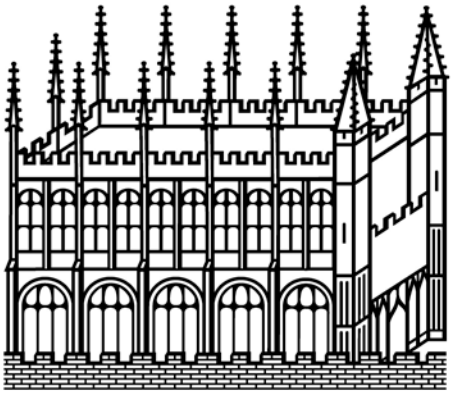

Autobiography of John Payne [Villon Society]

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JOHN PAYNE.


BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE PRELUDE TO HAFIZ.

(See p. 65.)

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

JOHN PAYNE

of VILLON SOCIETY fame, Poet and Scholar:

Translator of Villon, The Arabian Nights,
Omar Kheyyam, Hafiz, Boccaccio, Heine,
etc.

WITH

PREFACE AND ANNOTATIONS

BY

THOMAS WRIGHT

Author of "The Life of John Payne," "The Life of Sir Richard Burton," "The Life of Edward FitzGerald," etc.; Secretary of The John Payne Society

WITH

TEN DRAWINGS BY CECIL W. PAUL JONES

AND

SEVEN PHOTOGRAPHS.

OLNEY, NEAR BEDFORD:
THOMAS WRIGHT

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CONTENTS.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

A. Drawings by Paul Jones.

B. Photographs.

PREFACE.

In the year 1881 John Payne made the acquaintance of Mr. Tracy Robinson, of Hollywood, California. They first met at 20 North Row, Park Lane, London, where Payne was then living, and thenceforward Mr. Robinson and his wife Lucy were in frequent communication with their new friend. About 1887 Payne removed to 10 Oxford Road, Kilburn, where this *Autobiography* was written. After a time, Mrs. Robinson resolved to publish in the United States a volume of selections from Payne's poems, and she composed for it at the end of 1902 (posting the parcel on November 23rd) what I must call *Introduction* No. 1, with the title of "*The Poems of John Payne*, by Lucy Robinson." It is type-written, and consists of 31 pages (8½in. by 5½in.).

Writing to Mrs. Robinson, December 9th, 1902, Payne says: "I think your essay on my verse excellent and thoroughly adapted to its original purpose of making my poems known to the American public through a magazine or the like, but you will, I fancy, find, on proceeding to adapt it as an introduction to a vol. of selections, that it will need a good deal of remodelling and rewriting." He then jotted down a few suggestions; and a little later he sent for her guidance the present *Autobiography*, which he entitled *Memoranda*. It consists of 26 folios (12¾in. by 8⅕in.), written only on one side, with the exception of number 9, which has writing on both sides; and it contains, throughout, paginal references to her *Introduction*.

On receiving this work, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson revised *Introduction* No. 1, and sent their new effort, *Introduction* No. 2, to Payne, returning at the same time the *Autobiography*. *Introduction* No. 2 is also typewritten, and the pages, which are five inches high by eight broad, are lettered A to Z, and then on to Z.14. It is signed in ink, "Tracy and Lucy Robinson."

Further criticism from Payne followed, and they then wrote *Introduction* No. 3, which gave entire satisfaction. *Introductions* Nos. 1 and 2 are in my possession. *Introduction* No. 3 will be found in the American edition of Payne's poems.

In September, 1903, Payne was shocked to hear of the death of Mrs. Robinson, and on the 9th he wrote to Mr. Robinson the beautiful letter which appears in my *Life of John Payne*, p. 133. In it he says: Of course I knew her only from her letters, but they amply showed her brave, sweet, generous nature."

My own acquaintance with Payne commenced in September 1904. On August 25, 1905, in a letter to Mr. Robinson, Payne makes his first reference to "The John Payne Society," which I had founded on May 2nd of that year. He says: "You will see by the little book [*Sir Winfrith*, a selection from Payne's poems issued by the Society] which accompanies this that a movement in my favour has begun in England. You would probably like to be in communication with the Secretary, Mr. Thomas Wright, who is the heart and soul of the movement, and who shares your enthusiasm for my work. He is writing my life, and will be delighted to hear from you." About the same time Payne gave me the *Autobiography*, and a little later I received my first letter from Mr. Robinson.

Early in 1906 appeared the volume that had been the result of so much correspondence. The title page is lettered:

SELECTIONS FROM
THE POETRY OF

JOHN PAYNE

MADE BY TRACY AND LUCY ROBINSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LUCY ROBINSON

JOHN LANE CO., THE BODLEY HEAD
67 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK. MCMVI.

At the end of the present work I have given citations from the letters of Payne that reached me subsequent to the appearance of my biography of him. Other information that came to me after the publication of that work, will be found in the footnotes. For the paragraph headings I am responsible. Otherwise the manuscript is printed just as Payne left it. My thanks are due to Mr. W. A. Foyle (of Messrs. W. and G. Foyle's, Charing Cross Road, London), to Mr. R. N. Colbeck, of the same firm, and to Mr. W. Muir, for kindly assisting me when I was making the annotations; and to Mr. George Avenell and Mr. Maurice Kitchiner for taking the photographs.

Cowper School,
Olney, near Bedford.

THOMAS WRIGHT.

ago destroyed and forgotten,[3] and of translations from the dozen or more languages either (as with French, Latin and Greek) learned at school,[4] or as (German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Provençal, etc., etc.), afterwards acquired by solitary study. Between the years of 14 and 21 I translated into English verse the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, the Second Part of Goethe's *Faust*,[5] the *Hermann and Dorothea*, Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*,[6] Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*,[7] and countless short poems by Goethe, Schiller,[8] Heine[9] and other German poets, and many Spanish, Italian and Portuguese lyrics, besides unnumbered pieces by French poets of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

[3] Payne's memory is here at fault. He gave six manuscript volumes of these poems to Miss Rose Fisher (now Mrs. Mackay Heriot), who still has five of them. When the family lived at Shrubhill, in Wiltshire, Payne liked on wet days to assemble his brothers and sisters and read his poems to them. In order the better to hold their attention, he used to provide himself with a large bag of bull's eye sweets, and at the end of each poem he passed it round. His sister Frances was, at the age of fourteen, dark and rather plump. He called her "the Hottentot Venus," gave her a black doll, and proposed to his brother Billy that they should chase her over the hills with horse-whips in order to rid her of superfluous fat.

[4] Mr. Ebenezer J. Pearce's School, 5 Pembridge Villas, Pembridge Gardens, Westbourne Park, London.

[5] Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749—1832).

[6] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729—1781). *Nathan der Weise*, 1779.

[7] Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600—1681).

[8] Johann C. F. Schiller (1759—1805).

[9] Heinrich Heine (1799—1856).

SHRUBHILL HOUSE, BOX, WILTSHIRE.

The home of John Payne's father.

Photo by Mr. George Avenell.

The translations from Heine and Goethe contained in Vol. II. of the Collected Poems[10] are survivals from this period, from which may be judged the degree of proficiency in verse-writing to which I had then attained; but the majority of those above mentioned were subsequently destroyed as inadequate, after having served the purpose of thoroughly initiating me into the secrets of metrical form.

2. Influence of Emerson.

|| During the latter period of study and self exercise, original composition was to a great extent laid aside and it is (curious as it may seem) to the influence of Emerson (as a prose-writer, of course; as a poet he does not exist) that I attribute the effectual re-awakening in me of the poetical faculty. It was, if I remember rightly, in 1862 that I, then in my twentieth year, came across a tiny English edition of his first Twelve Essays[11] and became at once *possessed* by them, learning them well-nigh by heart, and carrying them about with me amulet fashion. (It is a little sad, by the way, to think that Emerson, to whom I owe so much, should have spent his whole subsequent life in diluting and explaining away the fine, frank, youthful outpourings of these first twelve essays, f. 2.

[10] *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, 2 vols., 1892.

[11] *Essays*, 1st series (Boston), 1841. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803—1882).

to my mind all that will survive of his work. The glory has nowadays departed from them for me, who have long since found an abiding harbour for my soul in the spiritual Alp-lands of the Vedanta,[12] but I still treasure the little book and love its memory, as having purified my boyish heart, and buoyed up my young soul upon a sea of ideal aspirations that bore it safely over the moral perils of the time.)

3. Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson.

As for poetry, much as I loved Keats[13] and Shelley, they had little influence with me, Byron none at all, Landor a good deal, Wordsworth[14] still more; whilst of all contemporaries Browning, as represented by "Men and Women," "Paracelsus," "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day," and the Plays, was the only one with whom I was really familiar until after the writing of the

[12] *Vedanta* = End of the Veda, a system of religion and philosophy founded on the Vedas. The Veda is the name of a body of religious writings which the Hindoos believe to be divinely inspired. Divided into four portions, they are usually spoken of as The Four Vedas.

[13] On 15 Aug., 1905, Payne said to me: "Intuition is everything. Keats had very little knowledge. What does it matter? There is more Greek feeling in Keats than in Landor, who was a great scholar. There is a stiffness and coldness about Landor." (*Life of John Payne*, p. 173.)

[14] On 19 Oct., 1904, he said to me: "I regard appreciation of Wordsworth as the true test of a poet. A real poet must love Wordsworth" (*Life of John Payne*, p. 147). See also his sonnet on Wordsworth, *Vigil and Vision*, p. 61.

greater part of my three first volumes.[15] He was the delight of my boyhood, and although he did
‖ little else (*me judice*), after *Dramatis Personæ*, than f. 3.
addle his eggs, I still treasure and love the two little volumes of the original edition (1855) of "Men and Women," which to my taste contains all his worthiness.

Tennyson I knew, indeed, but (with a few great exceptions, such as parts of "Maud" and the "Wellington Ode," in which he soared above his habitual defects) cared little for. With all his great qualities, he has always seemed to me no poet of the first order; he owed his popularity mainly to the way in which he pandered to the weaknesses of the intellectually lower classes and to his cunning fashion of adorning and idealizing the grossest gospel of disguised materialism and crass optimism. A French critic, on his death, describes him as more a producer of popular chromo-lithographs than a true artist; nor am I inclined to quarrel with the description of him; and I was always revolted by his school-girl affectations, by the sickly *Süsslichkeit*[16] of his style and his innate love for sheer nastiness (e.g. "The poachéd filth that floods the middle street,"[17] "Avaunt thou knave! thou stinkst of kitchen-

[15] *The Masque of Shadows and other Poems*, 1870; *Intaglios*, 1871; *Songs of Life and Death*, 1872.

[16] Sweetness.

[17] "Merlin and Vivien."

grease."[18] "The bones that have sucked me,"[19] "See the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs sweat on the gilded leather,"[20] "See whirl the harlot's dust in dung and nettles,"[21] &c.—I might quote hundreds of instances), and for sneaking prurient suggestion (cf. the dialogue between Vivien and Merlin).[22] Of Morris[23] I had not read a line at the time I published *The Masque*,[24] and although I have tried hard since, I have never been able to get on with his poems, which always remind me over much of Molière's abbé who had put the whole Roman history into madrigal.

4. Swinburne and Matthew Arnold.

f. 4. Of Swinburne[25] I ‖ knew little, and strangely enough, much as I *admired* his earlier work, its

[18] "Gareth and Lynette," but not quoted quite correctly. The words are: "Hence! Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease!"

[19] "Rispah." [20] "Walking to the Mail."

