

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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Some New "Pensées" of Balzac.

[THE Paris "Figaro" of October 29 last published under the title of "Le 'Garde-Manger' d'Honoré de Balzac" a selection of maxims and epigrams from an hitherto unpublished notebook of Balzac's, which is shortly to appear under the editorship of MM. Blaizot and Jacques Crepet. The following have been specially translated from the "Figaro" for THE NEW AGE.]

In the world, and above all in Paris, one must carry one's own pedestal with one.

There are far more crimes in high society than in low. Uneducated people are hanged for stealing a clock within the meaning of the five sections of the Code. The educated man burns a will.

Doubting everything and doubting nothing are one and the same defect.

Pagan religions divinised the earth and placed it in heaven; Catholicism has set heaven above earth.

An idea at first appears obscure, then it becomes divine in somebody's eyes. Later on the world approves it, two centuries afterwards nations are killing one another for it.

"It is said" and "perhaps" are the two ushers of scandal.

A mineral is a corpse; it is the final product of a life which has run its course, of forces which have disappeared after having come together.

What is called a representative Government is a perpetual storm, for the minority never fails to call itself the majority of the nation, and sooner or later this assertion must be verified, and a single circumstance may show it to be in the right. When this happens there is a revolution. The Government is therefore always at the mercy of chance. But the essence of government is stability. It is stability that makes Austria so strong.

Matter is God's female.

Every force that man believes himself to create is merely borrowed from eternal motion and restored on the instant.

Over-civilisation is always liable to barbarism as steel is to rust. One moment's neglect and it comes.

Genius has large ears inside.

A law is discredited by opposition before it becomes law; how then can it obtain a general obedience?

Virtue has work as its sentinel.

A Legitimate King believes far more than a republican Senate in the sovereignty of the people. So-called absolute Governments are far more popular than popular assemblies. A king fears the demonstrations of his people, and is bound to govern them well. An assembly injures them without responsibility.

Liberties certainly, but liberty never.

There are people who bay with the nightingales and warble with the wolves.

Mahomet, Jesus, and Moses were very successful in

the West. But Asiatic legislators have been much more successful. China is a striking witness against Europe.

It is impossible to be on a level with calumny; one is either above or below it.

Everybody who thinks strongly creates a scandal.

Here are the two poles of society, the country in which nobody ever thinks of committing a crime, and the country in which everything is so well calculated that nobody can commit a crime.

A great man is always right, even when the consequences of his acts appear disastrous.

Happiness is the exception in life.

There are no fools in Nature; we owe them to society.

Remorse is the virtue of the weak—they are afraid.

As well suffer in a great circle as be pricked with a thousand pins in a corner.

Space, darkness, terror: three great sources of poetry.

Depth comes from the mind of the reader, not from the thought expressed. A book is less an effect than a cause.

Those who deny themselves love are well recompensed for their continence by the sensations it induces.

Law ought not to be the will of society, for it should be opposed to customs in order to serve as a check and a balance to them. Law proceeds from a higher intelligence than that of the many; it can never be the work of all.

There are authors who are by no means viviparous.

The general sense of wars from 1792-1815 is this. France fought all her battles outside her boundaries and knew war only through the taxes. Continental nations knew war by the occupation of their territory as well as by taxes. Abroad, families were ruined and the State bankrupted. In France the State was bankrupted, but families made their fortunes. The account was settled in 1815! Foreign nations retook from France as a whole on their own account, and not on account of their families, all that the French armies had despoiled. It followed from this, financially speaking, that France was ruined as a State while the other States were enriched. Thus the strife, consummated by twenty victories, was lost by a single defeat. France, in a military sense, knowing nothing of the real evils of war, neglected to defend her territory; and the other States, tired of war, determined at any cost to put an end to France. We have been for twenty years under the burden of these results. The two greatest ideas of Napoleon, the Russian war and the war with England, were the actual and vital questions which he would have concluded to the profit of a threatened Europe; he represented neither France nor Europe, but the world.

Can you imagine yourself to be something immaterial, that is, something that has no affinity with matter, but which a small quantity of opium transforms and annihilates?

The finest revenge is to despise revenge.

The man of genius virtually impresses his words with the image.

One must indulge in misery.

If the mass is gifted with the intelligence of all the units that compose it, it is endowed equally with their ignorance; so that everything is possible to them, follies as well as heroisms. It all depends.

Women see only the defects of men of talent, and the good qualities of fools. The qualities of fools are related to their defects, but in men of talent defects and qualities are sharply defined.

It is difficult to draw up a standard system for use in our relations with women; all we can utilise is a mass of observation of which we can make use in the

circumstances. The observations are good once and false a thousand times.

It is remorse that makes a man odious. A man who does not repent is a system or an organism that provokes us and sometimes overawes us.

When one is guilty, one must be clever.

One virtue is sufficient to blot out many vices; and one vice is likewise sufficient to blot out many virtues.

A great soul is drawn towards great affections, and a strong head towards great ideas. To have a great heart and a strong brain is to be in conflict. Either the heart or the head must rule.

One should never touch an enemy but to humble him in the dust.

The rules of taste are eternal; they are the result of a permanent harmony between the means and the end of man.

Brobdingnag.

By Wyndham Lewis.

SHOULD Frans Hals come to life again, and find himself in the doorway of the "débit" at Kermanec, he would recognise Madame Brobdingnag at once as a figure in several of his masterpieces—this is allowing for slight inaccuracies of memory owing to the century or two that have elapsed since he last saw them, of course. The room would seem odd to him, no doubt; and how such a man as Brobdingnag came to be living conjugally with one of his masterpieces would baffle his understanding. He might even regard it as a suspicious and portentous circumstance, and consider his resurrection with uneasiness. But not to pursue the course of this sympathetic ghost's reflections, let it suffice that Madame B. would seem to him perfectly regular, and a genuine Frans Hals. She has the mellow tones of old pictures—but it is not time but drink that has effected this happy result. The obstinate yellow of jaundice is not yet subdued by the dull claret colour that is becoming the official tint of her face, assuring its predominance in many tiny strongholds of eruptive red. Her eyebrows are forever raised. She could not lower them now, I suppose, if she wanted to. The wrinkles of the forehead must have become stiff, like springs, with the result that if she pulled her eyebrows down they would fly up again the moment the muscles were relaxed. She is very dark; her hair, parted in the middle, is tightly brushed down upon her head. She treads softly, and has generally the air of a conspirator, or such as have some secret they are hugging. Her secret is that underneath the counter on the left-hand side, hidden among tins and flagons, is an enormous bottle of "eau de vie," which, when everyone else has either gone to the river to wash or else are collected in the neighbouring inns, she approaches on tiptoe, and pouring herself out several glasses in succession, swallows them with little sighs. She will drop her voice to a whisper, and seems keeping her secret publicly, as it were, and with everybody, at all moments. Sometimes her consciousness of it becomes so intense, that, with strange perversion, she acts as if the bottle were listening—as if it were from her secret itself that she were keeping her secret. The emphasis of unreasonable sorrow and contrition with which pious old women always speak to the priest, the tone of "misericorde," is that in which Julie speaks. The sort of old women I mean are such as hail their priest's light-heartedest jokes with ghostly smiles, treating them as though they were some further and even more hideously ingenious form of rendering life sad and unbearable, of which only a priest was capable.

While approaching his house this year, I wondered if Brobdingnag, since last summer, had been drowned at sea, disappeared, or declined from his old self. A

reassuring sight met my eyes on entering the "débit." Julie had her head bound up, and to judge from the bold and rugged outlines of the bandages, the face had lately undergone grave modifications. Brobdingnag's own person could not have made me more at home. The bandaged head welcomed me. The disfigurements seemed purposely bestowed, with a rare delicacy of intention, in case I should come in his absence. She told me that it was erysipelas; but she explained half-an-hour later that Brobdingnag had done it.

Once she told me that a few years previously they had had a jay; this bird knew when Brobdingnag was drunk; and when he came in from a wake or "Pardon," and sat down at the "débit" table, the jay would hop out of its box, cross the table, and peck at its hands and fly in his face.

Brobdingnag is a glorious and unique creature. This is not a merely florid introduction; it is the only sentence that seems to me at once adequate and exact. He is of very big and powerful frame, reddish hair, moustache and stubble. His eyes are blue and smiling, and always seem evenly suffused with a rich moisture. They are great, tender, wise, mocking eyes, and the sides of his massive forehead are often flushed, as it is with some people in moments of embarrassment. But with him, I think this affluence of blood is something to do with the extraordinary expression he puts into his gaze, and the tension this effort must cause in the surrounding vessels, etc. What we call a sickly smile, the mouth remaining lightly drawn across the gums—the set, painful grin of the "timide"—this seldom leaves Brobdingnag's face.

He walks softly, with a supple giving of the knees at each step. This probably comes from his excessive fondness for the dance—the Breton "gavotte"—in which he was so rapid, expert and resourceful in his youth.

