he thought of her as possible inmate of that old grey castello high up in the Umbrian hills, visited by few save the birds at early dawn and sunset; on the shoulder of a ridge it stood, buttressed well and loop-holed; its one tall watch tower looked down the valleys and caught the first sun-rays on its face from over that marsh-land where Arno flowed seawards. Fifty years before, his people had held it against the Florentine soldiery, and when peace came with honour, it ceased to be a refuge for the bold spoilers whose son he was. A fine lonely place to guard a fair woman in, and he desired with all his smouldering heart the beauty of Diana Rossi.

It was to him evident that she was passionately fond of that ascetic young painter, who lived easily within the limits of his earnings and had painted her fair face into the glory of Madonnas and Saints;—it seemed evident also to this Sandro that such asceticism was not destined to exist much longer in the glow of her frequent presence, though it was much to be doubted whether, in the impending conflict between the spirit and the flesh, the spirit might not at last painfully win back its high, solitary life again. Bonaventura, in the pure aims of his first youth, had achieved so successfully the joy of artistic creation that it was doubtful whether other things could finally prevail against it, even Diana, who was to that creation one of the most powerful aids. Single-hearted enthusiast, he worked from morning till nightfall among his panels and paints, often too sang tunefully as his hand moved, while Diana sat before him, weary of last night's pleasure and feasting, envying the simple happiness of the man who lived hermit in gay Florence. A slight bond of cousinship was between them, but no true bond of race. His blood flowed with Northern calmness, hers ran with Southern changings of languor and fierce energy. Thus it was reposeful to her, when tired of the crowded life elsewhere, to come hither and sit in the cool painting-room, and to see the repetitions of her growing in beauty and colour, while she tuned his little cithara and touched faint melodies hardly heard in the far corner where he sat. His welcome, so cheerful and unchanging, refreshed her ear after the flattery of the rich youths from Pisa who wore jewels in their sword-hilts and fur on their mantles. In fine, the plain self-contained life had a passing charm for her luxurious senses, and Sandro Pazzo saw in her eyes, when the painter spoke to her, a look, of which he knew the meaning.

True it was that, by some caprice of blood which made it none the less when it came, a passion for the young man was arising within her. Only by a caprice of sudden change from things naturally most pleasing to the pleasure-loving heart could this be, that the ruddy-haired girl, bold-

eyed, fond of sumptuous places and of revelry, should care to come here to her cousin's bare room, where the gentle, bloodless enthusiast sat working, wrapped in a thick mantle, save in the very hottest days of summer. But so it was; often and often had he made his canvas precious with her beauty, and thus it was a regular custom of her life that she should sit there during two or three afternoons of each week. He was not of a mind or bodily make to join in the banquets her father gave to his clients and customers in the double part of banker and goldsmith, so he visited the Rossis at odd times, when his work was done. And there was in him so little of the worldling, that he and his worldly cousin became friends, in an accidental, easy-going sort of way. Neither had first sought it. His mind was so enwrapped by the enthusiasm for his art that he had no room therein for other passion or impression;—if anything so came to him it was as a picture, and as such he would paint his way through it, loving the picture at last so dearly that he had but a faint feeling remaining for the original human creature whence he had drawn his ideal.

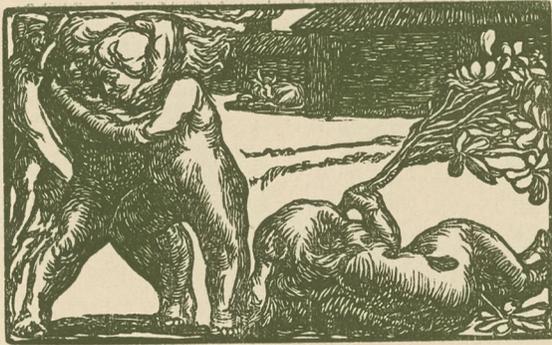
Indeed, it is not natural that such a one should care greatly for his raw material when there is always the finished result of his labour in the future; be that as it may, Diana produced no effect upon Bonaventura other than that of a friendly feeling for a valuable assistant, for this she was, now that his type of Madonna was becoming famous. And this gave him a unique position in her eyes. The influence upon her was good, for she had been a spoiled child and was now a wilful woman, and to respect anything was much. For some unknown cause the respect had gone hand in hand with easy comradeship till now, and Sandro Pazzo, who had studied men and women in many other cities, saw that the comradeship was, on her side, no more.

Now here it was that Sandro, being too cunning, made his mistake. He thought that Bonaventura must be one of her many adorers, under a mask of coldness,—thought that the visits of Diana to him were but a way of intrigue, bolder than those usual. He was wrong. He could not understand that man, who, though young and kindly, was thoroughly and virtuously simple in his life, partly from his very feeble frame, which at times was tortured by prostrating illness, partly from real purity of heart. Such folk are rare, yet they do exist, as do other strange things in this earth, and Sandro's mistake was in applying common worldly wisdom to the judgment of him. Men such as Sandro can see worldly motive in the simplest and most innocent of mortals; the price they pay for their knowledge of men's badness is the frequent blindness to the gold streak amongst the worthless stone. To them it is but brass, if indeed they see it. For this reason Sandro chose to expend the strength of secret hatred on Bonaventura, as time went on and he felt himself to be growing older.