[21] "Pelleas and Ettarre."

[22] In "Merlin and Vivien."

[23] William Morris (1834—1896).

[24] *The Masque of Shadows*, 1870.

[25] Algernon Charles Swinburne (5 Ap., 1837—10 Ap., 1909). Swinburne called Payne's poem, "The Rime of Redemption," a masterpiece. In conversation with me he once praised Payne at the expense of O'Shaughnessy. One recalls his reference to "seventeen, jigging, polka-like, and wholly pestilential jingles by that miserable mimic and monkey, O'Shaughnessy" (*Swinburne as I knew him*, by Coulson Kernahan).

In attacking Tennyson, Payne was retaliating on those critics who had lauded the purity of Tennyson at the expense of the translator of the *Arabian Nights* (which, of course, contains much poetry intermingled with its prose). Subsequent to the appearance of the *Arabian Nights*, Payne and Sir Richard

apparent hardness repelled me, and its insistent sensuousness revolted my ideality-intoxicated youthful mind. It was not till after the publication of his "Songs before Sunrise"[26] (for all my disrelish of his second-hand Jacobinism, *now* happily mellowed down to reason and patriotism) that I began to appreciate his supreme greatness, and to set him, as I do now, on the topmost pinnacle of England's Parnassus, as a poet second only to Shakespeare. Rossetti[27] had, of course, as yet published nothing: and his work, when I came to know it, excited in me little more than distant admiration; his sister Christina[28] was by far the truer poet. Matthew Arnold[29] I knew better, though not so well as I came to know him later; and (notwithstanding my admiration for Swinburne as the greatest of modern poets) he was and is still to me the dearest of all contemporary verse-writers; he is the one man, after Swinburne, whom I should call "master." I mean, of course, as a matter of appreciation and not of discipleship, as

Burton were hitting out in all directions. Payne's message (written in Arabic characters) to Professor Robertson Smith may here be recalled: "I and thou and the slanderer, there shall be for us an awful day and a place of standing up to judgment" (Payne's *Arabian Nights*, vol. iv., p. 82). See also my *Life of John Payne*, p. 88.

[26] Published in 1871.

[27] Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828—1882).

[28] Christina Rossetti, his sister (1830—1894).

[29] Matthew Arnold (1822—1888). In compliance with my request Payne wrote, on 2 Jan., 1906, a sonnet on Matthew Arnold. It appears in *Carol and Cadence*, p. 173, and in my *Life of John Payne*, p. 192.

I can, on reviewing my life's work in verse, see little or no trace of the influence of either poet. My true masters, i.e. those upon the study of whose works my poetical style was more or less consciously founded were, as I have intimated in the Prelude to "Salvestra,"[30] Dante and Spenser, with whose works I was early supersaturated; and the only other external poetical influence of which I am aware is that (trifling enough) of two old English poets, Drummond of Hawthornden,[31] and Henry Vaughan,[32] of the French and Anglo-Scottish poets of the later middle ages and early Renaissance, and the great writers (more the prosateurs than the poets) of the Romantic and Neo-Romantic movements in France. Heine, I may add, I loved and knew by heart. T. L. Beddoes,[33] the author of *Death's Jest Book*, was and is also a great favourite of mine: were I a play-writer I should consider him and John Marston,[34] of the Elizabethans my dramatic godfathers.

[30] *New Poems* (1880), p. 197. *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, i., p. 122.

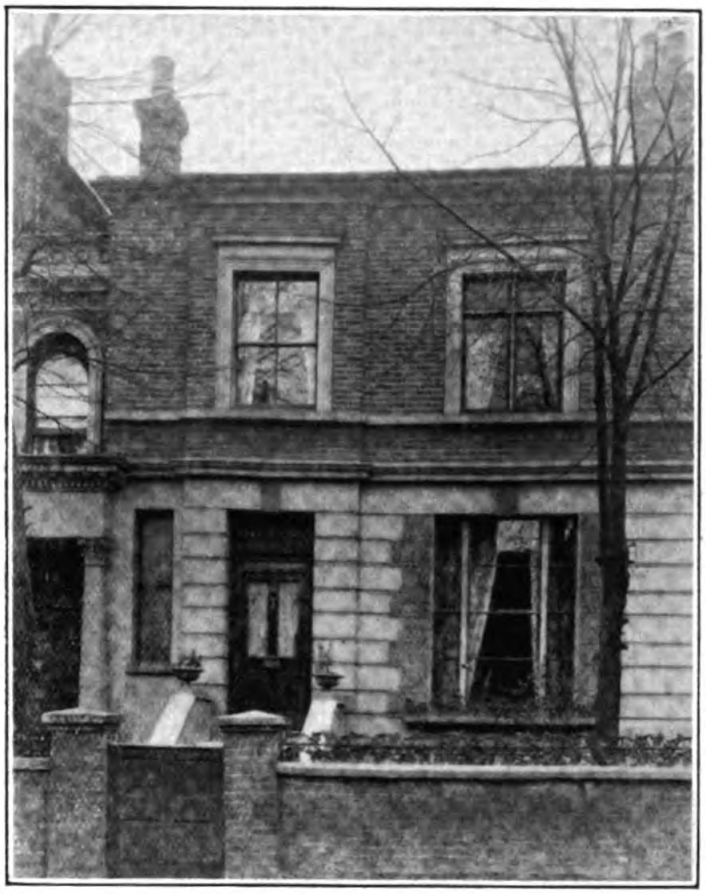
[31] William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585—1649).

[32] Henry Vaughan (1621—1695). In Payne's *New Poems* (1880), p. 13, are verses entitled, "With a Copy of Henry Vaughan's Sacred Poems," which begin:

> "Lay down thy burden at this gate and knock.
> What if the world without be dark and drear?
> For there be fountains of refreshment here,
> Sweeter than all the runnels of the rock."

[33] Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803—1849).

[34] John Marston (1575—1634).



10 OXFORD ROAD, KILBURN.

Payne's home from 1886 to January, 1910.

Here he translated Bandello, Omar Kheyyam and Hafiz, and wrote *Carol and Cadence*, *Ibn et Tefrid*, *Flower o' the Thorn*, &c.

Photo by Mr. George Avenell.

|| P. 1 of Essay. The following is a full list of my *published* Translations, in all 27 (twenty-seven) volumes :— f. 5.

1. *Villon* (1874—1892).

2—14. *The 1001 Nights*,[35] 13 vols. (1882-9).

15—17. *The Decameron*, 3 vols. (1886).

18—23. *The Novels of Matteo Bandello*, 6 vols. (1890).

24. *The Quatrains of Omar Kheyyam* (1898).

25—27. *The Poems of Hafiz*, 3 vols. (1901).

P. 3. To the poets who heartily welcomed my poems[36] and prophesied my success should be added Rossetti, Browning, Swinburne, and even Tennyson, contrary to his usual somewhat crabbed and jealous habit. Swinburne, in particular, has always accorded me a full measure of recognition, and his *fidus Achates* and *alter ego*, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton,[37] the well-known critic, writes to me that he considers me the one true poet among the men younger than Swinburne, and again (on the occasion of the issue of my "Collected Poems"), that "there is more imagination, more romance, and more of what *I* call beauty, in your

[35] As I showed in my biographies of Sir Richard Burton (2 vols., 1906) and John Payne (1919), Burton's translation of the *Arabian Nights* is in the main stolen from Payne. It is Payne's version altered and spoilt.

[36] Lucy Robinson had written: "Among the first to detect the true quality of his poems were Matthew Arnold and the aged poet [Richard Henry] Horne; the former commending them highly."—Introduction No. 1, p. 3.

[37] Watts-Dunton (12 Oct., 1832—6 June, 1914).

work than in that of any living man save one" (Swinburne).

5. The Cliques of 1902.

It is the younger generation, men of my own standing, who are jealous of me and who, having obtained complete control over the Press, contrive to keep my name and work not only from receiving its due recognition, but even from coming to the knowledge of the public. It is, I imagine, little known in America how completely corrupt is the contemporary English *literary* Press, which is altogether worked by a rigorous "combine" of two
f. 6. or three cliques, the members ‖ of which employ their power solely for the glorification of themselves and their fellow-riggers of the market, and the crushing out of notice of all who do not belong to the gang, thus exalting into temporary and purely factitious notoriety a number of fourth-class littérateurs, such as *****,[38] Lang[39], Dobson,[40] **********, *******, **********,[41] Phillips,[42] Stevenson,[43] Grant Allen,[44] &c., of whom it is safe to predict that scarcely a line will be extant fifty

[38] A well known man of letters alive to-day.
[39] Andrew Lang (1844—1912).
[40] Austin Dobson (1840—1921).
[41] Three well known men of letters alive to-day.
[42] Stephen Phillips (1868—1915).
[43] Robert Louis Stevenson (1850—1894).
[44] Grant Allen (1848—1899).

HELEN [MRS. SNEE.]

(See pp. 36, 51, 52.) Taken at Seville in September, 1877.

From a photograph by Beauchy y Rodriguez.

For a quite different portrait of Mrs. Snee taken by the same firm at the same date, see *Life of John Payne*, by Thomas Wright, p. 58.

years hence.[45] It should be clearly understood that, as things stand here at present, no man, however great his merit, has any chance of literary success, or even of having his work fairly placed before the public, unless he is either a journalist or connected with one of the various gangs of "log-rollers" and "press nobblers" that make fair weather and foul in matters literary, and can therefore force himself into notice by shameless self-advertisement. As an instance of the pass to which matters have come here, I may say that, although it is universally recognised that I am "literally without a rival in the field of translation" (I quote Richard Garnett),[46] it would have been impossible for me to find a publisher for a single volume of my translations, or to bring them before the public, had I not taken the matter into my own hands and founded a Society[47] for the

[45] The following stanza, which occurs in Payne's poem, "Anima cum Animo," *Carol and Cadence*, p. 242, was suggested by these thoughts:

"The work thou hast wrought to an end, with the life that was lent thee,
Shall stand as a cliff, in Time's clamorous tides unadread,
Shall live, when their names are forgotten that hate thee (Content thee!),
Shall hold thy name green when the grasses are over thy head."

I need scarcely say that Payne was unjust to some of these writers. To others he was equally unjust, and among them Walter Pater, Edward FitzGerald, Oscar Wilde, and Marie Bashkirtseff. See my *Life of John Payne*, pp. 168, 169, 172, 240. He said once to me: "Pater's value is slight. His real merit is above everything—suggestiveness."

[46] Richard Garnett (1835—1916), Keeper of Printed Books in British Museum; author.

[47] The Villon Society, founded 1877. See my *Life of John Payne*, p. 57. Its work is now carried on by the John Payne Society, founded 1905.

express purpose of doing so, thereby securing a small but select public of my own, and naturally giving additional and deadly offence to the autocrats of the press by showing that I could do without them. It is to this corrupt state of English literary society, rather than to any other cause, that I attribute the failure of my poems to reach the ear of the general public, who have deliberately been kept in ignorance of their existence.