"J'suis maître danseur; c'est mon plaisir," he will say. He also has composed many verses to the gavotte airs of his country. If you ask him, he will, with his set grin, intone and buzz them through his scarcely parted teeth, whose tawny rows look, on these occasions—he manipulating their stops with his tongue—like some exotic musical instrument.

He is a fisherman, but also a "débitant" or bar-keeper and "cultivateur." Brobdingnag and his wife dissipated the last half of her fortune in building their present home; Brobdingnag's enthusiasm, as it rose brick by brick, being of the costliest description. When at length it stood complete, beneath the little red cliff hewn out for its reception, glaring white, with a bald slate roof and rows of steps leading up to the door, his inaugural fêtes left them with nothing but its four walls and the third share in a fishing boat.

His comrades will tell you that he is a "charmant garçon, mais jaloux," or that he is "traître." He has been married twice, and in the first ardour of youth beat Julie's predecessor to death. "And yet, despite this, that 'pauvre Julie' would have him: qu'est-ce qu'elles ont les femmes à aimer un tel homme?" etc. He has "herité" three times or more, and spent each heritage ere the relative who left it him was half-eaten by the worms.

But first, foremost and above all, Brobdingnag is *civilised*. He is often drunk and then loses the amenity and "sourire" of his nature. Some people get drunk to attain to this felicitous and cloudless state; he, on the contrary, does so that he may remain in this perfect mood of his sober hours. These are necessary retrogressions. He is thereby purged completely for the time of all the suggestions, all the excretions of violent thought, emotion, black anger, bilious dreams, deposited in small quantities each day, inevitably, beneath the suave surface of his existence. Brobdingnag smiles placidly, confidently. He has accepted the price of that humane, wise and tranquil life that is his habitually. Having made up his mind, he will allow it to occupy him no further. The morning after he has beaten his wife—she a mass of bruises, lying exhausted on the bed—he busies himself about her, gravely and thoughtfully, inquiring occasionally how she feels, applying remedies, as a doctor would do having successfully performed an operation, and having no anxiety

for the consequences. He walks fifteen miles to Quimperlé and back to get the necessary medicines. As a man might tend a delicate wife, who suffers from some chronic complaint, so does he comport himself on the morning following one of those awful, unshunnable, and mysterious nocturnal disturbances.

He addresses his wife always with the greatest gentleness. Still there is a vague something in the bearing of both of them, as of two people who, resigned, have long shared a strong affliction; a constant intelligence and consciousness of something—of something soon to be borne, perhaps.

Once Julie, to make sure of some lodgers, had agreed to a very moderate charge, and also to do their cooking. Brobdingnag put down his foot. With inexorable tenderness he forbade her to take this burden upon her shoulders, already sorely over-taxed, reminding her of her "delicate health" and other responsibilities.

I rode over to Kermanec again just before I left Brittany. On entering the "débit de vin" I found several people gathered there, and Julie with her arm in a large sling, with glimpses of bandages, and four stiff, bloated fingers protruding from beneath stained cloths. As usual, I took no notice of her condition—were she dying I should not let her see that I observed the fact. I discussed the latest scandal about Bestre, at great inconvenience to myself keeping my eyes away from her wounded arm. And yet a certain doubt existed in my mind. It is true that I had not far to look for a cause of all this mischief; a solution sound, traditional, satisfying to the reason, and exempting the mind at once from all further search or hesitation—in fact in place of which I could seek all day and find no theory that would stand for a moment against it, or compete in likelihood. In the reposeful figure of Brobdingnag, sitting in the dark corner of the "débit," and gazing into space, was a key more than adequate to the history implied in this maimed arm. But it was this very figure that had engendered the doubt in my mind. His expression puzzled me. He, whom I was accustomed to see always master of the situation, seemed overcome, stunned almost, like a man not yet recovered from a terrible experience. His usual expression on these occasions was one of resignation and acceptance of the ways of Providence—tinged with sadness. One could see that he was a participator in the dispensations of Fate that had visited his roof, even in some way a secret agent of Fate. But now he looked like a man hardly recovered from a prodigious surprise.

Had Fate acted without him? Such was the question that at length shaped itself in my mind.

But Madame Brobdingnag, too, pre-occupied me. When one entered her "débit" and found some part of her body bound up, she would ordinarily look disagreeable—her way of "behaving as though nothing had happened"—although she was never disagreeable at other times. But now she gazed into my eyes for several minutes with an expression of bitter amusement. Really, had I known a whit less well the habits of the house, and not assisted at so many "lendemains de pardon," I should have interpreted this gaze as an invitation to talk about her misfortune. All this quite apart from the fact that it was only two weeks since I had seen her in a similar condition, and from experience I judged this new visitation premature.

At last some one said, "See how her fingers are swollen!" and Julie looked at me carelessly; she then tossed her head, with a resignedly desperate snigger.

I at once made inquiries. The baker had asked her, on driving up the day before, to put a stone under the wheel of his cart, to prevent it from moving. Julie had bent down to do so, but the horse backed suddenly, and the wheel went over her hand: she had been to the hospital at Quimperlé, and they had bandaged it. Her arm also was affected.

Brobdingnag now got on his feet, and approached me to give his account of the affair. He seemed to do this despite himself, rather as though impelled by the fact of a strange misunderstanding, or half understanding, on the part of his wife and all the others in this matter.

He had been at sea at the time. On landing he was met by a neighbour, who told him that his wife was injured. "Your wife is injured——."

"What, my wife injured? My wife injured!"

He repeated these words slowly, in a dazed way, in telling how he first heard of the accident. He really got something of the utter astonishment, dismay and shade of strange suspicion that his voice must have expressed when the neighbour first informed him of this happening. The intensity of his voice was startling. With my knowledge of him it gave me a lurid glimpse at once of his present condition of mind. In the first moment of hearing of his wife's injured state, the familiar image of her battered form as seen on the morrow of one of his relapses must have risen in his mind. He is assailed with a sudden incapacity to think of injuries in his wife's case except as caused by a human hand; he is astonished by the thought that he himself had not been there to be the sufficient cause of anything that might have happened. Then all his wild jealousy suddenly surges up, giving life to these twin ideas—only more exasperated than ever before. In a second of time a man is born—vague and phantom-like, but of prodigious strength—a rival! sickening his whole imagination, that has given it birth, as with a woman that has been delivered of some hero, already of heroic size. A moment of utter weakness and lassitude seizes him. This rival is such an astonishing being, that he remains powerless at the thought of him. Brobdingnag's mind is stunned and invaded by a torpor, at the sight of such overwhelming hate and daring, complicated with such unspeakable ingenuity as his rival has given proof of; an invention no less than this—not only to gain his wife's love; but, in an access of titanic arrogance, to conceive the idea of wresting from Brobdingnag that most mystic, thunder-guarded, inmost and incommunicable of rights—to have hatched and carried out the outrageous scheme of giving her a beating. From sheer incapacity to grasp a genius of such scope; at the end of a burning and prodigious second, another form takes hold of his mind, that of Julie—electrifying him, charging him with the most infernal energy and fury. This form at least he can grasp! At this moment someone must have told him of the real cause of the injuries. He heard, took the sense of the words, without it penetrating his mind. The forms of his imagination remained distinct, unmodified and immobilized, the reality now having rushed in and filled up the vacuum, as it were, with a stoney characterless matter. I can imagine it was touch and go. This information given but an instant later, and it would have been too late. Brobdingnag would have rushed up the steps of his house, scattered the sympathising group of neighbours, fallen upon the maimed and prostrate Julie, and before the spectators could cross themselves or gulp down their spital, have rendered the injuries inflicted by the baker's cart unrecognizable—feeling that, in outdoing and obliterating all trace of his imaginary rival, he had in some way mitigated his own humiliation, and humiliated this monstrous personage in turn.

The reality, while paralysing the progress of his fancy and what would have been its terrible and catastrophic advance, had not dissipated it. There it hung, as it had flashed into life a moment after his hearing of the accident, suspended over Julie's head, with only a common fact, the restlessness of a baker's horse, between her and destruction.

So he repeated in a dazed way to me: "What, my wife injured? My wife injured!" And here also his narrative came to a sudden termination, the others completing it for him.

What effect this most unfortunate adventure may have on Brobdingnag it is difficult to say. I can imagine those nocturnal rites growing more savage and desperate, and afterwards his recovered wisdom becoming at first insecure, and then no longer confident, and more and more sombreness remaining with him, and finally the complete ruin of his ancient self. I felt, in quitting Kermanec, that the shadow of doom had fallen upon this roof.

Lamartine.

By Francis Grierson.

"Le secret du génie d'un grand homme est le plus souvent dans son cœur."—LAMARTINE.

LITERARY charm is like a philter distilled by the heart and dispensed by the intellect. When I meet with a book that keeps me from my work hours at a time, uniting reality and reverie by a sort of magical bond, I know then that I have met with a poetic personality in the highest meaning of the phrase. Books are like people: we prefer those that attain our own level of thought and feeling; and we often find congenial books and people in the places where we least expect them—where we look for fashion in place of intellect, pretension in place of sincerity. Who has not met with at least one congenial spirit on some occasion when boredom seemed inevitable? Who has not been disillusioned at least once by accepting an invitation to meet a room full of fashionable people, many of them posing as artists, philosophers, and poets? Who has ever got the exact thing sought for at the beginning?