Sandro Pazzo's full name was Alessandro Patezzi, Count of Castello-calvo. No one called him Pazzo when he was by, because it was a nickname, given on account of his odd fondness for curious medical and









alchemic studies. Never had he been quite like other men, though none could attribute to him the ascetic life of Bonaventura. He had stayed long in Padua and learned much lore in that place, he had travelled much, eastward, westward, always in a secret, solitary fashion, speaking little of his experience, even when asked to do so, and taking no part in the petty wars and state schemes which occupied most nobles, great and small. Which, however, did not prevent his knowing much of what was doing and keeping on friendly terms with the ruling powers, for Mad Sandro did not wish to be brought to poverty through any neglect of the things so important to most men.

Thus his madness, as it was called, did not bring upon him the contempt of his fellows, but, on the contrary, a respect which became mingled with fear on the increase of acquaintance. The Count of Castellocalvo was like most other nobles, a man best not offended.

He spent his summer-time at his castle up in the hills, where cool winds wafted down the valley. There he read the books he had collected and passed the time in his own devices, in a separate tower or a certain room cut into the rock, and peeping out by one window over the cliff-edge into the vale below, a cool and pleasant place on hot days. Before he knew Diana Rossi he had been wrapped up in his pursuits, indeed much as Bonaventura, but more passionately in that his temperament was ardent and his frame that of the wiry mountaineer parents whence he was born. Since the death of his young wife many years ago, he had effectually tamed his sorrow for her loss by his violent studies, and now as his manhood hovered on the border of old age, behold! the acquaintance with Diana had been potent to inflame him with passions of youth.

So he schemed and plotted, and at last became very friendly with Diana and her cousin; frequently did he visit the painter's room in the warm afternoon, and as often as not would lend his face to Bonaventura for one of the Magi Kings in a Nativity picture. When the sitting was ended he would tell travellers' tales, or they would sing all together while Diana touched the cithara, and had it not been for his passion he could have felt that such pleasant comradeship was as good a thing as a man might desire in life.

For when you become a traveller and set foot every night in a strange hostelry, it is then that you shall come to put away the taciturnity of the absorbed scholar. A man talks little to those whom he has known all his life, or to those whom he has cause for disliking. But when he has voyaged somewhat over land and sea, and come into perilous places and passed through many tedious ones, and found how large a share of a traveller's, ay, or of any other man's life, is ruled by the accident of chance acquaintance, then it is that he comes to prize the pleasure of talking easily and at random with his fellow men and women. Would that sunny day in some German city have left so pleasant a remembrance in Sandro's mind had the old book bought under the arcades drawn no one of the passers-by to stop and chat with the queerly-garbed foreigner? . . . . And even if Meister Albrecht Dürer had taken the other turning

and had not met him after all, might not some other man of scholarly taste have spoken to Sandro and, in the momentary crossing of their life-path, discussed Paracelsian mysteries with him? How barren, by comparison, would that day have been had no one spoken. And what pleasanter thing for three such travellers on the journey of life as the scholar-nobleman Sandro, the incomparable painter Bonaventura, and the beautiful woman Diana Rossi, . . . that they should meet for many days in a room filled with the presence of fine work and should regale one another with tales, jests, and all manner of good conversation!

Yet perhaps it is but in mortal nature that, having a good thing, man should at once proceed to mar it. Thus the passion-inflamed Sandro regularly met his friends, and while adding his part to the cheerfulness of the hours, meditated how to get his desire, and watched the right moment to remove the innocent painter without suspicion.

For he was not so foolish as to tell Diana of what burned at his heart. He knew that she was not now in the temper to listen to such a thing from him, let alone show him any favour. Day by day he watched her, and noted the tones of her voice as she spoke to Bonaventura, and the tremor that ever and anon ran through its melody as with a subtle pain. Sandro would have given his castle and his fortune to have had her speak so to him, for it meant that the passion for Bonaventura was working sorely within her. But the painter was cheerful ever and serenely unknowing of it; the speech which Diana addressed to him alone he answered as if it had come from the two, so that after awhile he was the most frequent of the three to speak. Meanwhile his work went on and his fame grew apace.

Now the fresh warmth of the late spring was past, and the hot days had for some while been on the city, when on a certain afternoon the three friends met in the painter's room. It was the first time after an interval, which was caused by the severe illness of Bonaventura, who now again sat at his easel, looking weak and ghost-like, but happy in his work as ever. He had sent messages to his two friends, for they were now very dear to him, and one of them was coming,—prepared for business.

This was Sandro, the first to enter, his face, so baked and meagre, with its worn character deeply stamped round the mouth and eyebrows, looking at once strangely old and strangely youthful. For in his eyes lived the brilliant hunger of expectation, and the eyes are fed by the heart.

“Ah! greeting, my friend!” said he; “the sun has roasted me rarely. I am glad to be here.”

Bonaventura looked up smiling, and waved his brush in reply.

“You are welcome,” he said, “very welcome. The wine stands on that shelf at your right hand; I thought you might desire something to wash the dust out of your mouth; have you any fresh songs? Sing something, pray, and I will sketch you meanwhile. For I have an idea.”

Sandro drank and wiped his mouth. "Well, well. What shall it be?" So, as the painter made no reply, but chose a piece of paper and took his quill in hand, Sandro jangled a chord or two, and as in thought he slowly glided into this strain:

Tell me, O Hills, and tell, ye merry Birds,  
Tell me, O Brook, that tinklest down the stone,  
Know ye the sorrow that my heart engirds,  
Hopeless to love, and brood on Love alone?  
    Know ye what woe Love silent must endure,  
    And is there aught that such a pain may cure?

To me replied the Hills, replied the Birds,  
Replied the Brook that murmured by the stone,  
"Alas, a hopeless Fate thy heart engirds  
If one thou offerest Love for thee hath none.  
    We know what woe Love lonely must endure,  
    We know of Naught that such a pain may cure."

