

A LITERARY CAUSERIE

BY WAY OF EPILOGUE



I was in the autumn of last year, that, at the request of Mr. Smithers, I undertook to form and edit a new magazine. As this magazine was to contain not only literature but illustration, I immediately went to Mr. Beardsley, whom I looked upon as the most individual and expressive draughtsman of our time, and secured his cordial co-operation. I then got together some of the writers, especially the younger writers, whose work seemed to me most personal and accomplished; deliberately choosing them from as many "schools" as possible. Out of the immense quantity of unsolicited material which came to me, very little was of any value; a few manuscripts and drawings, however, I was able to make use of. I wish here to return thanks, most gratefully, to all those writers and artists who have helped me, with such invariable kindness, and with such invaluable assistance.

Many things that I had hoped to do I have not done; I have done a few things that I did not intend to do. For these failures I blame partly myself, partly circumstances. It is not given to anyone in this world to achieve anything entirely to his satisfaction; or only to those who aim low. I aimed high.

Yes, I admit it, all those intentions which were expressed in my first editorial note, and which the newspapers made so merry over, were precisely my intentions; and I have come as close to them as I could. It is a little difficult now to remember the horrified outcry—the outcry for no reason in the world but the human necessity of making a noise—with which we were first greeted. I look at those old press notices sometimes, in my publisher's scrap-book, and then at the kindly and temperate notices which the same papers are giving us now; and I find the comparison very amusing. For we have not changed in the least; we have simply gone on our own way; and now that everyone is telling us that we have "come to stay," that we are a "welcome addition," etc., we are obliged to retire from existence, on account

of the too meagre support of our friends. Our first mistake was in giving so much for so little money; our second, in abandoning a quarterly for a monthly issue. The action of Messrs. Smith and Son in refusing to place "The Savoy" on their bookstalls, on account of the reproduction of a drawing by Blake, was another misfortune. And then, worst of all, we assumed that there were very many people in the world who really cared for art, and really for art's sake.

The more I consider it, the more I realize that this is not the case. Comparatively very few people care for art at all, and most of these care for it because they mistake it for something else. A street-singer, with the remains of a beautiful voice, has just been assuring me that "if you care for art you don't get rich." No, it is for their faults that any really artistic productions become popular: art cannot appeal to the multitude. It is wise when it does not attempt to; when it goes contentedly along a narrow path, knowing, and caring only to know, in what direction it is moving.

Well, we were unwise in hoping, for a moment, that the happy accident of popularity was going to befall us. It was never in my original scheme to allow for such an accident. I return to the discretion of first thoughts; after an experiment, certainly, which has been full of instruction, full also of entertainment, to ourselves. And so, in saying the last words in connection with "The Savoy," which now ends its year's existence, I have the pleasure to announce that in our next venture we are going to make no attempt to be popular. We shall make our appearance twice only in the year; our volumes will be larger in size, better produced, and they will cost more. In this way we shall be able to appeal to that limited public which cares for the things we care for; which cares for art, really for art's sake. We shall hope for no big success; we shall be confident of enough support to enable us to go on doing what seems to us worth doing. And, relieved as we shall be from the hurry of monthly publication, we shall have the leisure to do what seems to us worth doing, more nearly as it seems to us it should be done.

ARTHUR SYMONS.