I had long been familiar with the name of Lamartine, without knowing much of his work. The friend who presented me to Alexandre Dumas was never tired of pronouncing Lamartine's name, for the poet died in the very year of my arrival in Paris. But I am now convinced that we can learn more from a man's writings in prose than we can from his poems. Victor Hugo belongs to the world of dramatic action, but Lamartine takes possession of the soul; the charm is vital, the influence cordial and penetrating. A great noise accompanied the life and work of Hugo, but Lamartine belonged to the Virgilian order. A man becomes noted for his wit, but this poet is distinguished by the quality of his soul. One has only to think of Virgil and Dante, without naming a hundred others, to accept Lamartine's dictum that, "The soul is the principle of all lasting glory." Such natures never change. Troubles and sorrows, instead of making them more worldly, make them more at one with themselves. The greater the noise of rival factions all about them, the more patience do they possess. Wit and action, in themselves, amount to nothing. "The human heart can invent nothing, though it can feel everything: it is anguish, piety, love, death, which renders it harmonious." In an age when realism and mammon are believed in by millions of people it is well to have such a thought as the following often repeated to the herd who put their faith in smartness, machine-made education, and the "isms" of the rabble: "It is through the soul that thought has feeling. The soul alone gives life, because it alone can feel." And here is one for the meditation of people who dream of becoming artists and poets by simply wishing and trying: "All great passions are prodigies; they can only be measured by themselves. The impossible is their measure."

In Amiel the poet was crushed by the thinker, but in Lamartine the philosopher was as great as the poet. He was a man of action withal, but he would have been just as great without having taken any part in politics. It requires something more than effective versifying to give utterance to a thought like this: "There is a mysterious analogy between the breadth of ideas and the breadth of horizons." And Amiel or Chateaubriand might have written this: "There are sites, climates, seasons, hours, exterior circumstances, so much in harmony with certain expressions of the

heart that Nature seems to be part of the soul and the soul part of Nature."

It requires a thinker who is not an intellectual mannikin to express such sentiments, to put them into simple language, and to give others a clear impression of the writer's feelings. This communion with Nature is rarely experienced by youth, which is hurried along at too rapid a pace to observe and appropriate the ensembles of wood and stream, shadow and sunshine. This is why the philosopher must develop before the artist can occupy the vantage ground of the seer. In youth we are struck by mere appearances. We are held by the pure illusions of sight and sense. In middle-age we begin to feel ourselves a part of the things we see. The supreme meditative mood is identical with Nature.

After a whole age of experience we begin to realise with the poet-philosopher that, "The human heart, and Nature, alone, are of a universal allurements (attraction), which renews itself through all ages."

It is impossible for anyone who is absorbed in the schools and "isms" of the time to properly appreciate this: "Every time that man prepares himself worthily to speak to God, he feels the necessity of placing himself face to face with Nature." This thought, if we dwell on it long enough, will explain the attitude of people who think they find enlightenment in the foibles and superstitions of certain modern beliefs. Looked at closely, some of the new "isms," instead of leading the mind to a contemplation of the realities, lead it away from the Supreme power of the universe into the trivial and the purely personal. Instead of bringing us face to face with the mystical unity of Nature and man, they separate them, and turn man into a trivial machine divorced from all communion with eternal realities. "The passion to admire renders everything comprehensible." There is no admiration inspired by the sight of human automatons, no matter what they may do or say. Nothing that is said or done mechanically will have any durable influence on the minds of thinking people.

Lamartine was the one clairvoyant statesman of his time; yet, in 1848, he addressed the people from the Hôtel de Ville with this outburst of Utopian fraternity: "Embrassons-nous, aimons-nous, fraternisons comme une seule famille de condition à condition, de classe à classe, d'opulence à indigence." But he was brushed aside, a few years later, by Napoleon's Coup d'Etat, and lived till 1869, neglected by the people in power who had risen from the ranks of the incompetent and obscure. Had Lamartine lived a few months longer he might have seen Napoleon hurrying across fields of carnage in his efforts to elude the mandates of destiny; members of his household escaping furtively from the back-doors of the Tuileries, veiled, disguised, assisted by the despised of society; and in Paris he would certainly have witnessed the rout of titled usurpers by the intellectual autocrat, Bismarck, on one side, aided by the proletarian demagogues and the *sans-culottes* of Paris, on the other. Wherever ambition and vanity obscure the light of intellect and wisdom, ruin and chaos are the result. Indeed, incompetent rulers are attacked by two opposite, inimical forces: the gifted, who can see, and the fanatics, who are blind.

Lamartine's experience is but another lesson to be added to those which history has sent down from the Revolution of '89. It is commonly supposed that we are better judges of the events of the French Revolution than the writers of culture who took a part in it. This is a grave error. No writer can describe ade-

quately what he has not seen and felt. Modern historians do not give us the movement, the manner, the swift gesture, the hissing voice, the flashes of rage in the bloodshot eye of the man-tiger liberated by chaos from the bars of social durance, and landed at one bound in the arena of mortal strife; they fail to impart the rush of blood to the sallow cheeks of covetousness, the sudden change from purple to pallor as the intriguing factions sway to and fro under the lash of the Girondists, or rise to oratorical violence under the exaltation of the Mountain; they fail to depict the malady known as "la folie des grandeurs," in its varying guises of sophistry and patriotic cant, in its hallucination of power unattainable, talent never to be acquired, ambitions never to be realised. They cannot see in imagination what they never saw in the body. A phrase from Mirabeau, a page from Chamfort, a portrait from Chateaubriand, come to us as the judgment of men who experienced the fatal fascination and the horror of a conflict between genius and an assemblage of weak minds made furious by the expectation of spoil and sanguinary conflict. Bonaparte, who used Republicans and Communists alike in his ascent to the throne, was never afterwards free from the influence of the populace. After his coronation every victory gained was a fresh weight in the scale descending towards calamity. Similarly, Napoleon III., who mounted the throne after it had been occupied by three kings in succession, had no direct rights and no legitimate expectations. Once more history was repeated: he came into power through a democratic revolution which banished Louis-Philippe, and gave the new emperor an opportunity of using the new democracy. Placed on the throne by demagogues, he was urged into impossible schemes by ambitious adventurers and by his own vanity into acts of political and social rivalry. The Crimean War was a blunder, the invasion of Mexico a crime, the war with Germany an act of madness.

But the experience of Lamartine stands as another warning. Never under existing conditions will the masses be made to realise the distinction between social rights and intellectual privileges. The typical lady's-maid, who reads sensational novels and goes out on Sunday wearing a dress cut in the latest fashion, has every right under the present system of education to believe that a rich marriage would make her the equal of the most cultured women in the land. She can see but one step between her position and that of her mistress: the step which is made of gold; and the accident of marriage might at any time place this step within her reach. With the ignorant young woman, as with the ignorant young man, there is no such thing as intellect. The question of existence is a question of possession. For the lady's-maid, the valet, the cook, and the coachman are all familiar with the very things which interest the master and the mistress: they have witnessed the same problem plays, read the same problem-novels in cheap editions; they know the ways of the modern money-kings, the intrigues of society leaders, and the ambitions of parvenus. They know the significance of all these words, signs, and symbols, which, forty years ago, appeared to the understanding of the people as so much Greek. Maxims about the equality created by opportunity are now a stock-in-trade in kitchen, workshop, and counting-house. The demoralising notion that all men are created equal has been doing its work ever since the French Revolution. Science is just beginning to unravel the tangle of errors created by this doctrine.

There are but two standards by which to judge of man: physical strength and mental ability. Taken on

the plane of simple brute force, the man with the greatest physical power is everywhere considered the best man; he is considered superior by the illiterate masses as well as by competent judges of the prize-ring. Here, in this world of sound health and herculean muscle, the palm of superiority is accorded the victor by universal acclamation. The savage and the scientist, therefore, admit that all men are not born physically equal. Taken on the plane of pure intellect, man is everywhere unequal. The street-sweeper has over him someone who is a little too good to sweep the streets, the bricklayer the builder, the builder the architect. It is therefore admitted on all sides that the architect knows more than the workmen under him. We cannot look about us anywhere without being struck with the physical and mental inequality of men and things. It is hardly possible to find three persons with an equal physical development, and it would be something like a miracle to meet with a group of persons with mental characteristics developed on parallel lines. Why, then, in the face of these inexorable laws, the force of which a savage is willing to admit, do people continue to preach the doctrine of equality? There are two reasons: lack of discernment and lack of scientific knowledge. But the initial reasons are the same as those which caused the American and French Revolutions: the vanity and excesses of the nobility, and the hate and fear inspired by ignorant law-makers; and, above all, the envy inspired by the arrogance and ostentation of the French nobles, from the reign of Louis XIV. to 1789.