"Bellissima!" murmured Diana's voice from the doorway, and Sandro's hand trembled as he rose and placed the cithara in her arms.

"It is very sweet indeed," said Bonaventura, "—and so *very* applicable to you, my friend!" and he laughed gently, but suddenly stopped on finding that the others did not accompany his mirth. Only Sandro's mouth spread out into the line of a smile without creating one, and Diana bent her head over the instrument and tuned a false note.

"Will it please you to sit down as you were, just for a moment, Messer Sandro?" asked the painter in his most courteous tone, for he saw he had made some mistake, and, though no courtier, was not so foolish as to lay stress upon it by asking pardon in Diana's presence,—“it is a fine pose, and you shall see in a day or two what I intend with it. Indeed there is no reason why I should not tell you now. I am going to turn you into an angel, Messer Sandro, by putting some flowing drapery on your form and pair of wings on your back. The other day when I looked at your face as King Melchior I said to myself, 'surely this is not quite the best which I have seen in my friend's face?' and then I could not tell why I thought so, for King Melchior was a scholar like yourself, and had travelled much. I thought about this all the time of my sickness, without coming to the reason. But yesterday evening I found what my thought contained, it was the memory of what you had told me of your voyage to the East, and of the good men who dwelt in the mountains of the wilderness. And it then seemed to me that it was fittest to paint you as the angel who sat at the entrance of our Lord's Sepulchre and told them who came of the wonderful things they had not before known."

"See," he went on, arising and showing the little sketch, besides which he had roughly indicated the idea of the picture, "do you not think it better than the other of King Melchior?"

Diana sat playing a lively air on the cithara, a melody of the streets, but she raised her eyes as Bonaventura walked across the floor to her and Sandro, and cast a glance at it. "How quick you are!" she said, and went on playing as before. She also looked full into his eyes for one moment, and Bonaventura was puzzled at the look, its bold intensity, and the sudden wistfulness which clouded it all at once.

She dropped her gaze before the placid wonderment of his face, and struck some random notes. Glancing at Sandro, the painter saw him watching her with eyes that seemed to burn. All for an instant only; then Sandro took the sketch and commented on it pleasantly, praising the clever drawing of his face in this new character.

"I did not know I had such inspirations in me," said he, "but certainly I like your rendering, and it is a sweet idea of the angel at the entrance of the grotto singing consolation to those who come seeking for their Master. Will *you* not sing something to us, Ma Donna?"

And Diana sang, sweetly and skilfully, a song of the villages which lie up beyond Samminiato, and when she had ended, there fell a silence, during which Sandro poured out wine for his two friends.

"Why do you not make Madonna Diana your angel, instead of me?" he asked as the red fluid bubbled forth; it was in the shadowed end of the room that he now stood, and neither Diana nor Bonaventura saw that something else dropped from his hand into one of the long glasses. There was something too of sarcasm in his tone, but the painter looked up from his work to which he had returned, took the glass given him and said simply,

"I will tell you, my friend. It is one of my strange ideas. Madonna Diana is as beautiful as an angel, it is true, but she has not explored the perilous passages of this world as you have. I wish my angel to be one who has been in many terrible places during his fleshly life, and has been scarred by the talons of the Evil One. His was no easy victory over malign things, and there have been times when he has been defeated, but now that he has attained to an honoured part in the guard of our Lord, he is the fittest to watch in that dreary place of tombs the body of One who has also fought and conquered. Have I said enough?"

Sandro's face suddenly quivered all over; he raised his hand. But the painter drank his glass to the bottom, paused a moment in thought, then placed it by. Meditatively he resumed his work, and for a long time nothing broke the silence but the faint tinkle of the silver cords.

At last Sandro arose and bowed. "I must depart," he said, and so was gone.

Then Diana laid the instrument aside and sat with folded hands for a little space, very still. The painter looked up from his work with a sigh, thinking of something. "Alas! I am sorry for him, for the good he contains," he began to murmur, when his glance fell upon the motionless beautiful figure, watching him with eyes of smouldering flame.

Directly their looks met, the flame burst into blaze; it was the first time for weeks that they had been alone together, and she was a bold,









wilful woman. She stood up, smiled at him, then suddenly tossed back her hair, so that a red-goldenness glimmered around, and cried, half laughing, half sobbing . . . . "Beautiful as an angel—as an angel! Oh, my cousin! Why have you not said it before? Yet I love you better for it too!"

The young painter as suddenly understood, and a gentle trouble filled his face. But he stepped to her and took her hand. It must not go further, for the sake of her parents as well as herself. Besides, all would end before very long, now.

"Madonna," he said soothingly, yet with a coldness which chilled her horribly, "do not, do not be angry with me. You are indeed the most wonderfully beautiful of women, and you are offering me the greatest of honours, but I am only half a human being and I cannot love you as a strong man should. You are to me the sweetest and kindest of maidens, but that is all I can feel. When half of a man belongs to the other world, so that at times he knows how little more remains to him of this, what can he give to such a queen as you?"

"You are cold and cruel!" she said, weeping, and dragged her hand away.

"Not cold or cruel," he replied, "but dying fast, and desiring only to add one more testimony to that Paradise I hope the Great Master of all things will allow me to enter."

She gasped and stared at him, saying "What?"

"I knew I should not live out this year, in any case," he replied, "and I was at times sorely afraid that my suffering might overturn my reason before departure. But as soon as I drank the wine just now I knew that my life had come to a few days' limit. My heart grieves heavily that any friend should have found a cause of offence in a few light words, yet for myself I do not grieve, for I shall have a speedy release from this uncertain and often-troubled body. And it is best so for us, Diana. Your parents could not have cared for a poor suitor like myself, even had I been less of a shadow and more of a man. Farewell, dear cousin, farewell, and let me paint my last picture in peace."