6. On Blowing one's own Trumpet.

f. 7. ‖ As to what you (jocularly, of course, as I perfectly understand) say of its being a faint heart that does not join in blowing its own trumpet nowadays,[48] it seems to me that the contrary is the case, and that it must be an exceptionally *stout* heart which dares to contravene the way of the world in this matter, and prefers to fail nobly rather than attain an ignoble success by such unworthy methods. It is possible, at the same time, that my uncompromising contempt for the "sweet uses of advertisement" may have had something to do with my failure to catch the popular ear (I confess that I could never see why the poet, one of whose chief duties is to keep himself unspotted from the world, should be expected to "pay with his person," to tug and hustle in the sordid press

[48] "In these days it is indeed a faint heart that takes no share in the blowing of its own trumpet."—Lucy Robinson's Introduction No. 1, p. 11.

of mean cupidities for a recognition which is, after all, valuable only when spontaneously accorded),[49] or it may in part be due to the austerity of the gospel of abnegation and detachment preached in my poems. The general public is much like the rats, who are perfectly comfortable in the sewers, and who regard it as nothing short of an outrage if one ventures to hint at the least defect in the atmosphere in which they are content to pass their lives. But it is somewhat idle to discuss the possible reasons why the reading public has not accepted my poetry, the actual fact being, as I said before, that it has never really reached or been properly put before them, i.e., it has not been allowed to come fairly to their notice—and that they have therefore had no proper opportunity of appreciating it.

7. On Archaic Words.

|| P. 6. Too much by far has been made by the critics of my use of archaic words; except in such poems as "Sir Floris,"[50] where it is above all necessary to give the true mediæval atmosphere, they occur comparatively seldom, and many of the poems are entirely free from them. The question, however, is that of the *mot propre*, and the test is, can a better word be substituted? I think, if you take f. 8.

[49] But Payne often used to say to me, "No work succeeds entirely by its own merits."

[50] "The Romaunt of Sir Floris." *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, i., 1.

the poems in detail, you will find that the word used, whether old or new, is in general the *only* one apt to give the exact shade of meaning, under the existing conditions of rhyme and rhythm. Take, for instance, the word "*fainéant*,"[51] used once only in the "Building of the Dream"; "Fainéant slumber." Here it is evident to any one with a sense of style that "fainéant" is the only right word, "idle" being too weak, "sluggish" too strong, and "do-nought" or "do-nothing" ugly and brutal. "Laggard," indeed, would give the proper sense; but it is a *heavy* word, and with the additional drag of the alliteration between it and "lain," would deaden the movement of the line, while "fainéant" with its triplet measure supplies exactly the requisite lightness. "Frore"[52] again, in the "Madrigal Triste," is imposed at once by the rhythm and the rhyme. "Frozen" would not do at all; it would not express the exact shade of meaning wanted.[53] The use of such *compact* words as "everydele" enables the writer to avoid periphrasis, one of the worst enemies of metrical style,

[51] "And he long had lain in fainéant slumber," id. i., 84. Lucy Robinson had said: "The use of archaic words culled from all possible sources, the iteration of *everydele*, *whilere*, *frore* and *fainéant* may also in some measure account for the average reader's unfamiliarity with Mr. Payne's original work."—Introduction No. 1, p. 6.

[52] "Woe's me! our kisses are but frore," *Songs of Life and Death*, p. 37; *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, ii., 230.

[53] Three or four lines omitted here, as their meaning, owing to heavy correction, is not clear.

and many other words, which, while perfectly legitimate and often (like "wanhope,"[54] "wandesire,"[55] "malison,"[56] "benison,"[57] "worshipworth,"[58] &c., &c.) exquisitely beautiful in themselves,[59] are most convenient and well-nigh indispensable substitutes for such corresponding terms in ordinary use as have by reckless wear and tear become mere colourless tokens vulgarized and often perverted past recognition.

8. Literary Criticism in 1902.

It is—mainly because literary criticism, so styled, has been allowed to sink to the level of a mere trade, largely practised by the || incompetent, the f. 9.
jealous, and the dishonest—generally forgotten or overlooked, that the poet, whose formal office is the setting of the best words in the best order, is the appointed guardian of his own language; one of his chief duties is to preserve the strength and colour of his native speech, and this is best done

[54] Wanhope = despair. [A. S. Wan = deficient, and hope.] "The anguish of wanhope was so intense."—Salvestra. *Poems*, i., p. 144.

[55] Wandesire = despair. "His heart is heavy with wandesire."—"Sir Winfrith." *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, ii., p. 81.

[56] Malison, a curse.

[57] Benison, a blessing. "Still for benison he bore them."—"Roses of Solomon." Id., ii., 131.

[58] I forget in which poem this occurs.

[59] Payne was an ardent lover of beautiful words. He once said to me: "What charming words have been made from ugly ones! For instance, zinnia from Zinn, and fuchsia from Fuchs."

by using and renovating, by illustrative employment, such concise, picturesque and nervous words and forms of speech as tend continually to disappear from the ever deteriorating vocabulary of commonplace and idealess folk, which is the vernacular of everyday life. You may as well claim to forbid the painter the use of certain colours as to prevent the poet from employing such words as most exactly express the varying shades and colours of his thoughts, just because they are not in colloquial use. The only fair test is that of internal harmony; when that is satisfied, all is well. I am certain that any impartial competent critic who chooses to study my poems with the necessary attention and does not, like Jean Paul's right eye,[60] confine himself to reading title-pages, will quickly recognise that such uncommon words as occur in my verse I have used because they were the best for my purpose, and not because they were new or old. One of the more enlightened reviewers of my first book, writing in the *Saturday Review*,[61] and referring to this question, said, "Mr. Payne's lines ['Sir Floris,' &c.] abound with words of curious and semi-French

[60] "Since last winter, my eyes (the left had already, without cataract, been long half blind, and, like Reviewers and *Littérateurs*, read nothing but title-pages) have been seized by a daily-increasing Night-ultra and Enemy-to-Light."—Letter of Jean Paul Richter (Aug., 1824). Quoted by Carlyle in his *Miscellanies*.

[61] A long citation from this review is given at the end of Payne's volume, *Lautrec*, p. 62.

archaism; but these are never dragged in: they suit the general effect and clearly come from the overflow of a memory steeped in the romance literature from which they are drawn:" and the plain truth of the case can hardly be better stated. The *Westminster Review*[62] also, one of the best of our literary organs, and also one of the few which has preserved its independence [it has always and consistently hailed me as a poet ‖[63] of the first rank], when reviewing my *Intaglios*, called attention to the way in which I had reset many of our long-forgotten but beautiful words and phrases, and added, " Mr. Payne writes in the true spirit of that old poet who, more than two centuries and a half ago, thus spoke, 'A writer, that dares venture and is desirous to enrich his mother tongue, decketh it boldly with that which he borroweth of others, and setteth forgotten words on foot again.'" Also later, speaking of *Songs of Life and Death*,[64] " Mr. Payne still goes to the storehouse of our elder English poets for their old expressive words which we have forgotten, and sets them with fresh beauty to modern thought." And many other of the older and better order of critics (now alas! well nigh died out) have spoken to the same purpose, when reviewing my books. f. 9a.

[62] Long citations from this review are given at the end of Payne's volume, *Lautrec*, pp. 63 and 65.

[63] All 9a is written on back of Folio 9, upside down.

[64] Appeared in 1872.

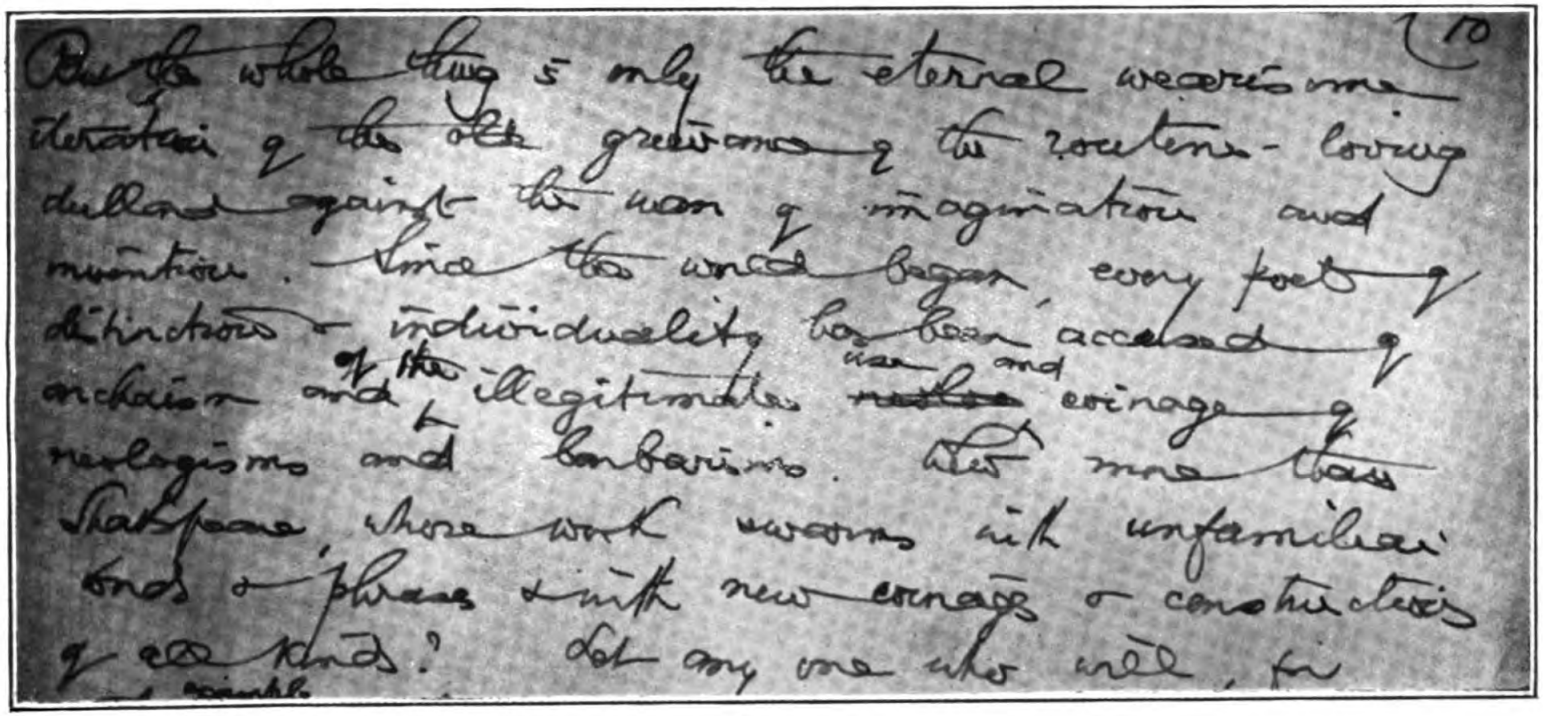
9. The Dullard *versus* The Man of Imagination.

f. 10. || But the whole thing is only the eternal wearisome iteration of the old grievance of the routine-loving dullard against the man of imagination[65] and invention. Since the world began, every poet of distinction and individuality has been accused of archaism and of the illegitimate use and coinage of neologisms and barbarisms. Who more than Shakespeare, whose work swarms with unfamiliar words and phrases, and with new coinages and constructions of all kinds? Let any one who will, for example, analyse *The Tempest*, and he will find himself arrested at every turn by instances of this. But what avails debate? As Schiller says, "Against stupidity the Gods themselves strive unvictorious;" against which forlorn saying we can only set the sturdy Turkish proverb, "The little curs bark and (i.e. but) the caravan passes [on]."

P. 7. As to archaic forms[66] of verse, the only question which a critic is entitled to ask is, does the form used interfere with the freedom and beauty of

[65] Lucy Robinson had written: "Yet such [archaic] terms are used far more sparingly [by Payne] in the poems than in the metrical translations; and it would be difficult to show why a poet who is at the same time a student of early English may not avail himself, in poetic composition, of words and phrases essentially English, romantic, or racy of the soil."—Introduction No. 1, pp. 6, 7.