Perhaps the most striking thing in the life of the poet-statesman is the fact that he was one of Nature's aristocrats who spent his best forces in the cause of a blind, wilful, and passionate people. Well may he write: "Oh, humanity! To what depths can you not descend when the spirit of utopia excludes the spirit of common sense." The mob feared the presence of a good man in 1849 as they feared and hated Mirabeau in 1789. In 1793 they fed the guillotine with the talent and genius of France. The rabble went free until the wheel of destiny began to revolve the other way; then the *sans-culottes* of the Mountain tasted their own blood by a process of their own invention.

Lamartine had to learn the lesson learnt by all the poets and philosophers since the beginning of history. All had to learn it to their sorrow. Goethe, the wisest mind of the nineteenth century, puts the lesson in these words: "I certainly advise you not to waste an hour in the society of men whose tastes and concerns have nothing in common with your own."

The subject of genius descending to the rabble is a fascinating one. Men who live and soar in the region of light and wisdom are never at home in crowds. A mob belongs to itself. The forces proper for the control and domination of crowds are those of will and reason, in which poetic inspiration is out of place. The poet blundered when he left his own world and descended to the ranks of the ordinary politician; and poets pay as much for their blunders as the rest of us, perhaps more—for the poet is a sensitive who feels the influence of people and things more acutely than others. We all blunder in thinking that we can succeed where others have failed. There is but one law for poets, artists, and thinkers, and that law warns everyone against the folly of descending to a plane on which Nature never intended the man of thought to dwell. But to succeed in living the life which Nature intended us to live requires a patience which has no end. The moment we lose patience we lose self-control, and trouble begins. Lamartine, like hundreds of others, imagined he could influence the crowd as he influenced poets and thinkers. The two worlds can never be made to mingle as one. Come what may, the soul will remain detached from the noises of the world. Neither politics, nor religion, nor science, will ever succeed in changing Nature's mandates. And the charm which we find in certain books, scenes, and people will never diminish or change with the innovations and fashions of time.

The Ploughman.

By Alfred Ollivant.

HE comes towards the gate with the wooden movements of the man who all his life has worked too hard; and he is as battered as the old black billy-cock he wears. A little twisted man, middle-aged, and shaped like a shallow S by reason of his stomach that is thrown forward somewhat from the waist as though to counter-balance his rounded shoulders. Yet he is not fat. You do not grow fat on the wages of a Sussex Ploughman.

There is no colour in his cheeks, and his mouth is always open. About his face hangs soft black hair in rags and tags, limp, and very sparse. He is not bushy; he is not brown; he is not your beery red bucolic of the picture papers and the stage, this colourless old creature: he is the typical earth-worker of the England of our day, wooden with weariness that knows no end. What chin he has is tumble-down. And his face is mild, mild as the October day to which it is uplifted; and with wonderfully quiet eyes. It is not dull; it is not brutal; it is least of all defiant. A very Christ-like fellow, this patient Ploughman drawing his dingy hand athwart his nose.

Close by his two horses, patient as himself, drowse side by side on the hard brown fallows. At the foot of the field are woods already yellowing, and the blue line of the downs lifts beyond.

It is four o'clock of a Saturday afternoon; but there is no half-holiday for him or his horses.

"Waants wet," says the Ploughman. "D's hard work this weather. Maakes plough kick to your hand. Knooby-like."

He is not complaining: he is merely stating the fact.

"What time d'you knock off?" I ask him.

"I'll be takin' harrses back now."

"What are your hours?"

"Five to five."

"Summer and winter?"

"Soommer and winter. And a mile to walk to and fro from cottage to farm." He is not rebellious; he is not bitter—he is never that. "Makes your legs a-ache—so much walkin'." He says it in a curiously matter-of-fact voice.

"Does your day end at five?"

"Coom back at seven, ye knaw, to feed the harrses and litter 'em down."

"D'you get your Sundays off?"

"In soommer, when harrses lays out."

Five to seven, summer and winter!—and he has been at it all what he calls his life. He gets no half-holidays, no bank-holidays, and no Sundays for nine months in the year. He tells me he is married; and I wonder mildly whether he was allowed a day off on his wedding day, or was married in his lunch-hour, omitting his meal for that purpose.

He is fifty now and already far-spent and stiff with toil. There are still twenty years between him and the pension he will never live to see, and which would not keep him if he did.

For forty years, man and boy, he has been plodding up and down these fallows in your service and mine, and will do so yet, I dare say, for another five to ten. Then he will begin to go to pieces, and we shall break up his home, separate him from his wife and children, and chuck him on the scrap-heap, in return for his twelve hours' toil a day in our service, carried on without intermission for six-days-and-a-bit a week through forty-five odd years.

Happily he does not know it. If we have done nothing else for this old man who has done so much for us, we have at least ground the imagination out of him.

And here we have been kind unconsciously. He sees only a little further before him than his horses, and hardly realises what we have in store for his old age. He is too tired. And it is surely as well. When the day comes and we part him from his family and lead our old retainer who has served you and me for forty faithful years to the scrap-heap to end his days in ignominy there, he will cry a little, and that is all. At present he hardly realises the future we have in store for him. That future is too far away; and he is so foolish as to trust it to us—to you and me.

I have spoken of him as old. In fact he is only fifty: yet old he is. All the sap of life seems to have been squeezed out of his limbs long ago. My host spudding plaintains on the lawn a mile away, pensioned these fifteen years, and not on five shillings a week, is twenty years his senior, and nothing like so old as this ancient of the plough.

I regard him timidly.

"Been happy?" I ask at length, catching my breath.

He doesn't answer. It is not that he doesn't hear: it is that he does not know what to say. He is not quite sure that he knows what happiness is. There have been no high lights in his life. It has been all a muddle of dull grey. Therefore he maintains a moving silence. Could he frame his thoughts, he would probably reply that he has not been happy, nor for that matter has he on the whole been unhappy. He has been passive: lived upon rather than living. And the neutral tint of what he calls his life seems to have entered into his blood and colourlessly coloured his very flesh.

I draw a step nearer and drop my voice.

In the presence of this old scarecrow, who all his life has laboured beneath the Cross for your sake and for mine, I feel a sense of humility and of awe I rarely own to in the twilight of a church with the painted figure of the Saviour looking down on me from the east window.

"And what d'you think of it all—of life?"

He lifts his mild face to the mild sky, and it is some while before he drops his eye to mine; and it is strangely sweet and shrewd as he answers:

"If one warn't workin' here one'd be workin' somewhere else, I reck'n."

Work! He has never known anything else. The beautiful things that he has made possible for you and me—leisure, travel, pleasure—these things have not come his patient way. We have climbed into heaven on his body. He has died and is to-day dying that you and I might live. And we! We are not grateful. We roll by him in our motors without a word of acknowledgment. In winter we splash past him in pink coats and curse him if he doesn't run to open the gate for us. He touches his hat to us, and we do not fall down and worship him. We are too blind to recognise in this bent old man in his battered billy-cock the Crucified—who has taken our sins upon his shoulders, has given his life to redeem ours, loves us so much that he dies daily for us, is the least amongst us and therefore the first, our servant and therefore the lord of all. We pass him by with a nod, a lift of the finger, a curt word, unrecognising him in that disguise—our Maker, our Master, the Saviour of the World.

Little wonder that I regard him with eyes of deepening reverence.

"What d'you earn?" I ask in hushed voice.

"Sixteen," answers the Son of God.

He gives the number and no more; and there is no need. That little word is all the more telling for its nakedness. It stands, and stands conspicuously, alone—the somewhat tragic epitome of the lives of millions in our England who have made the world big and beautiful for you and me.

"And a cottage?"

"Yes," he says, and lifts a mild and almost deprecatory eye to mine. "And it's worth it."

The Son of God turns his stiff old back, clothed in its dingy waistcoat.

I touch my hat to it. If I have done no more, I have at least recognised my Lord.

Mad Humanity*

A Play in One Act.

By Huntly Carter.

[Written in 1902. All rights reserved. The play must not be performed without the Author's permission.]

CHARACTERS.

LOUIS REEVES . . . An advanced morphinist.
CHARLIE FULLER. . . A painter of masterpieces.
FLOSS . . . A saviour of souls.

SCENE: A Studio.

[As curtain rises FULLER enters up R. He enters rapidly, slams door, flings hat on platform L., crosses to window recess, hurriedly exchanges his coat for an old velvet one, takes up palette and brushes, and sets to work dabbling viciously at a sketch of a girl in knickers. Almost immediately after hurried footsteps and an exhausted voice calling: Charlie! Charlie! are heard off R. A moment later FLOSS enters.]

FLOSS [pauses at door, one hand on heart, breathless with running]: Charlie, I want—to speak to you—on a matter—of the—greatest importance.

[FULLER takes no notice; continues working.]

FLOSS [moves C.]: Charlie, will you tell me—why you cut me just now?

[FULLER stands jerking his head from side to side like a seasoned fowl on sentry-go.]

FLOSS [moving to him]: Why don't you answer? Aren't you glad to see me again?