She fell on her knees before him and would have flung her arms round him, but he knelt also, and raised both her hands and his to a crucifix on the wall.

After a little she rose, and silently went away. They met no more, and she did not understand more of his words than that he would have none of her, and that somehow she could not hate him for it.

But one day, as she was sitting with her father and mother and many guests, some from north and some from south, but all men rich and loving merriment, and the board was cleared and all were hushed to hear her sing,—a bell began tolling heavily from the church hard by. And in that heated air, with every window and door ajar to catch any passing coolness, that doleful noise disturbed them very much, more and more, so that the whole place seemed full of it. Very rarely was any one buried in that churchyard, for its Campo Santo was small, and it was customary

for the citizens to take all dead outside the walls of the city. But there were some who lay there, in the holy earth brought from Jerusalem, and over their graves grew luxuriantly the strange Eastern flowers whose seeds had come overseas in that soil, men of goodly life and well-stored mind, who had served the cause of the Holy Church worthily, though they did not wear the monk's gown. Very few they were, but every one a famous, honoured name.

So, the clangour of the constantly tolling bell seeming endless, and preventing the full enjoyment of music, Luigi Rossi stood up and begged his guests' pardon for the same, proposing that they should go round to the other side of the house, into the garden, and there carry on their conviviality. To this they agreed, and soon were settled beneath the cypress shadow, hearing the bell indeed, but faintly, so that the noise of talk or the sound of song overpowered it altogether; many things they sang, now one, now another, and many hearts beat hard and quickly as Diana's rich voice caressed their ears in that hot shadow.

Indeed, to look at her, gleaming ruddy-golden against the dusky green foliage, as she gazed into every heart by turns with those eyes of hers, so languorous yet so expressive of veiled delight in that admiration which all must give her,—she was indeed a very enchantress, like that Queen Armida of whom the poet Tasso sings. Or rather, as she stood with silken folds spanning her shapely breast like the bands of a corselet, and her bare arms so strong and firm with all their beauty, singing in tones full and deep, never shrill, flinging the notes across the flowers and upturned faces till they echoed distantly and wandered among the laced branches like mysterious birds,—she seemed like the most enthralling of that excellent (albeit mad) poet's creations, the warrior maiden Clorinda. So that Count Sandro could have bent his head and burst his heart with the sweet agony which shook him,—nor was he the only one that day who was so moved.

All this while the bell tolled, but no one heeded it any longer. Then as evening came on the gathering dissolved, some going homewards to prepare for a night-festa, some otherways, until the afternoon's merrymaking was finished, and Diana went to her chamber. There came to her a servant with a sealed letter, and placed a picture before her, saying that it had been given to him for her by the servant of Messer Bonaventura the painter, who had died a day ago by a return of his former illness.

At that she felt as if some unseen hand had dealt her a fierce blow, and turned as white as the wall hard by. When the man was gone she lay for a long time on her bed and wept, not for Bonaventura, but for herself, loving a youth who had thought no more lovingly of her than of a comrade or a favourite dog or some other thing which is a pleasant part of one's daily life. Nor could she now be angry, because the man was dead and had shown that his words were no concealment of slight to her beauty, but stern truth. Thus after awhile she recovered, and the passion passed like mist away; and she read his letter with a certain

melancholy, yet also with a certain relief of heart that it said nothing which might cause others to ask questions.

"I, Bonaventura, being conscious that my end is very near, request the noble lady Diana Rossi to accept the last picture I have wrought, as a remembrance of the very many pleasant gatherings in my studio. But I request that the noble lady (hoping that she will yet remember me sometimes in her prayers) will not speak of my death to the others who assembled on those occasions. For above all things do I desire that the recollection of me should be joyous and not sad."

That evening her parents noted her to be less gay than usual, and before they could ask her the cause she showed to them the picture and letter, at which they also grieved a little, for they considered him a worthy man. When also they heard that it was for him the bell of S. Paolo had rung that day to their disturbance, they wondered that a man now so famous in the city should have died so suddenly without any one knowing it sooner,—and it gave them much to talk of until more company came in for the evening, and with the business of entertainment the death of Bonaventura was forgotten.

The next day Diana went to the Campo Santo of S. Paolo. and saw the painter's grave. It was by his own wish that he was buried in that ground, and his fame was such as fitted him for the place. Yet even as Diana looked at the piece of turned-up earth she felt the remembrance of Bonaventura to be less in her than it had been, only felt too that she would never again meet such a man who could, without any effort on his part, move her so much, and then while repelling her yet cause no hatred. Indeed, the more she thought on it the less could she tell why she had been so drawn forth, so presently departed to think of other things, and henceforward to remember him only as a picture she liked but could not understand. So little of a man of this earth had the painter been, and so soon do those of Southern blood forget their grief.

That same day Sandro also came thither, with regret in his heart for the man his passion had driven him to send out of this life. It is not every one who would come thus to see his victim's grave, but though Sandro knew quite well that, could he have the last month over again, he would act not a whit differently, yet he also felt sorry that the pleasant little gatherings were at an end. In addition to this he had a letter from the departed, as had Diana, and this is what it said:

"It has been a great grief to me, friend of mine, that I should by my speech so deeply wound you as to cause you to do—so much. I would have asked your pardon privately, had chance allowed. Yet you have unwittingly done me a service, for I have often of late been troubled by the fear that I must die in madness, so heavy were the pains of my various maladies, and now the end is soon and speedy, instead of a terrible tedious waiting for it."