[66] See his sonnet on Imagination—"Life's Motive Power," at the end of the present work.



PART OF FOLIO 10, PAYNE'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Photo by Mr. Maurice T. Kitchiner, Newport Pagnell.

the poem considered simply as such? If not, there is no more to be said; and I defy any candid and capable reader to deny that my poems, cast in these forms, are as poetical and as melodious —(what for instance can be simpler than the "Ballad of Past Delight"?)[67]—as any of those written in the ordinary every day metres? (You yourself, by the by, select the "Pantoum,"[68] written in the most elaborate of all these "exotic" forms — a form described, by the by, by one typically careless and dishonest critic, as consisting of mere repetition!—as representing my highest achievement in melody.) Even my enemies are compelled to admit that metrical difficulties simply do not exist for me, and that, as Gautier[69] splendidly says, *La vase soit plus belle De la matière rebelle.*[70]

[67] *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, ii., p. 198.

[68] Id., ii., p. 204.

[69] Théophile Gautier (1811—1872). In Payne's *Flowers of France* (Romantic Period, Vol. I.) will be found (pp. 91—195) many poems from Gautier. When Gautier died, 23 Oct., 1872, Payne, Swinburne, Victor Hugo, Anatole France and François Coppée wrote, at the request of the publisher Lemerre, poems which were included in a publication entitled *Le Tombeau de Théophile Gautier*, 1873. See *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, ii., pp. 211 and 293.

[70] "The most valuable work is produced from the most obstinate material," or, as Payne translates it (1st stanza of Gautier's poem, "Art"):

"The work, that most excels
From stuff, that 'gainst the tool
Rebels,
Comes, verse, gem, marble, buhl."

Other of Payne's favourite aphorisms were: "Few people know, and fewer think" (Berkeley); "Man's resolution uprooteth mountains" (Arabic); and "Do what you like, but

However, having regard to the unreasoning but
f. 11. || seemingly widespread and ineradicable prejudice against these old French forms, due partly (as in the case of the critic just quoted) to idleness and lack of receptive capacity in the reader, and partly to the fact that they (the beautiful forms aforesaid) have been vulgarized and cheapened by mere handicraftsmen like * * * * *, Lang, and Dobson, I suggest if you should wish to include (which I do not recommend) any of my essays in this kind in your selection, that the distinctive titles of Ballad, Villanelle, &c., should be omitted and I will supply fresh titles. This will probably suffice to put the dullards off the track.

P. 9. Herewith an *additional* list of the poems either absolutely un-melancholy, or in which melancholy is exalted into triumph. (It is rather curious, by the way, that you should have overlooked the "Bacchic of Spring,"[71] which is, of course, the most jubilant of all.[72])

make no stir about it"; in other words, "If you must make a noise, make it quietly."

Of Gautier, Payne was life through an ardent admirer. See my *Life of John Payne*, p. 47. He used to pair him with Arthur de Gobineau (1816—1882). In a note at the end of Vol. II. of *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, 1902, France is called "the native land of Gautier and Gobineau." He considered Gautier the greatest critic the world has ever known, and Gobineau one of her greatest patriots and philosophers.

[71] "A Bacchic of Spring." *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, ii., p. 281.

[72] Lucy Robinson had referred to the brightness, vivacity, and spring-like quality of some of Payne's lyrics, mentioning

Vol. I.[73] Prelude, Postlude, and Second Prelude to "Sir Floris."

p. 232. "Bells of Gold.

252. "O happy pleasaunce of the Gods!"

Vol. II. 72. "Into the Enchanted Land."

80. "Sir Winfrith."

95. "Madonna dei Sogni."

162. "Love's Epitaph."

182. "Les Soirs de Londres."

263. "A Birthday Song."

274. "Major Cadence."

281. "Another Birthday Song."

297. "Love's Amulet."

311. "Salut d'Amour."

320. "Prelude to Hafiz."

322. "Dopper's Lament" (humorous).

329. "Bassarid's Horn."

332. "Barcarolle."

340. "Love Solicitous."

‖ 345. "Trinitas Trinitatum." f. 12.

352. "Bird-peep."

354. "Evensong."

To these may be added "A grave at Mont-

particularly "Rococo" (in *Intaglios*), the Rondel "Kiss me, Sweetheart" (*Poetical Works*, ii., 198), the Villanelle "The Air is White" (Id., ii., 197), the *Rondeau redoublé* "My day and night are in my lady's hand" (Id., ii., 193), the Chant Royal of "The God of Love" (Id., ii., 189), and "Madrigal Gai" (Id., ii., 298).—Introduction No. 1, pp. 9, 10.

[73] That is of *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, 1892.

martre"[74] (satirical), and "The Quest without Avail" (humorous), from Supplement.

The existence of this considerable body of verse "in the major key" it would, I think, be well to insist upon, as my enemies are fond of accusing me of "mere dolorousness."

10. Some American Authors.

P. 11. Warner's[75] request *re* Villon[76] never reached me, and this is the first I have heard of his compilation. Had I received his letter I should certainly have answered it, and probably have complied with his wish in the matter. I am, I hope, first of all "*hom gent et curteis*,"[77] as the old romancer phrases it; I could never understand why a poet should be excused from being a gentleman, and I have rarely been able to bring myself to disregard the most obviously idle intrusions upon my time; much less could I have slighted dear old Warner, who had

[74] In *The Descent of the Dove*. It is also used as a Prelude to Payne's translation of Heine, 3 vols., 1911.

[75] Charles Dudley Warner, American author (1829—1900). Lucy Robinson had said: "Loss of health followed [owing to the death of Mrs. Snee], and the hard-working London solicitor and tireless translator of masterpieces for the Villon Society, withdrew, some ten years ago, into apparently impenetrable solitude, returning no answer to Mr. Warner's urgent request (which may never have reached him) that he would write the Villon article for his 'Library of the World's Best Literature.' —Introduction No. 1, p. 12. Subsequently, Mr. Warner and Payne got into touch with each other, and Warner lived to bring out an American edition of Payne's poems.

[76] *The Poems of François Villon*, 1878.

[77] A man elegant and polite.

been good to me, and for whom I had a real regard, and I regret extremely that mischance should have left him under the impression that I had done so. Stedman's *Victorian Anthology*,[78] also, I have never seen or heard of: he (Stedman) is, I believe, completely under the influence of the Logrollers. The best selection of my verse (scanty enough at best) is to be found, I believe, in Schindler's (German) anthology; next to this in Miles' "*Poets of the Century*," where I am represented by "Sir Erwin,"[79] "May Margaret,"[80] "A Song of Willow,"[81] "A Song before the Gates of Death,"[82] "Vocation Song,"[83] "Another Birthday Song,"[84] "A Soul's Antiphon,"[85] and "Love's Autumn"[86]—not a bad choice for the space—preceded by a very inadequate and not very just 2-page notice by Richard Garnett.[87]

‖ I am glad that you are sensible of the f. 13.

[78] Edmund Clarence Stedman, American poet and critic (1833—1908). Lucy Robinson had written: "With the exception of the group of poems given in Mr. Stedman's *Victorian Anthology*, I am aware of no other attempt, on this side the water, to place the original work of John Payne on the footing it unquestionably deserves."—Introduction No. 1, p. 12.

[79] "Sir Erwin's Questing." *Poetical Works of J. Payne*, ii., 17.
[80] "The Ballad of May Margaret." ,, ii., 134.
[81] "A Song of Willow." ,, ii., 288.
[82] "A Song before the Gates of Death." ,, ii., 222.
[83] "Vocation Song." ,, ii., 249.
[84] "Another Birthday Song." ,, ii., 296.
[85] "A Soul's Antiphon." ,, ii., 284.
[86] "Love's Autumn." ,, ii., 298.

[87] Richard Garnett. See Footnote 46.

spontaneity[88] of my work. This shows that you have real critical insight, and are one of the Five Hundred (i.e. of that minute and almost invisible fraction of the English-speaking 150 millions who are capable of appreciating poetry *at first hand)*, and is especially pleasing to me, as the general tendency of the careless, corrupt and incapable critics of the day is to accuse me of over elaboration and artificial cultivation of technique. With Vacquerie,[89] I hold that the idea makes the form, and cannot be divorced from it.

11. His Method of Working.

The following extract from a book on *The Art of Authorship*,[90] to which I (in 1890) contributed by invitation an account of my methods, says, I think, most of what is necessary on the subject. "I find it difficult to give any particulars as to my method of literary work, for the simple reason that my mode of original production, both in verse and prose, has always been more or less *inconscient;* and it is indeed only by an *a posteriori* process that I can trace any of the influences which have

[88] Mrs. Robinson had said that Payne's poems convey "a sense of elaboration unspoilt by conscious effort. He seems always to have written with ease and to have avoided lapses, like those of Wordsworth, Swinburne, Rossetti, and even Tennyson, into laboured and cumbrous phraseology."

[89] Auguste Vacquerie, born 19 Nov., 1819, died in 1895.

[90] *The Art of Authorship* . . . personally contributed to by leading Authors of the day. Edited by G. B. [Rev. George Bainton.] J. Clark and Co., 1890. Payne figures on pp. 68 to 73.

affected it. My verse, in particular, has never, except in a very few isolated instances [this qualification was added purely for conscience sake, as it would puzzle me to point out any of the 'instances'] been written in cold blood: ideas and subjects have lain dormant in my brain for months, and even years, till some unexplained influence has played the part of Vulcan's hammer, and loosed the imprisoned Minerva, ready armed, and then there is no question of style or method, the pen can hardly move fast enough for the imprisoned flood of verse. The poem is || committed f. 14.
to paper as if in a dream, and I am surprised when I awake to find what I have done. I cannot, therefore, tell you anything about my method of labour as regards style, simply because labour there is practically none, correction being almost always only a matter of rectifying the mechanical slips of the pen consequent upon the furious haste with which the poem is committed to paper. I know there are other poets who build up their verse with infinite labour: Rossetti was one of this kind. This I could never do, but must wait till the fit took me, whether I would or no. Any enquiry, therefore, into the mechanism of my methods of production can hardly be likened to anything more exact than an attempt to analyse the influences that have brought about the flowering of a primrose; but by the *a posteriori* process of which I have already spoken, I may perhaps be

able to give a few particulars of the things which I suppose, rather than know, to have had a fertilising influence on my mind in the matter of style. I had no special training in this respect; indeed, I may say the contrary was the case, I having been engaged in business from the age (fourteen) of leaving school, and having been brought up by parents bitterly hostile to literature, who spared no endeavour to divert my mind from its natural bias and to crush out the germs of poetry in me by all means, foul or fair, going so far, for instance, as to deprive me of pocket-money, that I might not buy books, and forbidding me fire and light in winter, to hinder me from 'segregating' myself, in my father's favourite phrase, for the purpose of study, all of course in vain.[91] Omnivorous reading, a very early delight in word analysis, which made, even at the age of nine or ten, the dictionary as
f. 15. pleasant as a novel to me, || and an instinctive turn for language learning, to these things, as far as to anything other than what natural gift I may have had, I attribute what you describe as my mastery over the English tongue. It is only of late years that I have begun to see clearly the influence which my early instinctive study of language and word-form have had upon my power

[91] Payne is here unfair to his parents, whom he did not understand. They were simply desirous that he should follow a calling that would be likely to bring him in a living. Even in literature Payne would have obtained more success if he had abstained from "segregating" himself.

of literary expression; but it is now evident to me that they were all to the greater glory, as far as I was concerned, of our beloved and most magnificent English tongue,[92] to wit, that the final cause of all the philological training I have gone through was to increase my knowledge and to strengthen and refine my power of handling my own language."