FULLER [flings down his palette and brushes]: Oh, if you don't know— [Turns and looks out of window.]

FLOSS [crosses to easel L., peers at him inquiringly]: Know what? What ought I to know?

FULLER [turns sullenly and crosses down to piano L.]: Oh, come, don't try to play the innocent with me.

FLOSS [moves down C. with force]: Charlie, I swear I haven't the least idea what you're angry about. Is it—is it—because I've kept away from you so long?

FULLER [brutally]: Has the four months seemed really—so long?

FLOSS: Well, then, you're right, Charlie. Knowing how you loved me, knowing that we were almost engaged—

FULLER: Almost? We were engaged.

FLOSS [continuing]: I ought to have sought you out sooner. But you went away so suddenly—you know—and left no address. I could never guess why. [Looks at him inquiringly.]

FULLER [crosses to couch R., and flings himself down]: It's wonderful the amount of pretence some women possess.

FLOSS [turns quickly]: Pretence! You mean I'm—deceiving you?

FULLER [angrily]: Don't act! [Turns over.]

FLOSS [goes to him, coaxingly]: Charlie, what is it? [As he doesn't reply]: I insist on knowing.

FULLER [springing up and facing her]: I wasn't anxious to be associated with a woman who as soon as my back was turned went to live with a disreputable character—that's all. [Crosses to bookcase, takes book, and sits on couch.]

FLOSS [staggered]: But—I don't understand! I say—I don't understand! [As a thought strikes her she smiles.] Oh-h, so you've come to the popular view now.

FULLER [astonished in his turn]: What view?

FLOSS: That woman should be virtuous in spite of nature.

FULLER [springing up]: Did I ever say—?

FLOSS: Didn't you used to say that to interfere with Nature is to invite unknown disaster? And—what is it? Oh, society is doing its best to upset things

by making it unholy for women to—to satisfy their natural instincts.

FULLER [facing her]: I said that women who had no chance to marry should be exempt from the social law. I didn't say that young girls ought to be the mistresses of loathsome old men. [Turns to replace book.]

FLOSS [aggressively]: But you said that a girl has every right to secure an economic—wasn't that the word?—[he nods]—an economic independence if society fails to secure it for her, and if she can't marry for a living then she's justified in getting a living the best way she can, especially as it is unlawful to commit suicide even by starvation.

FULLER [crossing up to easel]: Does this apply to you?

FLOSS [moving R.]: No. You see, I'm not living with this man. I'm only his neighbour. We've been neighbours now four months. [Sits on end of couch.] One day he came to the house where I have lived since my parents died and left me with a weak heart to fight the world alone. Then—

FULLER: I know—the usual damn thing happened. He was poor, and you or your landlady took pity on him and took him and his poverty in.

FLOSS [proudly]: We took in something besides—his musical genius.

FULLER: Oh, he's a genius, is he? A very damaged one, no doubt.

FLOSS: You talk as if he were something cheap and nasty—like elderberry wine.

FULLER [crosses down to piano and sits]: Oh, he's a colossal genius—if you like.

FLOSS: Now you're jealous.

FULLER: I? Rot! [Rises.] I jealous of a chap I've never seen, who probably can't tell a D major from a cat's squall.

FLOSS: Then, Charlie, he's different from you. You can tell the difference. You haven't a single thing to reproach yourself with, dear, in your knowledge of D majors. I suppose it's too much to ask you to take a sensible view of the case.

FULLER [resenting the implication]: I don't want to take any view of it—except one.

FLOSS [crossing to him, softly]: Forgive me, Charlie, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I know it's difficult to get sympathy for a fellow creature who has a vice.

FULLER [quickly]: So your genius has a vice?

FLOSS [produces a bottle]: He takes this—I found it in his room.

FULLER [uncorks it, smells it]: Morphia! [Crosses up to window and examines bottle.] He's always at it, I suppose?

FLOSS: He used to take it like water.

FULLER: Used? Now? [Crosses and puts bottle on mantel R.]

FLOSS: I've almost cured him of the habit. I made it my business to do so.

FULLER: Why?

FLOSS: Because something whispered to me that Fate had confided a great soul to me, with a curse closing about it like a tomb. [Crosses R.]

FULLER: So that's what you're trying to do—to save a morphinist. [Whistles softly.]

FLOSS [nervously]: I know I shouldn't bother about him, but he's very good and gentle and he does his best to obey me. Besides, don't you think a woman has a nobler purpose in life than keeping house for a man?

FULLER: Yes—when that woman's a mother-in-law.

FLOSS: Don't jest.

FULLER [walking about]: It's you that's jesting. Who's been putting all this rot into your head? You can't save a morphinist. You might as well try to push the House of Lords into the river.

FLOSS: That wouldn't be an impossible task if you'd got the whole country behind you.

FULLER: Well, you've got no one behind you. Besides, there's your promise to me.

FLOSS [looks at him]: Promise?

* I am indebted to my friend Dr. Forbes Winslow for the use of the title of his well-known book.—H. C.

FULLER [*swinging round*]: You look surprised. [*Crosses L., unhooks a small watercolour and hands it to her.*] Do you remember this picture and your words about it? "Charlie, I'm very fond of that style of picture. I'll have nothing else in our drawing-room when we're married."

FLOSS [*looks serious*]: Did you think that I meant seriously that we should ever be married?

FULLER: Of course. We had known each other nearly ten years, and there seemed every prospect of our making a match of it. [*Angrily, as she stands looking at picture*]: You hear what I say?

FLOSS [*handing back the picture*]: I'm sorry I led you to believe that. I'm afraid I'm not the wife for you—I don't think I'm fitted for marriage.

FULLER: I never heard such silly rot! If you've no intention of making it up, why do you come here? [*Rehangs picture.*]

FLOSS: I want to go away from London.

FULLER: You do, for a change of air—and of ideas.

FLOSS: I shall never think differently, Charlie. Marriage is not the only thing for a woman. There is much good for her to do if men will only help her to do it.

FULLER: And that's what you want—my help?

FLOSS: I've got no money.

FULLER: To take this fellow with you?

FLOSS: Charlie, I only want a little. I'll pay you back, I will indeed. I've great hopes that my voice and dancing will soon begin to bring me in something. Do help me to save Louis. He is made for better, greater things—ever so much greater things. These are what I feel I have a real affinity with. I want to bring them out in him. He's almost cured; if I can get him away from all temptation the rest will be easy enough. Help me to do it, Charlie?

FULLER: No, I'm damned if I will!

FLOSS: Charlie!

[*Footsteps heard off R.*]

FULLER: Give him up and I'll help you to any extent.

FLOSS: I can't give him up, I cannot! Won't you help me?

FULLER: No, I won't help you. [*Door R. opens and LOUIS enters.*] He's a wreck!

FULLER [*looks at him, then crosses to FLOSS, who stands as though petrified*]: Who's this?

FLOSS: It's he.

FULLER: He! Is this the individual you said was not past saving?

FLOSS [*a little terrified*]: Well—I—he's had a relapse. Only a mild one. He's been absent two days. He's not beyond salvation. Don't abandon me, Charlie!

FULLER [*to REEVES*]: Who are you?

REEVES: I'm Purcell, the greatest English composer. [*Sees FLOSS.*] Ah, little girl. I was waiting in the chemist's opposite when I saw you enter here. When you've a minute to spare. Don't hurry! don't hurry! [*Goes to glass over mantel and stands humming "La! la! la! la! la! la!" etc., peers into glass, speaks to imaginary persons*]: There you are! All of you! What are you staring at? Away, you ugly, leering faces! Why are you always following me, grinning at me, mocking me, thrusting your hideous forms into my very face! [*Starts back, shrieking.*] Ah, take them away! Take them away! [*Covers face; looks again.*] You're still there! Millions of you—millions. With your skinny hands beating the air, jabbering, shouting, leering! What's that you say? I'm one of you? A deformed hideous monster like you? Ha! ha! Come with you! I must come with you? Descend to your damnable depths! No! no! Away with you! All of you! Away, I say! [*Suddenly, authoritatively*]: Open the window! It's stifling here. [*Shrieks.*] No! no! Shut it! Look there, can't you see there's one leaping in! Ah, you've caught his body. Pull down the blind—pull it down! They want to rob me

of my genius—[*feeling in pockets*—they've robbed me of my cash. [*Takes out pawn-tickets and throws them about. He sees piano, his face brightens; he goes to it, strikes one note after another, as though trying to recall some tune. Shakes his head sadly.*]

FLOSS [*goes to him*]: What do you want to say to me, Louis?

REEVES: I want some money—a little—a few shillings will do.

FLOSS: You want—morphia?

REEVES: I must have something—this abstinence is driving me mad. [*Clutches her by the shoulder.*] What's that? There—there! the black thing moving in the corner!

FULLER: That's my prize bull-dog.

[*REEVES, apparently unsatisfied, moves towards it.*]

FLOSS [*desperately*]: Charlie, will you lend me this money? You see how desperate things are.