There was no signature, or name of any kind. Sandro was touched by such considerateness, and brought a nosegay to place on the earth. This done, he stood there meditating, no longer about the painter, but

about his chance of getting Diana from her parents. Possibly they might be willing enough, but not she. He resolved to try in three days' time, and then again by-and-by, and then again after that, until by persistence he had worn down all opposition. The chief thing was to keep other men away, which would not be hard, for most were afraid of him and he knew it very well.

The little nosegay on the painter's grave withered fast in the fierce glare of the hot weather, now pouring day by day more heavily on the city, and his memory in men's hearts withered as fast. A few brief days after his burial the only creature who had any thought of the thin placid face was Diana, and that only when her eyes fell upon the picture he had given her; strange as it may seem, directly he died her passion for him melted away, and could find no sufficient mind's image by which to live. Remained only the spiritual portion of her former feeling, which in such a woman was small indeed. She remembered him only as a strange man, whom she must trust and respect entirely, were he still alive. Such was the variability of her mind that she came near to laughing at last, when the thought of his face, so puzzled and wistful at her sudden love-making, flitted for an instant before her. How all the other young men would have leaped at such a chance! Perhaps she would not have said what she did, had she not a feeling that he was the most innocent and temperate of mortals. Then, ceasing from her mirth as she had ceased from her grief, in her usual sudden way, she hung the "good cousin's" picture again on the nail and scanned it while combing out her great locks for the evening festa. And much she thought of the gay youths with fur round their mantles, youths of hot, amorous temper. All of them were rich, and one of rank. And then there was the elderly Count of Castellocalvo who told such interesting tales. She wished for the first time that he were rather younger and sighed at the passing memory that the pleasant meetings had ceased in the studio three streets away.

These were the thoughts suggested by the picture, a sketch rather than a finished work, but having genius. There by a rock-sepulchre such as most other painters represented it, sat an angel with the face of Sandro, idealised with the expression which the poor painter had thought the most significant of Sandro's real nature, and more youthful, but very resembling. The three Maries were all Diana in this way or that, but only in the chief one was the whole likeness, with the full lines of figure and red-gold hair, carried out to completeness.

Thus the dead hand of Bonaventura was causing what Sandro wished, and made her think much about one whom she had formerly noticed little more than one does any acquaintance often seen,—and so that evening, when Sandro spoke to her, instead of returning merely the civil reply which has no meaning, she conversed with him at length. True, the subject was their mutual regret for Bonaventura, and the Count, when he found that Diana appeared so strangely indifferent to the painter's memory, turned with a graceful sentence to other things. He was much





THE  
MOST PLEASANT  
AND  
DELECTABLE TALE OF  
THE  
MARRIAGE OF  
CUPID  
AND PSYCHES

 THE SECOND BOOKE OF THE MARRIAGE  
OF CUPID AND PSYCHES

II



**P**OORE Psyche perceived the end of all fortune, thinking verely that she should never returne, and not without cause, when as she was compelled to go to the gulfe and furies of hell. Wherefore without any further delay, she went up to an high tower to throw her selfe downe headlong (thinking that it was the next and readiest way to hell) but the tower (as inspired) spake unto her saying, O poore miser, why goest thou about to slay thy selfe? Why dost thou rashly yeeld unto thy last perill and danger? Know thou that if thy spirit be once separated from thy body, thou shalt surely go to hell, but never to return again, wherefore harken to me; Lacedemon a citie in Greece is not farre hence: go thou thither and enquire for the hill Tenarus, whereas thou shalt find a hold leading to hell, even to the Pallace of Pluto, but take heede thou go not with emptie hands to that place of darknesse: but carrie two sops sodden in the flour of barley and Honney in thy hands, and two halfe-pence in thy mouth. And when thou hast passed a good part of that way, thou shalt see a lame Asse carrying of wood, and a lame fellow driving him, who will desire thee to give him up the sticks that fall downe, but passe thou on and do nothing; by and by thou shalt come unto a river of hell, whereas Charon is ferri-man, who will first have his fare paied him, before he will carry the soules over the river in his boat, whereby you may see that avarice raigneth amongst the dead, neither Charon nor Pluto will do anything for nought; for if it be a poore man that would passe over and lacketh money, he shal be compelled to die in his journey before they will shew him any reliefe, wherefore deliver to carraigne Charon one of the halfe-pence (which thou bearest for thy passage) and let him receive it out of thy mouth. And it shall come to passe as thou sittest in the boat that thou shalt see an old man swimming on the top of the river, holding up his deadly hands, and desiring thee to receive him into the barke, but have no regard to his piteous cry: when thou art passed over the floud, thou shalt