To the fact, stated above, that I never write verse in cold blood, but wait till it comes to me, must be attributed the ease and absence of effort which strike you in my verse. As a matter of fact, I have no such thing as technique or method of work in verse; and it is, indeed, incorrect to describe my verse-production as "work." I only set down what comes to me, whence I know not, and one might as justly describe the Zinnias and Tigridias of the Mexican plains, or the Ixias and Sparaxis of the South African veldt, as owing their gorgeous colourings and beautiful forms to elaborate gardening and painful cultivation, as accuse me of artificial construction of verse and deliberate elaboration of style. If the form and colouring of my verse are rich, it is due to the native richness, yet more enriched, of course, by thought and study, of the soil from which they spring, absolutely

[92] In a letter to Tracy Robinson: "My life is given up to the building up of enormous monuments of English prose, like the *Nights;* all that I can now do for that noble English language that I love with an irresponsible affection and reverence, so much so that I might wish my epitaph to be: *Linguam Anglicam dilexit*—"He loved the English tongue."

as a wild flower springs from the earth of the field or the hedge-row. The following instance will show you exactly how poetry comes to me.

12 The Spontaneity of his Verse. Hafiz.

f. 16. In the closing || week of January last[93] I was suddenly taken with an attack of verse-production[94] (there's no better comparison for the phenomenon, in its suddenness and lack of apparent cause, than to an access of fever) and for six weeks following verse poured through me literally day and night without cessation, the result being some three dozen poems of various lengths, amounting in all to 4,000 lines of verse, about equivalent to the contents of the volume *Songs of Life and Death*.[95] In this access,[96] which began with the "Requiem,"[97] and ended with "Evensong,"[98] my only *conscious*

[93] 1902.

[94] These "attacks" always came on in the winter.

> "Methinks in the dread season of the year
> The very nakedness of nature brings
> A keener sight into the soul of things."

[95] *Songs of Life and Death*, 1872.

[96] Evidently this access of poetry is the one celebrated in *Carol and Cadence* (p. 217), where it is described as the verse-flow of "Forty Days" during which he wandered "noon and night Song's solitary ways." In "Song-stress" *(Carol and Cadence*, p. 215) he calls it "High-water Time," and in a letter to Mrs. Tracy Robinson, "a six weeks' attack of poetry." Among the poems then written were "Her Grave," "Alas!" and others relating to Mrs. Snee.

[97] "Requiem for our Dead in South Africa," *Collected Poems*, ii., 324. Peace was signed 31 May, 1902.

[98] "Evensong," id., ii., 354.

part was the labour of writing down what came to me; it ceased as suddenly as it came, in the middle of an unfinished poem, "The Death of Pan,"[99] and I have not written a line since.[100]

By the way, I can only attribute this return to me after so many years desertion of what Shelley calls "the spirit of delight" to my then recent emergence from what Mr. Carlyle[101] would have dubbed "The Valley of the Shadow of Hafiz,"[102] and the consequent release of my brain from the tremendous tension of the almost superhuman task—I mean the isometrical translation of the greatest of the Persian poets—which had occupied my whole thoughts and energies during nine years,[103] and to which all my other enterprises in

[99] "The Death of Pan," *Carol and Cadence*, p. 137.

[100] A footnote added by Payne several years afterwards runs: "Written in 1902. Another access came early in 1903, when 236 sonnets were produced in nine weeks, and yet another (cut short, alas! by prostrating illness) in January, 1904.

[101] Thomas Carlyle, 1795—1881. It was Mrs. Carlyle who spoke of her husband emerging from "The Valley of the Shadow of Frederick," 1865.

[102] To Lady Lewis, 4 Nov., 1899, he wrote: "Hafiz I *must* finish before I die; when it is done and printed I can say, '*Domine nunc dimittis.*'"

[103] 1887—1901. During these fourteen years Payne seems to have worked as follows: 1887—1893 at Hafiz, 1894—1898 at Omar Kheyyam, and 1898 to 1901 at Hafiz again. His rendering of *The Poems of Hafiz*, 3 vols., appeared in 1901. His "Prelude to Hafiz" (an original poem—*not* a translation), which is given at the end of the present work, is one of his finest poems. While he was at work on the Hafiz, he lost his friend Mallarmé (see the sonnet in *Vigil and Vision*, p. 63). Gauguin, on 12th Dec., 1898, wrote, "I have read in the

this kind, even the colossal undertaking of the Nights,[104] had been as child's play. You would be surprised to see how free my manuscript is from alteration; recasting is a thing practically unknown to me; each poem is born in its own special garb of metrical form, without conscious effort on my part. (This applies, strange to say, even to such apparent Chinese puzzles of metrical intricacy as "Cromwell-Bilboquet"[105] and to my French[106] as well as my English poems.) This it is that
f. 17. gives my verse its uniform freedom ‖ of flow and I cannot for the life of me understand how anyone with the least capacity for appreciation of poetry can for a moment honestly mistake what seems to me in every line the manifest stamp and hall-mark of absolute spontaneity. My verse may be worthless, if you like; but artificial! *Hasha!* Away! as the Arabs say. A critic must be either a knave or a fool who can say so; but I fear the two qualifications are pretty often blended in the latter-day journalist. Whatever may be the faults of

Mercure of the death of Mallarmé, and I am grieved for it. One more martyr to art. His life is at least as beautiful as his work."

[104] 13 vols., issued 1882—1885.

[105] "Cromwell-Bilboquet" (= W. E. Gladstone). *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, vol. ii., p. 206. *Bilboquet* = a toy which consists of a puppet so formed and loaded as always to recover its upright position.

[106] The following poems by Payne are in French: "Cromwell-Bilboquet," vol. ii., p. 206; "Ballade à Villon, vol. ii., p. 207; "Ballade aux Critiques," vol. ii., p. 207; "Théophile Gautier," vol. ii., p. 211.

SCORN AND SYMPATHY.

(See pp. 39 and 75.)

my poetry, it is at least the native speech of my heart and soul, and I feel that no poet has more literally than I said to his readers, "Take, eat, this is my body and my blood."

13. Love and Pity.

P. 22. You are right in observing that the key note of my verse is love and pity,[107] but with a difference, *Unendliche Verachtung, unendliches Mitleid*,[108] in Schopenhauer's phrase, for the human race. The heartbreak of the world's misery is ever heavy upon my soul; but I am no Socialist, in the political acceptation of the term, at least, although an "altruist" I certainly aspire to be. But as a thinker and a life-long student of history

[107] Lucy Robinson had quoted the stanza of the beautiful "Shadow-Soul" *(Poetical Works*, vol. ii., p. 255) which contains the line: "There was great love in this man's soul," adding, "To those who knew and loved Charles Dudley Warner, it may be interesting to know that in his copy of [Payne's] *Songs of Life and Death* another entire stanza in the same poem was pencil-marked:

"Bytimes, too, as I walk alone,
The mists roll up before my eyes,
And unto me strange lights are shown,
And many a dream of sapphire skies;
The world and all its cares are gone:
I walk awhile in Paradise."

[108] "Infinite contempt, infinite pity." That is, contempt and pity for the world. See also Payne's *Carol and Cadence*, p. 177, for the sonnet, "Scorn and Sympathy," which is founded on Schopenhauer's saying. Payne's attitude to the world had something in common with the attitude of his enthusiasms, John Marston (Elizabethan Dramatist) and T. L. Beddoes. Swinburne, who disliked Marston, spoke of Marston's "affectation of a gloomy or furious scorn against mankind."

and philosophy, I cannot but be sensible that humanitarian methods have taken an altogether wrong course in dealing with the sufferings of the world, and that they have but aggravated the vast sum of human misery. All that they have yet done is to lift a light and necessary yoke from the neck of the cadger and the shirker and to add it, as a crushing burden, to the already overladen shoulders of the real workers of the world. What the ethical residuum of the human race (a residuum
f. 18. which has always || existed and will, by the laws of Nature, always continue to exist—"the poor shall never cease from out the land") [needs] is above all government and discipline, merciful and generous certainly, but above all just government, such as children require, and "Le peuple (as Michelet[109] says) est un enfant eternal." They are and always will be, from the moral point of view, children incapable of governing themselves, much less of taking a share in the government of the community; and to hope to remedy their distresses by mere charity is like endeavouring to quench a conflagration by sprinkling rose-water upon it. (Yet Charity must be, and woe unto him who withholdeth his hand from giving! We cannot let our sad brother starve, whilst we are debating the various methods of curing his ills.) The watchword of the Future is "Fraternity," but not Liberty, which exists for no man except the

[109] Jules Michelet, French historian (1798—1874).

Vedantic sage,[110] who has renounced desire of all kinds; and not Equality, which Nature fiercely denies with her every voice.

14. The True Cause of Human Misery.

The true cause of human misery, it seems to me, in these days of over-population and of (and notwithstanding) boundless almsgiving, is the existence of a large class which is false to the social compact, and its implied obligation that no man who can maintain himself should be a burden to the State. In the United Kingdom alone there are more than a million able-bodied persons of the lower orders (with the class who pay their own way the State has nothing to do) who have never done a day's work, and who would ‖ (strange as it seems f. 19. to ourselves) rather starve than work, and to these must be added at least an equal number who live by crime, both classes inheriting their characteristics from their fathers and forefathers who have been professional paupers and habitual criminals from generation to generation. These two classes are, of course, supported by the workers of the middle class, specially by the brain-workers, who bear the chief burden of the State, and are an eating ulcer upon the body politic, weighing down the nobler portion of the community with a crushing load of taxation and diverting the stream of

[110] See footnote 12.

charity from its proper channels. No government dares to deal with this burning question, which will prove the ruin of England if it is not speedily settled, although the great doctor[111] of the Christian Faith, who was no flint heart, and by whose precepts we English profess to shape our lives, has laid down the true solution in the plainest words:

Εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι, μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

"If any will not work, neither let him eat."[112] The duty of every government is to subdue the wicked and to help the weak; and modern democracy forgets that the latter cannot be done without the former. If the professional pauper and the habitual criminal were forced to earn their own living, the question of pauperism would virtually disappear,
f. 20. and the great ‖ stream of state and private charity would be allowed to fill its proper uses, that of tending and comforting with all love and gentleness the old, the afflicted, and the helpless who cannot help themselves. But to this gigantic task our feeble latter day democratic systems of government by agitation are unequal; it could only be grappled with by some powerful despotism such as that of the United States or the Swiss Republic, the only two important absolute governments (I mean, of course, *temporarily* absolute, during the four years of each Presidential term) which at present survive.

[111] St. Paul.

[112] 2 Thessalonians iii. 10.

15. Duty.

The keystone of my political creed is Duty,[113] or as Mazzini[114] magnificently says in his *Il Lavoro ed il Dovere:*[115] "I know that there is no right but arises out of a duty fulfilled." We have spoken too long of the people and their rights, it is time to remind them of their duties. Yet notwithstanding (or rather because of) my ineradicable belief in the inevitable insufficiency of humanitarian methods, as above expressed, my heart overrides my reason in practice. I am, I am afraid, as much at the mercy of the plausible cadger and the cunning professional dealer in apparent misery as any one alive, and my soul is heavy in me to think how little, how infinitely, how piteously little, I do or can do (although I strive to do my duty in this matter) to lessen the vast and ever increasing sum of human misery. *Sunt lachrymae rerum!* [116]

16. His Love for Music.

‖ P. 15. Musical quality of verse. f. 21.