FULLER: Consent to allow you to debase yourself by going off with such a degraded wretch? I wonder you ask me. You say your life is not with me. I say it's not with him. If you're set on doing this thing, then do it alone.

FLOSS [*angrily*]: Then I will do it alone—at least, without your help. I can get money—as much as I want—from a former friend of Louis's—a very rich fellow. I've resisted him till now, because I thought you would see me through. But since you refuse, then I'll sell myself to him. [*Rushes out.*]

FULLER [*stands a moment as though unable to realise her meaning, then rushes to door*]: Floss! Floss, old girl!

[*Receiving no answer, slams the door.*]

[*Meanwhile REEVES has found the bottle of morphia and swallowed part of its contents. The effect is magical.*]

FULLER [*sees REEVES looking bright and contented, savagely*]: Well, are you satisfied with your work?

REEVES [*seated L., quietly*]: My dear fellow, I'm never satisfied. That's my particular malady. I wish it were a universal one.

FULLER: You're apparently satisfied that you've got over your visitors.

REEVES [*mysteriously*]: I haven't got over two of them. [*More lucidly*]: There are two who never leave me. The first is a dear woman of stunted growth, dressed in sombre grey, and with something dark and desperate and mysterious about her. She suffers from mental syncope and represents the average moral sense. On her breast she bears the cold, sarcastic, cynical words of rationalism: "The world is peopled by moral drug-takers. It is not sickness so much as pure idiocy that has forced us into this flat, unwholesome habit. Our condition is due to that moral form of insanity—absence of common sense. It leads us to reject self-reliance, and to grovel and snivel to unseen powers, and to place important social matters, such as the religion of woman, falling in love, and marrying, under the strict supervision of Heaven, the State, and the Police."

FULLER [*interested*]: The other is—

REEVES [*pointing to some unseen object*]: The second is a giant about sixty-feet-four in height and mighty in proportion. He is clad in a beautiful carmine shirt trimmed with a collection of Brobdignagian cockroaches, flies and blackbeetles, with an elephant's nose round his neck, and giant caterpillars with millions of eyes in their bodies, in his hair.

FULLER: What particular form of lunacy does this natural history museum represent? [*Walks up and down.*]

REEVES [*curling himself up in his chair*]: Unreason. He is the offspring of sickly moral sense, and has attained his present splendid proportions on large doses of decocted sentiment. This is his age. He is a great tyrant, and has charge of all our souls. He confuses our thoughts and impairs our actions

in all sorts of ingenious ways. He leads us from the fortitude of the straight and narrow path to the servile submission of the broad and flowery one. He is our God; we are his handiwork—a race of fallacy-mongers.

FULLER [*stops R. C. Looks at him.*]: We are all fallacy-mongers?

REEVES: With special gifts for destroying our own sanity and that of unoffending races as well. [*With startling suddenness pointing at him.*] Look what Unreason has done for you.

FULLER [*startled*]: What has it done?

REEVES: Deprived you of common sense and forced you to plume yourself on an uncommon sense of importance. [*Sinks back.*]

FULLER [*astounded*]: You mean that I'm suffering from delusional insanity?

REEVES [*with sad conviction*]: It can't be denied. [*With a sweeping gesture*] Everything about you proves it. You live in a drab commercial age. You paint masterpieces for a living—there's one. [*Points to a small colour study.*] What man with a grain of common sense ever commits such a monstrous error of judgment? [*Triumphantly.*] Doesn't it prove incontestably that lunacy has got you in its cold, sharp claws? Oh, the fault's not yours. You were not born properly. Had your muddle-headed ancestors taken the trouble to endow you with the instincts of a logical butterman you would have seen from the first the paying occupation of the future must be motor-driving or some other mechanical and legalised form of public execution. How, indeed, could any other be profitable in a nation hatched by that rank heresy—military glory; suckled on the outworn unscientific cant that there's colour in brains, and weaned on that ghastly legacy of early feudalism—which argues, because so-called inferior nations have neither the gramophone, bridge, golf, compulsory vaccination, nor the divorce court, they belong to us by the superior right these benefits confer.

FULLER [*places chair C. and sits*]: Look here, aren't you a bit mad to say I'm mad?

REEVES [*with a smile*]: I'm not mad. I'm a genius. [*Settles himself comfortably.*]

FULLER [*quickly*]: But genius—

REEVES [*as quickly*]: I know what you're going to say—that genius is mad. But that's another of your delusions. You've heard the proposition somewhere and accepted it without question as a true one. Someone told you that I have genius, and your conclusion was that I am mad. [*Shaking his head amusedly.*] My dear fellow, I'm not mad, no! I've genius, and I've that sort of weakness of genius which consists in a deep consciousness of my genius and a desire to exhibit it at all costs. In fact, I'm different from the world I live in, and my deficiencies obtrude themselves as different and abnormal. Mind you, madness may have genius, but madness in genius—stark, staring, plain as a pike-staff madness—the sort you find in an Irish legislator, or a London County Councillor—is as rare as a taste for politics in a member of Parliament. Bad reasoners—and, I repeat, the world's full of them—have no sense for anything less discernible than a brick wall several dozen feet high and lit by electricity. They not only are unable to detect the error of a given premiss, but oft-times gladly accept it as true because it flatters a folly that likes to hear greatness disparaged. The proof of fallacious reasoning is in the popularity. When a writer like Lombroso sets out to prove such an aged fantasy of human belief as the Insanity of Genius the only result he achieves is to prove the Insanity of Lombroso.

FULLER [*rising*]: Lombroso mad?

REEVES: My dear fellow, he's as mad as Moses. [*Rises and crosses to door R.*] The one made laws that make men of genius bad, the other writes a book

that makes them mad. [*Pushes door as though to close it.*]

FULLER: The door is shut.

REEVES [*confused*]: O! [*Returns to seat.*]

FULLER [*watching him curiously*]: But Lombroso is a specialist.

REEVES [*curling himself up tailor fashion*]: So are we all—all specialists. This is an age of specialism, and we most of us err where Lombroso errs. We are narrow specialists, vague generalists, emotional gluttons, and authority-directed opinionists.

FULLER: In a word, I suppose we take too much for granted. [*Sits.*]

REEVES: And we're too inclined to imagine that the world was made for each of ourselves.

FULLER: For why?

REEVES: What other reason could there be than our failing to transcend not only the ideals of our childhood but of antiquity. Every age has its multitude naturally prone to the absurd ideals of former ages.

FULLER: This age shows no exception.

REEVES: On the contrary, it's choked with a shouting, perspiring mob of the Faithful, overloaded with examples of what reasoning by proxy can do for a nation; Black-hole-of-Calcuttaed with men who not only fail to see that the religious belief of 2,000 years ago is logically incompatible with modern scientific knowledge, but continue to exhibit it as a specific as unfailing as a Chinese execution.

FULLER: We're too thoroughly consistent in old forms of conduct.

REEVES: Consistent! Why, one man is in such a savage state of culture and so badly read in mental science that he actually believes in an atoning sacrifice.

FULLER: He ought to be dropped in the river.

REEVES: Another is so bad a reasoner that he argues sorrow is still the royal road to happiness, although humanity instinctively flies now, as always, to frivolity for what the world can give.

FULLER: He's an inverted fanatic.

REEVES: Another of these false generalists is for making a virtue of vice. Because he has been to prison with progress to his soul he is now convinced of the necessity of everyone following his example. [*Rises, crosses up to window.*]

FULLER [*watching him*]: I suppose progressive criminals and anyone who doubts the infallibility of the police and our present perfect prison system think otherwise.

REEVES: They are only convinced of the necessity of prison escaping us all.

FULLER: For they know there's a pleasanter way of preparing for heaven than going to prison.

REEVES: Quite so. [*Endavouring to shut the window, which is already shut.*]

FULLER: The window is shut.

REEVES [*confusedly*]: Oh! [*Returns to seat.*] Then comes a blockhead who sets up the orthodox conception of altruism and humanitarianism to cheat the Devil; he doesn't know that they are the counters in the game of souls by means of which the Devil cheats weak unreasoning mortals.

FULLER: The embroidered robe of sentimentalism with which he hides his horns.

REEVES: The ethical idealism with which the unscrupulous strong clothe themselves. Finally, there's that colossus of imbecility, the man who knows so little about the physical sciences that he imagines because Nature made man, man was intended to remake Nature. He assumes that the inebriate's craving for alcohol, or the invalid's for morphia, is unnatural and removable, and he's the one person on earth to remove it.

FULLER: It's sad nonsense.

REEVES: Sad—it's fatal nonsense. It's as stupid and preposterous as the notion that by clothing cannibals in Scotch trouserings and feeding them on indigestible missionaries, you can civilise them.

FULLER: But what's to become of intemperance?

REEVES: It takes care of itself. Intemperance is like woman, a perversity of Nature.

FULLER: I'm afraid not many women will agree to that.

REEVES: They wouldn't be perverse if they did. It is often one of Nature's happiest means of sterilising and eliminating the unfit.

FULLER [*inquiringly*]: The unfit?