BOOK THE SECOND

II



POORE PSYCHES PERCEIVED THE  
END OF ALL FORTUNE, THINKING  
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MISER, WHY GOEST THOU ABOUT TO SLAY THY  
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THY LAST PERILL AND DANGER? KNOW THOU  
THAT IF THY SPIRIT BE ONCE SEPARATED FROM  
THY BODY, THOU SHALT SURELY GO TO HELL,  
BUT NEVER TO RETURN AGAIN, WHEREFORE  
HARKEN TO ME; LACEDEMON A CITIE IN GREECE  
IS NOT FARRE HENCE: GO THOU THITHER AND  
ENQUIRE FOR THE HILL TENARUS, WHEREAS  
THOU SHALT FIND A HOLD LEADING TO HELL,  
EVEN TO THE PALLACE OF PLUTO, BUT TAKE  
HEED THOU GO NOT WITH EMPTIE HANDS TO  
THAT PLACE OF DARKNESSE: BUT CARRIE TWO  
SOPS SODDEN IN THE FLOUR OF BARLEY AND  
HONNEY IN THY HANDS, AND TWO HALFE-  
PENCE IN THY MOUTH. AND WHEN THOU HAST  
PASSED A GOOD PART OF THAT WAY, THOU  
SHALT SEE A LAME ASSE CARRYING OF WOOD,  
AND A LAME FELLOW DRIVING HIM, WHO WILL  
DESIRE THEE TO GIVE HIM UP THE STICKS  
THAT FALL DOWNE, BUT PASSE THOU ON AND  
DO NOTHING; BY AND BY THOU SHALT COME  
UNTO A RIVER OF HELL, WHEREAS CHARON IS  
FERRIMAN,





surprised at this, not believing it possible for her to so forget her cousin. But their talking went on and he was in heaven during the duration of it, seeing that at last she was interested in him as not with others. That night he decided that it was time for him to speak to her parents, so as to prevent other offers; also he thought that they probably would be glad to make alliance with a rich noble. And so in truth it proved.

Everything went smoothly and in proper form. Diana seemed a little surprised when informed that the Count of Castellocalvo wished to make her his wife, but as the other suitors were no richer and of lesser name, after a short while she agreed, and became his bride.

Sandro was a changed man from that time. He became generous and genial, he became a byword for uxoriousness, and even did he begin to grow fat. And so the winter passed, and with the spring the Countess del Castellocalvo, who had hitherto allowed herself to be adored with sufficient complaisance, began to be weary of the indulgent old man. For now she saw him to be old indeed, and his continual fondness grew tedious to her; most of all did she regret the gay gatherings which Sandro strove to lessen as he began to feel the pangs of jealousy. She took little care to soothe his irritation when the circle of gallants who had hung round her the whole evening had gone homewards; and at length Sandro, the man of many rough experiences, found himself sometimes quailing before the coarse vigour of her tongue when her anger was touched. For she was no timid or sensitive soul, nor ignorant of the brutalities of speech, nor sparing in their use when she might choose.

Worst of all, Sandro felt the weakness of old age now upon him, and every one of these quarrels made him feel how much less he was than once he had been, till at length he came to acquiesce sullenly in her freedom of life, and cast down his eyes when men looked at him with smiles of jesting pity as he passed them in the street. For it was now well known that his wife counted off her lovers upon her fingers.

Now he thought again the old thought of his lonely castello up in the hills, and meditated how he could get her there and hold her in the way most pleasant to his nature, under lock and key. For days he brooded over it, and as the hot weather began to come in once more, he spoke to her in her pleasant moods of the delightful country she had never seen, cool and airy, much visited by the rich nobles when Florence had grown too hot for pleasure. Until, by often doing this, he heard her say at last, "Why have we never yet been to Castellocalvo, my husband? What is the use of a cool retreat up in those beautiful hills if you never go there? And how hot it is getting to be here! Cristo! but I feel stifled!"

Then Sandro rejoiced, but was cunning in his reply.

"Oh yes, it is a cool spot," he said, "there is a fair woodland hard by, and little brooks flowing down; the breeze comes straight in from the river mouth and you can at times smell the salt. And the view is wide; you look over the cliff-edge right into the valley far down and see the boats and

ships passing to Pisa. But I do not care to go, I want to stay here in Florence."

At this tantalization she stamped her foot, saying, "Why! every one else is going into the hills. Do you want to be here all alone?"

"Yes, I like it, and we have had as much company as I desire. I want to stay here and study, as I used to do."

"Do you, my husband? And pray what am I to do to pass the time? I tell you I *will* not be kept here to roast on a gridiron! If you will stay, I will not. I will go, and take my friends with me, and leave you here alone. Do you like that?"

"Well," said Sandro as if grumbling, "I suppose I must allow you your will. When shall it be?"

"Now you are good!" said Diana very sweetly, "and I will give you a kiss. We will go to-morrow. Do you not see how much better it is for you to let me have my own way?"

"Truly I do," said Sandro with a grim smile.

And indeed Diana could not complain of any hindrance on the part of her old husband, that day. There was a great gathering that evening, and Sandro was blithe as a wrinkled man could be, while his wife drank merrily with her court of youths at the other end of the long table. Several times that evening he met her in the groves of their garden, dealing out a ready response of smiles, laughter, and the hot talk in which her soul delighted, but there was no more sullenness on his brow, none whatever. Many of his guests began to pity him somewhat, and listened charitably to his garrulity.

In truth he was very content with himself, for he had gained what he wished; she was coming up into the mountains with him, and once there, with a few well-paid guards, he would have her safe, and could do as he pleased,—starve her into humility or experiment on her with love-philtres.

A messenger had gone up thither as soon as he knew that she had set her heart on it, and all was ready. Once up there, and Luigi Rossi would have no power to interfere between his daughter and her husband. So that last evening in Florence was a very gay one, and Diana received as much adoration as she desired. The only annoyance, and a serious one this, was the intense heat that oozed out of the sun-saturated stones and earth without the faintest breath of breeze to lessen its strength. There were rumours of plague in the low-lying villages, and most folk told Diana that they envied her for her possession in the hills, for mayhap the scourge might visit Florence,—God avert it!