P. 17. Wagner[117] music has always been as

[113] "Life's whole beauty is in duty done for duty's sake" ("Litany," *Songs of Consolation*, p. 106). When visiting him on 19 Oct., 1904, I said: "What is the great central teaching of your poetry?" He replied, "The importance of Duty. Duty is my pole-star."

[114] Guiseppe Mazzini, Italian patriot (1805—1872).

[115] "Toil and Duty." An English translation of this work appeared in 1863 under the title of *The Duty of Man.*

[116] "Here are tears for human misery" (Virgil, *Aenid*, i., 462).

[117] Richard Wagner (1813—1883). Lucy Robinson had mentioned that Payne was one of the first in England to

much and as essential a part of my life as literature. Although all but untaught (I had only a few month's teaching on the violin when a lad) and brought up amongst unmusical[118] people, I have a species of innate gift for music, which enables me to judge and appreciate the strangest and most unconventional compositions, and to reproduce upon the piano (without a previous hearing) the most complicated orchestral and other works. "But for music," as Disraeli says, in one of those flashes of wit and wisdom which shine like diamonds in the vast rubbish heap of his novels, "we might almost say the Beautiful, i.e. the *formally*, externally Beautiful, is dead,"[119] and, indeed, I hardly know how I could have borne the burden of my life without it.[120] I cannot but feel that my love and practice of music are to be traced everywhere in my verse, in which it seems to me that it is impossible for any insight to mistake the

recognise the genius of Wagner, and she alludes to "Poem addressed to Wagner," which forms a prelude to Payne's *Songs of Life and Death (Poetical Works*, vol. ii., p. 217), in which occur the lines:

"For the days hasten when shall all adore thee,
All at thy spring shall drink and know it sweet;
All the false temples shall fall down before thee,
Ay—and the false gods crumble at thy feet;"

written at a time when to mention Wagner as a great musician was to incur suspicion of madness.

[118] He is here hardly fair to his mother and Mrs. Pritchard.

[119] See, too, Payne's sonnet, *Vigil and Vision*, p. 35, top line.

[120] Cf. "Musicke (a mithridat for melancholy)," John Lyly, *Mydas*. Act iv., Scene 4.

hand of the student of melodic expression and, above all, of orchestral harmonies, and that the technique of the latter especially and inevitably suggests the familiar use and knowledge of music in its subtlest and most recondite forms, if, indeed, it may not at times be accused of encroaching too far upon the limits of the sister art. Berlioz,[121] by the way, is and has always been, quite as dear to me as Wagner, and he has the advantage over the latter of being the precursor; his "Symphonie Fantastique," produced in 1830, is still the unsurpassed type of romantic music, as it was the first great example;[122] but Liszt[123] above all is my composer; with his transcendent purity of aspiration (the nostaglia of another and a nobler world—his mystic spirit harmonies) and his interstellar splendour of expression, he appeals more to my personality than any other master, although I love and appreciate many and many another, including many who are practically unknown in England, and whose work hardly goes beyond the pianos of myself and one or two other amateurs.[124]

[121] Hector Berlioz (1803—1869). See sonnet on Berlioz's "Faust," *Vigil and Vision*, p. 45.

[122] See, too, *Flowers of France, Romantic Period*, vol. ii., p. 160, footnote, and *Vigil and Vision*, p. 43.

[123] Franz Liszt (1811—1886). His daughter Cosima married Richard Wagner.

[124] See my *Life of John Payne*, p. 154.

17. References to his Early Years.

f. 22 ‖ P. 8. As to the "habitual melancholy" [125] of which you speak here, and the existence of which in temperament I should be the last to deny, it is due in the first place to the oppressive influence, never completely to be shaken off—(the mind may forget, but the body never does; Nature is inexorable in exacting full payment, not only for our sins, but for our sufferings, and no saying can be truer than that of the French poet, Jules Lefèvre-Deumier, that "L'on meurt en plein bouheur de son malheur passé"),[126] of a singularly unhappy and thwarted (I might almost say persecuted) youth under the doubtless well-intentioned, but altogether misguided, control of my father, an upright and well-meaning, but prejudiced and narrow-minded man, moody, soured and violent-tempered, who was a Philistine of the Philistines in all matters of art and letters—thinking nothing of any value that would not bake bread —and who used every means in his power, not sticking at harshness, insult or even cruelty

[125] Lucy Robinson had written: "And while it would be unfair to characterise Mr. Payne as a pessimist, it would be useless to deny the habitual melancholy to which he pleads guilty in many places, as in the beautiful but tenuous 'Shadow-Soul'; also in the sonnet, 'Ignis Fatuus.'"

[126] In *Flowers of France, Romantic Period*, vol. ii. (1906), Payne gives translations of three of Lefèvre-Deumier's poems: "The Whaler," "Spring Sadness" and "Human Life." The line quoted above is the last line of "The Whaler," which Payne renders: "In full mid-happiness one dies of misery past."

of all kinds, to force me to abandon the literary career to which it early became evident that all my ideas were directed.[127] With this end in view he removed me from school at an early age, and insisted upon my at once entering upon the struggle for a livelihood, and that under conditions peculiarly exasperating and distressing to the nervous and shrinking nature of a perhaps morbidly shy and retiring lad; pitchforking me, for instance, into situation after situation in various trade and business houses where there was no opening for me, and where I felt myself utterly forlorn and disconsolate in the consciousness of being neither fitted nor wanted. Thus within five years || after my leaving school, I passed through f. 23.
the various stages of clerk to an auctioneer, to a coach-builder and to an architect, reader (or rather printer's devil) in a provincial newspaper office,[128] usher in two schools,[129] supernumerary (on sufferance) in a government office, &c. (I remember, above all, the horrors of the school-ushership, they would have furnished a new circle of Dante's Hell), till at last, in 1861, I was permitted to settle down in the somewhat less uncongenial atmosphere of a London solicitor's office, where I served my

[127] As already stated, Payne is unjust to his father, who really, though they did not understand each other, had his interests at heart.

[128] At Bristol.

[129] One of these was his old school in Pembridge Gardens.

five years' articles[130] and being in due time admitted a solicitor, practised as such till ten years ago,[131] when I retired from business, which had always been confined to the quasi-literary branches of conveyancing and Chancery. The result of this harsh and ill-considered treatment by my father (completely unsuccessful, I need hardly say, so far as regarded its prime object, the crushing out the germs of literature in me) was to inoculate me with what Sénancour[132] calls *l'habitude rêveuse d'une âme comprimée*,[133] to deprive me of all self-confidence and to send me out into the world a mere mass of naked nerve, to fight a solitary battle at a frightful disadvantage.

18. Solitude and Self-Concentration.

Thus early was instilled into me the habit, which has clung to me throughout life, of solitude[134] and self-concentration—of lonely abne-

[130] 1861 to 1867.

[131] In his early days Payne was a partner in the firm of Newman and Payne, their place of business being 13 Clifford's Inn. In 1875 Payne, who was regarded as a very clever lawyer in conveyancing and Chancery practice, dissolved partnership with Newman, and removed to 3 Clifford's Inn, where he employed as a clerk Mr. Coulson Mead, a young man who remained with him for twenty years. Payne's private house was, till 1884, 20 North Road, Park Lane.

[132] Étienne Pivert de Sénancour, author of *Obermann* (1770—1846).

[133] "The dreamy state of a soul in bondage."

[134] Cf.

"The huckster, the hustler, when forced to live lonely
Go mad;
But the thinker, the dreamer, in solitude only
Are glad."—*Ibn et Tefrid.*

KINGSWOOD, MORTIMER CRESCENT

(12 Mortimer Road, Maida Vale).

Payne's home from January, 1910, to 1914.* Here he finished his translation of Heine and wrote *The Way of the Winepress*, &c.

Photo by Mr. George Avenell.

gation, looking to no one for help and expecting no sympathy from anyone, especially from members of my own family; and I cannot help feeling that it says a good deal for the native soundness of my nature || that the unhappy experiences of f. 24.
my youth, and indeed of my whole life, together with the injustice with which I feel that I have been treated by the literary world, have not been able to sour me, and that though an incurably melancholy man, I am no misanthrope. Like Sir Adrian in *The Light of Scarthey*,[135] if (as I fear) many or most people are distasteful to me, I hate no one, and feel that my heart grows every year more readily open to pity and sympathy. Nor am I, on the whole, discontented with my life; though I have at times had a hard struggle, yet I am happier than many in having never been compelled to do for bread's sake any literary work other than that which was congenial to me, and that I have always been able without betraying my vocation, to earn enough to supply my modest wants, my only luxuries (or rather necessaries) being books and music, which fortunately are cheap, being commodities into the price of which the element of brains still enters. The one thing which is really a source of bitter regret to me is the feeling that, notwithstanding the immense mass of work which I have acomplished and every por-

[135] *The Light of Scarthey*, a Romance by Egerton Castle, published by Osgood, in 1895.

tion of which I am conscious of having done with all my might, I am drawing near to the end of my working day (I was 60 the other day, 1902)[136] without having given the world anything like the measure of my real powers (in poetry especially)
f. 25. owing to the lack of that || modest measure of appreciation and encouragement which is to esthetic production as sunshine to the vegetable creation, and without which no artist can give forth the best which is in him, even as no plant can yield its true flowerage in the dark. This frame of mind (appeasement and resignation without discontent) is, I think, pretty clearly manifest in my later poems, especially in the last-written "Evensong,"[137] which may be my Swan-song; and the last line of which, "Duty done," I am quite content should be the epigraph of my life work.

19. On Archaic Words Again. Helen Snee.

P.S. To return for a moment to the question of the use of archaic, &c., words, I hope you will be able to insist upon the absolute simplicity of the language of the bulk of my lyrics (in most of

[136] Payne's birthday was August 23. Although he uses the expression, "the other day," this manuscript could not have been written until after the receipt of Mrs. Robinson's "Introduction No. 1," which was posted to him on 23 Nov., 1902, and acknowledged by him on 9 Dec. The figures "1902" were added some time after—apparently for my information.

[137] "Evensong," *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, vol. ii., p. 354.

which there is scarcely a word which could baulk a fairly well educated child of 12 or 13), and upon the fact, not generally noted, that they are for the most part distinguished by the immense preponderance of short, nervous English (I do not say Saxon, because the other Scandinavian and the Celtic tongues have so great a share in the composition of the vernacular language) words, and the remarkable paucity of words and phrases of Latin derivation. Cf. for instance, among others, Part III. of "Aspect and Prospect,"[138] the whole of which poem, by the way, may be read with "Shadow Soul"[139] as a general profession of faith on my part.

P. 11. For "the death of a dear woman,"[140] I

[138] "Aspect and Prospect." *The Poetical Works of John Payne* (1892), ii., p. 301.

[139] "Shadow Soul." Id., p. 255.

[140] In Introduction 1, p. 11, Lucy Robinson had written: "But setting aside the question of temperament, severe losses have inclined this poet to a life of mediæval seclusion and contemplation. The death of a dear woman, to whom he gives, in one of his 'Intaglios,' the name of Beatrice, seems to have cast over his existence a shadow almost as deep as Dante's passion. Loss of health followed; and the hard-working London solicitor and tireless translator of the masterpieces for the Villon Society withdrew, some ten years ago, into apparently impenetrable solitude."