REEVES: All who, like myself, are unfit to carry on the race. Experience teaches that such a perversity is best overcome, not by volently opposing it, but by allowing it gradually to adjust itself to the natural order of things.

FULLER: An inebriate should be a self-managed public-house.

REEVES: A man who is born drunk should be allowed to drink himself sober or perish in the attempt.

FULLER: I daresay most drinkers would prefer to perish.

REEVES: It would be a happier end than death by withdrawal.

FULLER: You think that all attempts to cut off a man's drink would do him more harm than good?

REEVES: I'm convinced of it. There's my case. I was born with a craving for drink—not an ordinary one, but the insatiable British workman kind which enables large employers of labour to grow wealthy because it cheapens labour and its ultimate costs are cheerfully borne by the ratepayer.

FULLER: What's to become of this sort of intemperance?

REEVES: The Government should provide it with an old-age pension and export it to Crusoe's Island, where no further drain on the public purse need ensue. Thus incurable plebeian intemperance would be cheaper than charging it to the community in the shape of accident wards, poor law relief, lunatic asylums, and that large group of their best friends—incompetent reformers.

FULLER: It's impossible to uproot by traditional methods?

REEVES: As impossible to uproot as hereditary lying. Your born liar is always a liar, and never by any chance strays from the rosy path of the American Eagle. He can no more be cured of the habit than fashionable society can be cured of the belief in a superiority of birth, the blessings of landlordism, the virtue of inherited wealth, and the wisdom of Eve when she perceived the utility of fig-leaves.

FULLER: In your case, then—

REEVES: The characteristics transmitted by a long line of hard-drinking ancestors had made drink necessary to an organism which had become to an extent immune to its moral effects. In early manhood, while engaged in producing my finest work, I was, however, pounced upon and captured by one of those earnest patriotic bodies—a temperance society—who argue that the longer a man is deprived of his natural food nothing but good can ensue. It cut off my drink, killed my creative power, and stood me between madness and destruction as one of the most promising stages in the science of reclaiming sinners.

FULLER [*rising*]: What is the ultimate stage in this beautiful science? [*Walks up and down R.*]

REEVES: Well, it varies with the vigilance of the sinner. I know what fate it had in store for me. I was to become that paradox of Nature—a respectable citizen—and my chief duty would be to beget tainted offspring as love begets Faustus—by the baker's dozen.

FULLER: So you were to be done for in any case? [*Pauses.*]

REEVES: And so was Nature.

FULLER [*down R.*]: Seeing how dangerous this restriction was to your genius, why didn't you resist it? As a rule those that want drink get it.

REEVES: The reason was heredity had given me a

specially weak and degenerate will, and I was powerless to fight prohibition except with intrigue.

FULLER [*explosively*]: Ah, you had the will for that.

REEVES: I had cunning. When I found that my mental energies were rapidly vanishing I took to secret drugging. I had no wish to revert to the condition of Darwin's prehistoric man.

FULLER [*referring to his attire*]: Apparently you have no strong objection to do so now.

REEVES [*setting aside the impertinence of the remark with a wave of his hand*]: I hoped by this means to pull myself together and return to former things. But even this consolation was denied me.

FULLER [*crosses up to window*]: I know; a new saviour appeared on your horizon. [*Looks out.*]

REEVES: Well, she has treated me with great generosity. I have no quarrel with her. But she, like the rest, would have best served Nature and myself by leaving me severely alone. I was past saving. At least—how shall I put it?—their saving, at any rate. You ask, perhaps, why she is so determined to remove the damnation of heredity from me that she willingly risks prostitution and would probably die for her end. I can tell you the reason. She has been taught from the first to practise the golden rule of doing as you would be done by, quite unconscious that it is preached by those whose failure to conform to the principle is notorious. The fact is, she's obsessed by a fallacy, and fancies she's a sort of Joan of Arc with a divine mission.

FULLER [*crossing down*]: And I suppose, like Joan, she's mad—as Nebuchadnezzar, eh?

REEVES: Madder, if possible. Thus you see Unreason, like Art, is driving the race insane. [*Rises.*]

FULLER [*looking at him with surprise*]: Art driving the race mad? What new heresy is this? What Art?

REEVES [*crossing R. and pointing to a piece of Monticellian colouring*]: That! [*Crosses L. to piano and picking up score of Strauss's "Tod und Verklarung."*] That!

FULLER: Monticelli and Strauss! What's the matter with them? [*Crosses L.*]

REEVES [*moving R.C.*]: The matter with them is that they are too much above and beyond us to be healthy.

FULLER: That sounds bad.

REEVES [*shortly*]: Well, it may, but it's true.

FULLER: You mean to say, perhaps, that such complexities of colour and sound as theirs is giving us mental indigestion?

REEVES: That is what I do mean to say.

FULLER: Simply that we are the victims of the Art craze. [*Sits L.*]

REEVES: Exactly. [*Sits R.C.*] The Art craze is one of those silly and mischievous fallacies which pass for compressed wisdom, while really tending to strengthen error and encourage crime. The fallacy lies in the assumption that because Wagnerian music and Japanese colour are good enough for the Germans and Japs, they're good enough for us. We overlook the fact that we are not an Art but a commercial nation with an eye and an ear adapted for the appreciation, not of complexities of colour and sound, but of the simplicities of ready cash and sky signs. Music is the outer expression of inner states of feeling; and popular music mirrors the inner life of the people. Nothing indicates more clearly our utter subjection to the ideals of the counting-house than our national songs and our national amusements. Our songs are "The Cottage by the Sea" and "The Lost Chord"; our amusements are revivalist meetings and musical comedy. Both express the Anglo-Saxon Art taste; both exhaust the imagination of England. You can imagine the effect of trying to force imported art upon such a non-musical and miscellaneous race as ours.

FULLER: I suppose the effect of introducing Wagner to the average petrified Briton is as natural as that

of introducing Browning to the congealed Laplander. It drives one to beer; the other to revenge.

REEVES: Precisely. The sudden introduction of unaccustomed sights and sounds to either would so tend to disorganise the delicate mechanism of the visual and acoustic organs as to promote the usual symptoms of degeneration of the brain. Look at this. [*Takes from his breast a glaring, blazing poster—an advertisement of somebody's beef extract or condensed milk—showing a blue cow and yellow girls with crimson sunshades in a sea-green meadow with rainbow colour trees and a russet background.*] Isn't it enough to drive anyone mad—born out of Japan? Why, if it upsets the nerves of a person who has cultivated the colour sense, what effect must it have on those of an individual who has cultivated nothing except a tall hat? Simply that in time he develops mental dyspepsia and passes over to the great majority at Hanwell. [*Refolds and replaces paper.*]

FULLER: Where we all are passing.

REEVES: Some more rapidly than others.

FULLER [*rising*]: Isn't it just possible that in trying to prove others mad you're proving yourself frightfully demented? You say you're a great composer; that the British mind does not want great compositions. How then do you propose to be rational and give it an entertainment it can possibly digest?

REEVES [*more enthusiastically*]: By returning, like the Pre-Raphaelites, to a former ideal.

FULLER: Resuscitating mediæval ideals?

REEVES: Not from mental bankruptcy, but for a means of warfare on Brixton Empire, feeling and habit.

FULLER: You were to be a propagandist of old-time music.

REEVES: My ambition was to restore the early simplicity of vocal and instrumental music. Early simplicity is to be found in the beautiful vocal compositions of Purcell, Byrd, Palestrina and Vittoria and in the contrapuntal fancies and orchestral writings of the seventeenth century Italians and the Elizabethans. These composers attempted and achieved beautiful effects which Wagner and his school, with all their glowing colour and wealth of detail, can only follow at a respectful distance. [*Goes to piano.*] Listen to this. [*Plays a bar or two of Byrd's "John, come kiss me now."*] The simple beauty of it must be apparent to the most inverted tap-room brain. Now listen to this. [*Plays the rushing demisemiquavers and semiquavers and abrupt figures suggestive of the flight of the Valkyries' chargers in Wagner's "Ride."*] Imagine the rage of the same brain on being told that was meant for music.

FULLER: I suppose it would be like telling an apostle of Wagner that there is music in "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey." [*Rises, crosses R.*]

REEVES: Yes. They both would storm, and they both would arrive at each other's conclusion that Wagner, like Bill Bailey, is an insane spasm of sound. And their conclusion, amazing though it is, is right. [*Crosses down L.*] It proves that each mind is conditioned by the law of proportion. The constant over-exercise and neglect of this law has resulted in a bias of mind that tends to assert its unnatural instead of natural working.

FULLER: There is somewhere a mutual appreciation?

REEVES: Yes. If the educated and uneducated musical sense unanimously agree that the extremes of sordid ugliness and spiritual loveliness constitute a row, then it is probable there is a degree between—the golden mean of Aristotle—having something of simplicity, goodness and beauty in it which may appeal equally to both as music. You see, Nature has implanted a taste for music even in the English breast which cannot be smothered, however artistically undeveloped we remain.