With early dawn the cavalcade set forth through the slumbering streets and the Roman gate was unbarred to let it pass. The captain of the guard was a friend of the Countess, and as she and her train filed through he saluted her with "a rividerla," to which she responded laughingly. She was very gay at that fresh hour, and the echo of her voice came back as the party travelled seawards by the road skirting the river, leaving the captain disconsolate and wondering where in this

empty season he could find another house for his entertainment and another lady for his compliments.

Sandro rode by her and entered into her mood, which suited him well, jesting and enduring meekly the wilfulness of her replies. She made no secret of her dominance over him, turning him to ridicule before the servants, and it all made the journey pleasant to her. Thus they followed the river awhile, and about midday came to a village of the marsh flats. Here they stayed for meal and siesta, and while the sun was hot overhead, a vision came to Sandro in the dark room where he and his lady reposed.

It seemed to him that he was lying wrapped in his mantle, half asleep and still watching the shadowed face of the sleeping Diana, loving her with his old hunger as her breast gently rose and fell, when he became aware of a figure, sitting at her feet and gazing at her with grave solicitude. But there was no desire in him to rise and order the man away, for he saw by the thin features and pale eyes that it was their dead friend Bonaventura, sitting as he had seen him last in life, only that his hands were crossed upon his lap and there was no smile upon his face.

For a long time the figure sat thus sighing but with no word, and, as the minutes passed, the face of Diana grew troubled and at last her eyes opened. And seeing the shape of the man she once had loved she sat up and stretched forth her hand, with a strange light shining in her eyes. But the figure shook its head sorrowfully and placed her hand back, so that she sank down as she was before, looking at him with love returned. Then a terrible odour came floating in at the window, and the figure waved its hands as if trying to ward something away from her, and then fell back as if some mighty power had pushed it. Then it covered its face with its thin fingers, as if in great grief, and faded into nothingness, and a darkness came over Sandro, so that he knew no more till he awoke with that strange odour still in the place, and going to the window he saw a man lying against the wall, stricken with plague.

At this he was very angry, and called in the host of the house, and asked him why he had been so careless as to allow such a living corpse to come into his courtyard. At which the host was full of apologies, and blamed others who were in his employ, saying that it was their neglect and not his that had permitted the wanderer's entrance. No one had the courage to go and touch the creature to turn him out upon the road, until one or two men went and so goaded him with long sharpened poles that at last he was fain to rise and get off as fast as he could, much moaning and complaining that no one would let him rest. So they chased him away into the marshes a little lower down, where he fell at last, unable to move for all their goadings, and died there, as they could see. Therefore they took all the dry wood and canes and reeds which they could find, and threw them over his corpse, hardly yet cold, and set them on fire, so that by eventide there was no plague left from

the fire's purifying influence. For when the plague hovers near, every man must band with his neighbour against such a foe.

Meantime Count Sandro and his wife departed in great wrath from the village, and travelled on and on up into the hills, through one valley after another, through groves of stone-pine that fringed the hillsides and stood out dusky against the sky as the sun began to settle down behind the ridges, through broad sunny spaces of open pasture-slope, and on into the shadow of the hills again. All this time they went upwards, till at last they came into a high valley, down whose centre flowed a brook with a whispering fall of cool waters, and saw, at the end of a long rock-shoulder on their leftward, the square tower and other buildings of the Castello Calvo, with a little village some distance away. The Castello was in the strong slanting sunlight, but the shades were on the valley. And at sight of his home, the master took a horn and blew a call, sending the echoes far to front and behind, and presently this was answered from the tower-top. Then they pushed on, and by sunset were in its courtyard.

It was a strong, snug place, and Sandro laughed as the gatebars rattled into the staples behind them. Diana laughed also—her first laugh since the hour when she had seen the vision of her dead love Bonaventura. She had been silent and thoughtful during all the interspace, and so had Sandro; neither had vented their anger in words, and in each mind came a suspicion of the other, for which neither could give a reason. Diana also wished to know if Sandro had seen the vision, while Sandro felt that there was some calamity hovering, yet neither would open heart to the other. Then Diana felt uneasy with a foreboding of death, for she understood that the kindly spirit of the man she had loved had not availed to fight against the Terror that lay outside her window at midday, and at the fresh sight of Bonaventura the little of seriousness in her was stirred to life, he being a human being she had ever respected and deeply cared for, though since his death she had forgotten him in the way of her nature, and led her life in the reckless fashion most loved by gay dames of that day.

So they rode into the castle court, and as the clang of hoofs on the stones ceased and Sandro laughed to think that she was now shut up in safety,—she suddenly hated him fiercely in her heart, for she saw by his manner that he had won some victory over her.

And in the next instant came a fiery shudder through her, which she knew to be the forerunner of the Plague,—and therewith she looked right into his eyes and laughed too, for she knew him to be in her hand. So they entered the hall, and sat there supping in comfort, till she said she would retire to rest. Then her waiting-woman came and accompanied her to her room, where presently also came Sandro.

When he entered, she rose and held out her hands to him, and whispered loving words. At which he was filled with such delight that his brain reeled, and he babbled, being suffocated with the power of her beauty on his heart, and he forgot all that happened lately, his jealousy







P. S.  
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and shame before men, and folding his arms round her he kissed her countless times, while she kissed and fondled him in return . . . . till a faint odour arose.