The "dear woman" was Helen Snee (1845—1880) who inspired many of Payne's most beautiful poems, including "Her Grave" and "Alas!" both of which are printed in *Nature and Her Lover*. Her maiden name was Helen Matthews; her first husband was a Mr. Noble, by whom she had a daughter, Constance, who died in babyhood. Soon after the death of Mr. Noble she married (in 1866) Mr. Frederick Snee.

should wish you to substitute "the loss of a beloved companion."

P. 4. You will find several "homely situations" treated in the "London City Poems."[141]

P. 1. You may find it useful to know that my
f. 26. ‖ original verse (or rather the printed part of it) amounts (including the Supplement)[142] to nearly 30,000 lines (or considerably more than twice that produced by Rossetti). This, notwithstanding the fact that happier circumstances, and more appre-

Mrs. Snee is buried in Kensal Green (Catholic) Cemetery. An account of her life is given in my *Life of John Payne*, pp. 26—66.

In compliance with Payne's request, Mrs. Robinson altered the words to "of a beloved companion," and then added, on her own responsibility, "*vide* 'A Christmas Vigil'" (see Introduction to the American Edition, p. xxi.), but "A Christmas Vigil" relates to the death of O'Shaughnessy, and has nothing whatever to do with Mrs. Snee.

On the day Mrs. Snee died, Payne called on his sister, Mrs. Pritchard. He said, "Helen is dead," and then burst into tears. It is significant that among the poems of Ronsard translated by Payne is the "Song for Hélène" *(Flowers of France, Renaissance Period*, p. 25).

[141] *The Poetical Works of John Payne* (1892), ii., pp. 3—46.

[142] Of this "Supplement" (to *The Poetical Works of John Payne)*, which was issued with the title of *The Descent of the Dove*, only 25 copies were printed. In the letter to Lucy Robinson of December, 1902, Payne writes: "*The Descent of the Dove* I have relegated to a privately printed Supplement, as it deals in too mediæval a spirit of frankness with Christian mythology to be acceptable to those who find an anthropomorphic faith necessary to their comfort, and I should be sorry to hurt any sincere believer's feelings, though I regret the necessity of omission, as I consider the poem my masterpiece." The Supplement also contains a few other poems. Payne subsequently issued a volume entitled *Songs of Consolation* (1904) and he included in it "The Descent of the Dove" and the other poems from the *Supplement*.

ciation, would certainly have caused a greatly increased production.

P. 4. I do not think it is correct to say that my themes are unsubstantial;[143] they are doubtless often "aloof" from popular thought and feeling, but they have, I think, their own substantiality none the less for those who can appreciate spiritual things.

P. 13. "Pantoum"[144] in *Songs of Life and Death* not *New Poems*.

20. Sir Floris.

P. 19. Some mistake in account of Sir Floris as to Christ speaking with the hero in the garden. Please refer to poem.[145]

"Sir Floris," by the by, was written before Wagner had *thought* of Parsifal. The material which he afterwards used for that music-drama was originally intended for one to be called *Die Büsser* — "The Penitents," on the subject of Buddha. "Sir Floris" [was] written [in] 1868, fourteen years before the completion of *Parsifal*, the poem (libretto) of which was not written and

[143] Mrs. Robinson had written: "No doubt John Payne's failure to take by storm the hearts of his fellow-countrymen is partly owing to his preference for unsubstantial themes, for ethereal or fantastic imagery."

[144] "Pantoum." *The Poetical Works of John Payne* (1892), ii., p. 204.

[145] Mrs. Robinson had written: "Christ Himself comes to Sir Floris in the garden, in such simple guise, using such plain speech, that the reader's taste is in no way offended."

published till nine years later (1877). It ("Sir Floris") was suggested by an old fragmentary German romance on the subject of the Graal Temple,[146] rather than by the later romances, *Parsifal* and *Titurel*, of Wolfram von Eschenbach[147] referred to in the Prelude.

Re B. (Epigraph).[148] *L'on doit aux vivants des égards, aux morts la verité*—Voltaire.[149] *De mortuis nil nisi verum.*[150]

Concluding Note by the Editor.

This Autobiography was written, as we have seen, at the end of 1902. In the same year Payne issued *The Descent of the Dove;* in 1903, *Vigil and Vision*,[151]

[146] Five romances respecting the Holy Grail appeared between 1190 and 1204.

[147] Wolfram von Eschenbach, German poet, born in the end of the 12th century. He wrote *Parzival* (1210), an epic on the history of the Holy Grail, seven Love songs, and two fragments called *Titurel.* It was from *Parzival* that Wagner derived the libretto for his opera *Parsifal.*

[148] *The Poetical Works of John Payne*, i., p. 2.

[149] When I was writing my *Life of Sir Richard Burton*, I said to Payne (21 Sept., 1904): "I want to tell the precise truth, yet to avoid giving pain to anyone." "Be guided, then," he said, "by the advice of Voltaire: 'To the living one owes consideration, and to the dead the truth.'"

[150] "Of the dead, let nothing be said but what is true." The maxim is sometimes worded: *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*—"Of the dead, let nothing be said but what is favourable," which to both Voltaire and Payne seemed ridiculous. This was no doubt the motto sent for the guidance of Dr. Burton, who was helping Lucy Robinson in the selection, and who purposed writing on Payne. He is referred to in Payne's letter to Mrs. Robinson of 9 Dec., 1902.

[151] Cf. "But few see visions; many dream dreams" *(Way of the Winepress*, p. 64). Of *Vigil and Vision* Payne once said to me, "It is my finest work altogether—the complete expression of my soul," but he lived to do still finer work.

and in 1904, *Songs of Consolation* and *Hamid the Luckless.* I made his acquaintance on Sept. 21st, 1904, and soon after began to collect material for a biography of him. He gave me these Autobiographical Notes, and helped me in many other ways. He read most of his subsequent works to me while they were in manuscript, and I was careful to take down his table talk every time I visited him. He wrote a number of poems at my request, and he helped me with my *Life of Sir Richard Burton* (1906). The story of our friendship is told in *The Life of John Payne*, which I published in 1919. Payne subsequently issued: *Flowers of France, Romantic Period* (2 vols.), 1906; *Flowers of France, The Renaissance*, 1907; *Carol and Cadence*, 1908; *Ibn et Tefrid*, 1908-9, and *Flower o' the Thorn*, 1908.

From 1886 to January, 1910, he resided at 10 Oxford Road, Kilburn. In that month he removed to "Kingswood," Mortimer Crescent (12 Mortimer Road, Maida Vale), where he translated *The Poems of Heinrich Heine* (3 vols.), 1911, and *Flowers of France, The Latter Days* (2 vols.), 1913; and wrote *The Way of the Winepress* (published by me after his death). Two of the sonnets in this work are given at the end of the present volume. His translation of *The Marvellous History of Seif ben Dhi Yezn, King of Yemen* is still unpublished. To these must be added three thin curiosities in paper covers, printed for

circulation among friends, namely: *Humoristica*, 1909; *Humoristica, Second Series*, 1909; *Humoristica, Third Series*, perhaps 1910. They are for the most part displays of wit at the expense of certain politicians, including Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith, and certain men of letters, including Lord Morley, Lord Bryce, George Meredith, Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch, and Grant Allen.

In 1914 Payne removed to 28 "The Boltons," South Kensington, principally in order that he might be nearer to his sister, Mrs. Pritchard, who resided at Cleeve Lodge, 40 Hyde Park Gate. I am able to give a few anecdotes which have come to my hands since I wrote the biography.

One day, soon after Payne had settled at "The Boltons," D'Indy, the cat, mentioned several times in my *Life of John Payne*, was missing. As he did not return, Payne placed on the street gate a notice offering a reward, remarking to his nurse, Miss Brereton, while it was being fixed, "D'Indy must have known that his master was going to die, and so he went away. I saw him walk out that morning and he will never come back." Opposite "The Boltons" is St. Mary's Church, and one morning the sexton came to Payne's door and said that he had found a cat answering to D'Indy's description, and had buried it in the churchyard.

"We don't know whether it is the same cat," said Payne.

"Then I'll dig it up," said the man.

28 THE BOLTONS, SOUTH KENSINGTON.

Here Payne died, February 11th, 1916.

Photo by Mr. George Avenell.

"Oh, no!" groaned Payne, "I could not bear to see it," and the man was dismissed with a solatium.

Payne often repeated during his last illness—and for months he was quite blind—his lovely little poem, "Primrose Faces" *(Carol and Cadence*, p. 13). Once he rang Miss Brereton up in the middle of the night to repeat it after him; and she, half asleep, droned:

> "I never yet might see the primrose faces,
> But needs must dream
> Of things which *are* beyond the spheral spaces
> And here but *seem*."

And so on to the last line with its reference to Helen (Mrs. Snee).

When he had become blind, Miss Brereton said to him, "If you want anything, ring for me." She went in at any time. Sometimes he would ring, and then ten minutes after she had left him would ring again. When she gently scolded him, he said, "I must have been asleep." "I'll tie a ribbon to the bell," she said, "to show that I have been in." Sometimes when he rang it would be for a cup of tea, and while drinking it he would say, "Would you like a cup? Are you having one?" He ate a good deal of cake in the night and was, says Miss Brereton, "as jolly as a sand-boy." Once he said, "With all this reciting of poetry and eating and drinking, it's something like the *Arabian Nights*." Among the books which she

read to him during his blindness, were Constance Fletcher's works, the amusing *Polly Hooly* by Edgar Jephson, and Mrs. Penny's Indian books. He enjoyed them all.

As of old, he had to be humoured in everything. One day they had for dinner lamb and what Miss Brereton called "mint sauce."

"You don't say it right," interrupted Payne.

"How must I say it?"

"*Mint* sauce, with the accent on mint—for mint is the important matter."

"It was more than I dare do," said Miss Brereton to me, "to speak of his serviette. The first and only time I mentioned that word to him, he corrected me, saying acidly, 'I suppose you mean 'napkin'?'" One day he said, "I feel just like a beggar and a tramp now I am blind."

Miss Brereton: "You ought not to feel like that, a great man such as you are."

To which Payne replied: "I now see with Milton," and he quoted the sonnet, "On his blindness," with its pathetic close:

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

On November 18th, 1915, Payne lost his friend, Mr. Tracy Robinson, who died at Colon, Panama, where he had for many years resided. Mr. Robinson had said in one of his letters to me: "I love Mr. Payne to-day as always, and read him whenever I am athirst for the beautiful. I never tire

of him;" and in another (February 6th, 1913), referring to Payne's poems: "I love them, and in my old age (I am in my eightieth year) they solace me beyond measure."

Payne died on February 11th, 1916, and his remains were cremated at Golders Green.

Mr. R. Greeves, the oculist of 14 Harley Street, who had become very fond of Payne, said in a letter of February 25th to Miss Brereton: "In one thing at least he was most unusually fortunate, the constant and unwearying care and attention day and night which he got during his long illness."

The John Payne Society, of which I am Secretary, has issued the following of Payne's works:

Sir Winfrith and other Poems, 1905 and 1922; *Abou Mohammed*, 1906; *The Way of the Winepress*, 1924; *Ibn et Tefrid*, 1921; *Nature and Her Lover* (Selections), 1922.

On May 21st, 1925, the Society held its 21st Annual Meeting at the house of Mrs. Grenville Byam, Payne's only surviving sister.

THE END.

APPENDIX I.