FULLER: I see; you were anxious to discover the point of arrested development.

REEVES: As representing the point of our aggregate intelligence.

FULLER: And by reconciling the diverse claims of the two kinds of appreciation?

REEVES: I hoped to get back the lost proportion, and by removing all indigestible factors so far to cure the nation's impaired mental digestion as to accustom it to act in all social and political matters with that degree of sanity which has become normal in other nations.

FULLER: That was your scheme for perfecting the English race. [*Goes L.C.*]

[*Hurried footsteps heard off R.*]

REEVES [*sadly*]: That was my beautiful scheme which I regarded as being the nearest possible approach to the perfection of regeneration, and which has been utterly destroyed by the British love of consistency which is the nearest possible approach to the perfection of insanity.

[*The door R. opens and FLOSS rushes in. She is breathless and pale, and presses her heart with her left hand, in which she carries a large bunch of roses.*]

FLOSS [*to FULLER, rapidly*]: I've seen him. He was just about to start for Monte Carlo. [*Breathes heavily, presses her heart.*] My heart's bad. He has consented to find the money. See, here's some on account. [*Shows loose gold and bank notes. A sovereign drops and rolls away unperceived by her. REEVES picks it up and crosses up to window.*] I and Louis are to go away with him to-night. [*Holding out flowers.*] These, too, are his present.

FULLER [*snatches flowers and flings them away. Rapidly, earnestly*]: For God's sake, don't go—not with this money. Take Reeves away if you want to. I'll pay. I didn't mean what I said just now. Send that money back. [*Takes it from her almost by force, crosses L., gets envelope, into which he crams gold and notes, and seals it up.*] What's the name? Here, just address it! [*Gives her envelope and pencil.*] I'll provide all you want. [*Fetches hat.*] I haven't got it by me, but I can soon raise it. Stop here—[*takes envelope with money, which she has addressed*—I'll be back directly.

FLOSS [*rather confused by the sudden turn of affairs, stopping him*]: You really want me to go away with Louis?

FULLER [*at door R.*]: Yes, go away with him; and, whatever you do, get him to talk to you as he has done to me, and if in a week you're not back on your knees begging me to marry you, I'll eat my studio. [*Exits.*]

FLOSS [*pausing a moment bewildered, not knowing what to make of his strange speech. Meanwhile REEVES, who has picked up the parentickets, is about to follow FULLER. She stops him.*] Where are you going, Louis?

REEVES [*with a return to his old manner*]: To get my coat. I'm not decent like this.

FLOSS [*taking tickets*]: Charlie shall go for it.

REEVES [*weakly*]: Then I'll go for Charlie.

FLOSS [*apprehensive of losing him*]: No, no; stop here! [*Drags him from the door.*]

REEVES: The noises—the sensations are coming on again. Look, isn't that— Yes, it is—see, he beckons me.

FLOSS: It's no one. [*Pointing in the opposite direction.*] There's the piano.

REEVES [*his will failing*]: The piano—?

FLOSS: You remember you always said it drives away the horrors.

REEVES [*shaking his head*]: No good, no good.

FLOSS [*pleadingly*]: Play to me.

REEVES [*struggling weakly*]: When I return.

FLOSS: Now, now! [*Drags him to it.*] I want to practise my dance—the one you taught me. You must, you must. Louis, you shall! Come, play the dance you're so fond of. Listen, here it is. [*Hums a few bars.*]

[REEVES sits, touches the keys slowly, mechanically.]

FLOSS [*places herself in the middle of the room*]: Play! play! One—two—three—four! One—two—three—four!

[REEVES run his fingers dreamily over the keys once or twice; gradually he gains the tune he seeks, then plays more rapidly. FLOSS dances. REEVES' playing grows wilder and wilder. He laughs madly. FLOSS's step increases with the music; the pace tells on her. She seems unable to stop. She cries out: "Oh! slower! slower!"]

[REEVES takes no notice, only plays faster. Continues to shout with laughter. She dances more and more wildly, then stops suddenly, puts a hand to her side, twists round and falls flat. REEVES continues his mad playing and laughter.]

FULLER [*enters, glances round, sees FLOSS and runs to her. Shouts*]: Stop! Stop, I say!

[REEVES plays on, and gives one wild, prolonged shout of laughter.]

FULLER [*rushes at him, clutches him fiercely, and tears him from the piano*]: Stop, you madman! Look, you've killed her!

REEVES [*looks round with a sort of terror; rises*]: Killed her? Great God! [*Crosses with FULLER to her.*]

FULLER [*bending over her*]: Floss! Floss, old girl! [*Puts his hand over her mouth.*] She breathes. [*He raises her and half carries, half leads her to chair L. Hastily unfastens her dress, etc.*] Quick, some water! There, by the palette knife!

[REEVES goes to window recess and brings small basin with water and sponge.]

FULLER [*sprinkles her forehead, moistens her lips*]: Floss, don't you know me?

REEVES [*as she moans*]: She's coming to.

FLOSS [*opens her eyes, remains silent a moment, regards each in turn*]: Louis! Charlie! [*To FULLER, about to exit*]: Where are you going?

FULLER: For a doctor.

FLOSS: Don't go; it's useless. I'm dying.

FULLER: Dying! [*Runs to her.*]

FLOSS: Louis [*stretches her hands towards him*], help me up. [*He does so.*] That's better. I can breathe more easily. [*Stands, supported by him, drawing her breath slowly, painfully.*] I've done some good. Tell me I've done some good?

REEVES [*forcing his voice, ambiguously*]: You've done your best, little girl.

FLOSS [*sighs gratefully*]: I have—done—my best. But I've succeeded. Oh, say—I've succeeded? Don't look from me, dear. I have done all I could for—you. I have done nothing for you you would not have done—for me. It's for your sake I'm dying. Don't cry—Charlie! I've been—true to you—also. I have—been—true.

[*She grows faint, her head falls back. FULLER comes to her, and between them they lead her to couch.*]

FLOSS [*coming to*]: Charlie, where are my roses? [*He fetches them.*] Dear flowers—earth's sweets. [*Kisses them.*] Untie them—Charlie. [*He unties them.*] Sprinkle—me—with them. [*He does so.*] The poetry of earth wafts me—to the poetry—of—heaven. When I am buried—you will sometimes sprinkle—my grave—with flowers. [*She becomes blind, groping about.*] Where's Louis? [*He comes to her.*] Give me your hand. [*He does so, concealing in the other a bottle which he has taken from his pocket.*] Promise me—oh, promise me—that you—will—give up—your dreadful habit? Promise—that the hour—that—sees—me—sleep—under—these flowers—sees—a new life—for you!

REEVES [*insincerely*]: I promise. [*Turns away, lifts bottle to his lips, and drains it.*]

[FLOSS sinks back with a great sigh of satisfaction. A far-away look enters her eyes. Suddenly she raises herself. She murmurs]:

FLOSS: Light! light! How beautiful!

[*Stretches her hands towards it. Sinks back, sighs, her eyes half close. She dies.*]

FULLER [*with deep emotion, in a choked voice*]: Dead!

[REEVES stares at her, apparently without emotion.]

FULLER: What are you thinking of?

REEVES: I was just thinking of the true significance of this thing we call Death. Thinking that while this rich body is undergoing the horrible forms of Christian burial, while it is being draped in black, mourned over and entombed, the imperishable atoms of it will be joyfully preparing for the next phase of evolution upon which they are to be embarked. So death enables them to continue that flight towards the perfection of self-realisation which civilisation, through current sanctities of renunciation and mutual service, is doing so much to thwart.

FULLER: Yet it seems to me there is something beautiful in orthodox self-sacrifice, seeing that it appeals to us through tender souls like this. [*Kisses the dead girl's brow reverently, takes flower from her breast, and turns away.*]

CURTAIN.

INCITEMENT.

A murderer's soul drew near,
And whispering in my ear
It bade me slay.
I answered "yea,"
And sped away,
For blood-lust banished fear.

I slew him I loved best,
Deep-stabbed his heaving breast;
Down dead he fell.
In prison cell
I tasted Hell,
Obeying Hell's behest.

Men hanged me up on high,
And though they saw me die,
My soul survives,
And ever strives
To win more lives,
As it goes whispering by.

C. E. BECHHÖFER.

TO A YOUNG MAN.

Since your heart is fierce and little,
Since your soul is blithe and lean,
Since you nothing know of labour,
And you nothing know of teen,
It's from London you'll be faring,
It's from England you'll be bound,
From the mauling of the millwheels,
From the grim and grinding sound.

But when you're full of roving,
And your soul is sick for home,
And you conjure up a vision
Of old bald Paul's dome,
It's to England you'll be hasting,
It's to London you will hie,
To the old grey huddled buildings,
And the people thronging by.

E. H. VISIAK.

TWIN-SOULS.

I cannot think, when you are gone,
That I shall long remain:
For God made us twin-souls,
In joy and in pain.

My light would dwindle into dust,
And dust would cloud my brain:
For God made us twin-souls—
One soul, and not twain.

E. H. VISIAK.