Then Diana suddenly leaped up from her languorous loving and pushed him away, and spat upon him, telling him, as he stood amazed, that she hated him, and knew why he had laughed at her on entering, and that in revenge she had given him the Plague to die of. Then a madness came on her and she seized the lamp and dashed it out of the window so that it could be heard falling far down the cliff. And then she fell back, reviling him and taunting him with his age and foolishness, bewailing the memory of Bonaventura and weeping because there was no hope of seeing him again,—till her voice failed and she died, while Sandro listened in terror, all his old courage gone. And he sat there in the dark till daydawn, with shivers of fire running through him, and cursing her lying there so silent, having no hope of his own life. Then in the dawn he thought of his deed to his friend the painter, and how little pleasure he had had in return for so much toil of evil contrivance, and how much torture of mind, wondering how he could have been so infatuated in his elder years as to kill a good friend and take a young wife, and rising with pain, he went to the wall and began to scratch upon it with his dagger, groaning in great misery, until, as the sun filled the vales, he fell down and died, all alone, for no one came near when they became aware of the Plague odour by his door.

When at last came some who dared to bury them, they read this writing upon the wall.

“I implore thee, Bonaventura, to forgive me for my evil deed to thee. I am punished now for not living wisely in that way which the years had shown me to be best.

“We spoke of the soul, oh friend whom I killed, and I fear now the fate that awaits it. The corpse of Diana laughs at me in death; she has had her pleasure of me, as I forced her to do, and now I must bear the burden of her sins and mine. Be merciful to me, and do not come to watch me when the devils are taking their due.”

W. DELAPLAINE SCULL.

## BATTLEDORE

### I

NO breath of wind, within, without ;  
No stirring twig, no insect hum ;  
The very beehives dumb ;  
Till shrill and sharp, with shriek and shout,  
The laughing sisters come.

Swarth, heavy-tressed runs Alison,  
Not corn than Blanche more debonair,  
They fill the voiceless air,  
Scarcely a scant scarf bound upon  
Their joyous, rebel hair.

“ Here, sister, here.” “ No, here i’ the shade.”  
“ Look, sister, gather up your skirt ;  
It trails upon the dirt.”  
“ Ah, malapert, now you have made  
My hand bleed ; I am hurt.”

“ Sweet Alison, your hose is rent.”  
“ Sweet Blanche, but look you, do you this :  
Loosen your girdle, sis,  
And draw your gown through.” Indolent  
Blanche laughs at her excess.

Their heart-shaped bats, bent, bound and strung  
With ravelled bow-cord, light and stout  
To drive the ball about,  
Winged plaything from the soutar wrung  
With supplicating pout.

Drum! Drum! How it spins! How straight it flies!  
How blue ’tis! Bluer than the sky!  
“ Sister, you strike awry.”  
Hither and thither, hands and eyes,  
And never feet more spry.

The chatelaine creeps forth a space,  
Down the strait stair, with looks askance  
For peeping eyes. “ Constance!”  
The girls cry out, “ come, take a place.”  
Her eyes fixed, as in trance ;

Thoughts flocking of Provençal fields,  
Of her own youth, grown nigh and nigher,  
Gathering her fine attire,  
The weary Lady Constance yields  
Unto a great desire.

Truth, she is little apt, although  
She strive, and make a brave array  
Of skill; the breathless day  
Catches her throat for to and fro,  
This way and that way. "Nay . . . ."

One hand clasped on her face, and one  
Against her waist, the frightened twain  
Of girls, seeing her pain,  
Shriek, cry: "Swift! water!" Alison  
Wrings at her hands in vain.

"A little sickness, child; 'tis naught;  
'Tis well. Dear Christ! if't be a wight,  
Moris shall he be hight;  
If't be a lass, Ysold. For aught  
I joy, 't may be this night."

## BATTLEDORE

### II

The sheltered garden sleeps among the tall  
Black poplars which grow round it, next the wall.  
The wall is very high, green grown on red.  
All is within, white convent, chapel, all.

Slight supper past, the evening office said,  
Gardening tools locked up, the poultry fed,  
Little is done but lazy chaplets told,  
Weeds plucked, and garden calvaries visited.

Some pace and stitch; some read in little, old,  
Worn, heavily bound missals, which they hold  
With both red hands, where lawns are foiled with flowers,  
Lily and Ladybell and Marygold.

This is the least unushed of evening hours,  
When blessed peace best wears its dearest dowers:  
Quietly grouped are nuns and novices;  
Two tiny ladies play with battledores.

Drunk with the blows, unsteady with the whizz  
Of whirling flight, the shuttlecock seems, is  
Alive and fluttering at each new shock.  
Sisters are drawing close by twos and threes.

Asthmatic mother, as the shuttlecock  
Flies straight at her, allows herself to knock  
It onward with her leaf fan, muttering,  
Half as excuse: 'Tis nearly nine o'clock.

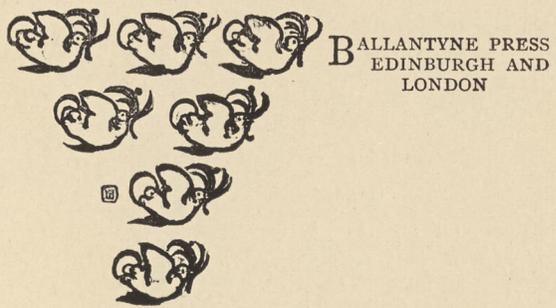
What better warrant for a foolish thing :  
With swift inventiveness the sisters bring  
Whatever light thing strikes ; old copybooks  
Fulfil the purpose well. Such fluttering

Within the convent walls the sober rooks  
Who live among the poplar branches—Sooks!—  
Had seldom seen. Now all the place prevails  
With cries and laughter to its furthest nooks.

The novices and nuns catch up their tails,  
Better to bustle, darting till their veils  
Float back and tangle in the merry fuss,  
Till sombre weeds swell out like lusty sails. . . . .

Peace, croaks the mother, Peace, the angelus!

JOHN GRAY.



1896