Citations from Letters which reached the Editor subsequent to the appearance of his *Life of John Payne*.

LETTER WRITTEN BY HAWKINS-PAYNE (THE POET'S FATHER) TO HIS SON WILLIAM,

With references to John Payne.

THIS letter was written at the end of August, 1869, and sent to William Payne, who was then in India. The ship that took it, the *Carnatic*, was wrecked, but somehow the letter was recovered. Hawkins-Payne and his family, who had been holiday-making at Ventnor, were at the time spending a few weeks at Tangley Manor, Shatford, near Guildford. Harry, his youngest son, and Frances, his youngest daughter, were under a governess, Miss Georgie Jey. Part of the letter runs:

"'Jack' [the poet] is with us, and he and the girls revel in the pretty leafy lanes, and Miss Jey and her charges take after them when lessons are done. Aunty [old Aunty Payne] knits, nets and crochets, and now and then takes Ma's arm for a tour of inspection about the place." Then follows an account of a trip in "a pair-horse wagonette" made by "Jack," Jack's friend Hubert Micling,

Annie, Nora [Payne's sisters] and Miss Jey to the Isle of Wight. They returned about 10 on a lovely moonlight night, immensely jolly and noisy, and delighted with their journey.

Letters written by Payne to his sister Frances (Mrs. Grenville Byam).

The first letter, written by Payne from 5 Lansdowne Place, November 3rd, 1884, relates to the death of Hawkins-Payne.

In it Payne says: "My dear Fanny,—Sad as your news is, it is a relief to hear that the poor father's sufferings are over. Since he began to feel so much pain, one could only hope for the end as quickly as possible. . . . I hope the dear old mum won't break down; she must think that, contrary to all expectation, he has, by a sort of miracle, had 13 years of comparative health and strength."

On July 11th, 1899, Payne writes: "Very pleased to have the Archbishop's[152] affectionate congratulations,[153] but there is not much to be proud of. Between me and the Government it is only a question of 'Blow your sympathy! Buy a trotter.' However, they have, though tardily, bought the trotter to the extent of £100 p.a.;[153] so I am satisfied. Horrible weather in the Swiss Jura

[152] Payne used to call General Byam "the Archbishop."

[153] Re the pension of £100 a year.

[he had just returned from the continent]. No one knows how a cold bath can bite who has not tried it on the top of a mountain 3,200ft. above the level, at seven o'clock, in the midst of a cloud."

January 29th, 1900. "It is a long while since I have heard anything of you or the Archbishop. I often wish you lived near at hand, that I might have some reasonable man to talk with about the war in 'Savage South Africa,' if it is not an insult to the decent Zulu, who after all is a gentleman to the brute Boer, to call it so. Tell him (the Archbishop) I am writing a couple of handbooks on the *elementary* principles of (1) Tactics and (2) Strategy, for the use of our generals, especially Buller.[154]

P. is simply impossible. When the war began, we were going to be in Pretoria in two or three days; and as soon as we heard of our first checks he immediately put straws in his hair and announced that we were beaten for good and all, and that we had better give in at once. This is the Celtic way, but not quite that of the Anglo-Saxon, who wants a dozen or two ruffians hitting him in the stomach, and generally coming the 'brave Boer' over him before he gets his monkey up and settles seriously to business. And this time he does mean business, and no mistake; but

[154] General Buller.

we must get rid of the Bull's eye gang and the old apple-women in the cabinet, because after this we shall have to buckle to and give the French the periodical thrashing they so richly deserve."

On July 8th, 1901, Payne writes: "I hope to be able to come down on Friday afternoon by the train you mention, if the rascal bookbinder will let me. The books [*Hafiz*, 3 vols.] were promised ready on Sat^{y}, but the villain, being at a loss for a pretext of delay, has just announced his intention of shutting up shop and going off beanfeasting for two whole days with his 2,000 or so workpeople, which may mean that no more work will be done this week. I shall get off if I can, but I may have to remain here. I suppose the train goes from Waterloo? What station do I book for? I do not know exactly where you are.

"I am very unwell at present, and much distressed about poor little Rover,[155] who, I am afraid, is in a consumption, or something of the kind. I wish I knew of some place where I could send her to be nursed; I am afraid here she will die, or I shall have to have her chloroformed, which would be terrible."

On March 17th, 1902, he says: "I am simply overwhelmed with work just now, so you will have only a line or two. When do you return tc England?" After a reference to the marriage, at

[155] One of his cats.

Bombay, of an acquaintance, Ruth Norman, to "a man named John," he continues, "March has been a delightful month thus far, real spring for once. My garden is like a Turkey carpet for crocuses. The cats enjoy it immensely. Rover is quite herself now, and the two others are well.

I saw Harry [his brother] the other day; he is very well, and jolly as usual. Will [his sailor brother] has just had an attack of pneumonia or the like, owing, as Nix [Dr. E. J. Nix] thinks, to over-indulgence in Turkish baths, but he is getting over it. He is a wicked old thing, and will be neither to hold nor to bind for conceit, now that they have put his head on the postage stamps instead of the king's. [William Payne's face resembled King Edward's.] Hope the Archbishop is all right, and keeping up his religious exercises."[156]

[156] Some of these letters were addressed to the Old Rectory, Bisley, where General Byam had resided since Sept., 1901. In August, 1904 (not 1905 as stated by mistake in *The Life of John Payne*), he left Bisley and settled in Petersham Cottage, Byfleet, Surrey, where he resided till his death, 18 Feb., 1906.

"THE PALMER SANG."

"Rime of Melisande." (See p. 68.)

APPENDIX II.

Some of the Poems, by Payne, referred to in the preceding pages.

THE PRELUDE TO HAFIZ.

From *Sir Winfrith*, p. 1.

Hither, hither, o ye weary, o ye sons of wail and woe,
Ye, who've proved the hollow shimmer of this world of fleeting show,
Ye, who've seen your hearts' hopes vanish, like the firstlings of the snow;

Ye, who scorn the brutal bondage of this world of mis-belief,
Ye, who bear the royal blazon of the heart afire with grief,
Hearken, hearken to my calling; for I proffer you relief.

I am he whom men call teller of the things that none may see,
Tongue of speech of the Unspoken, I am he who holds the key
Of the treasuries of vision and the mines of mystery.

I am he that knows the secrets of the lands beyond the goal,
I am he that solves the puzzles of the sorrow-smitten soul,
I am he that giveth gladness from the wine-enlightened bowl.

I am he that heals the wounded and the weary of their scars.
I am Hafiz, son of Shiraz, in the pleasant land of Fars,
Where I flung my flouting verses in the faces of the stars.

See, my hands are full of jewels from the worlds beyond the tomb:
Here be pearls of perfect passion from the middle dreamland's womb;
Here be amethysts of solace, for the purging of your gloom:

Here be rubies red and radiant, of the colour of the heart,
Here be topazes sun-golden, such as rend the dusk apart,
Here be sapphires steeped in heaven, for the salving of your smart.

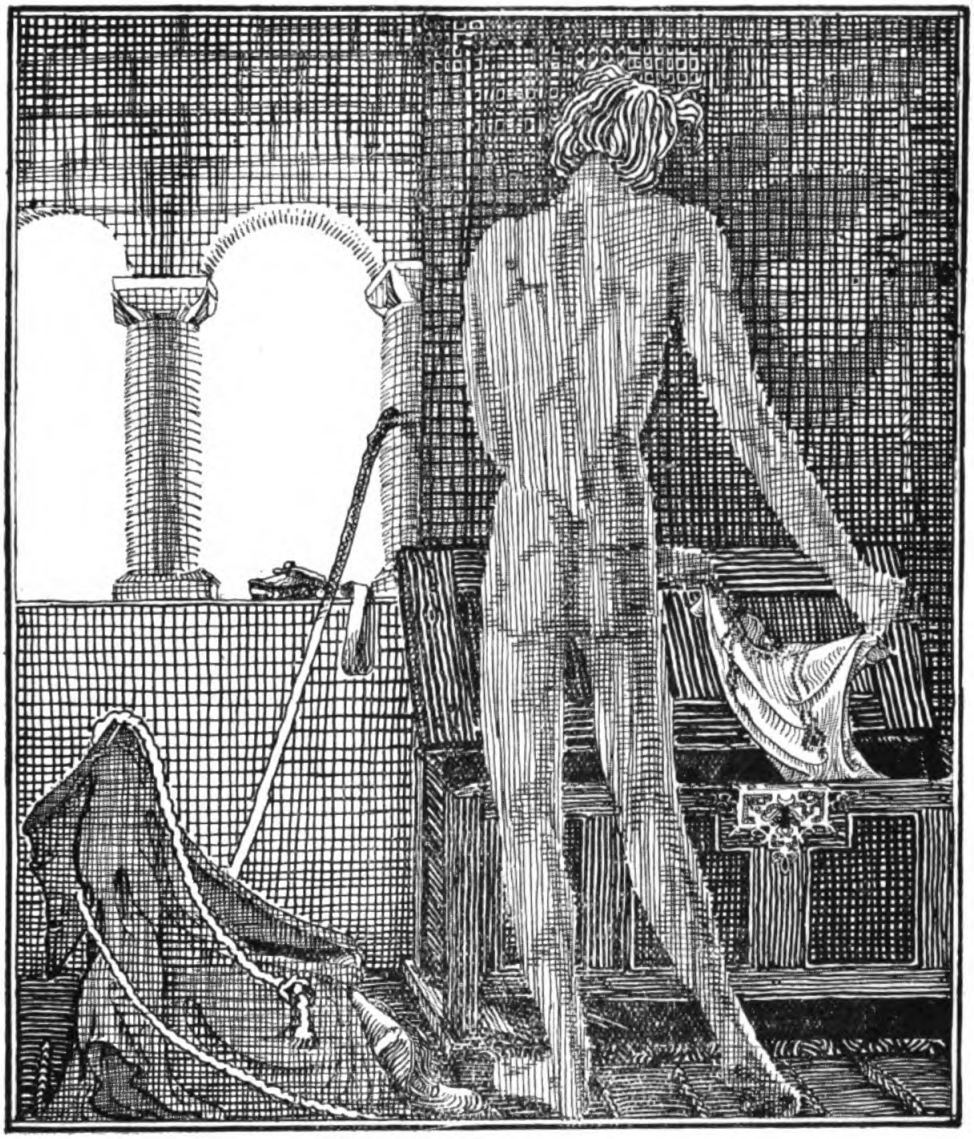
If your souls are sick with sorrow, here is that which shall appease;
If your lips are pale with passion, here is that which hath the keys
To the sanctuaries of solace and the halidomes of ease.

Let the bigot tend his idols, let the trader buy and sell:
Ears are theirs that cannot hearken to the tale I have to tell,
Eyes that cannot see the treasures which are open to my spell.

Where is he that's heavy-laden? Lo, my hand shall give him peace.
Where are they that dwell in darkness? I am he that can release.
Where is he that's world-bewildered? I will give his cares surcease.

Hither, hither, with your burdens! I have that shall make them light.
I have salves shall purge the earth-mists from the fountains of your sight;
I have spells shall raise the morning in the middest of your night.

Come, o doubt-distracted brother! Come, o heavy-burthened one!
Come to me and I will teach you how the goal of rest is won;
Come and I will cleave your darkness with the splendours of the sun.



"HIS WEDE HE SHED."

"Rime of Melisande." (See p. 70.)

Leave your striving never-ending; let the weary world go by;
Let its bondmen hug their fetters, let its traders sell and buy;
With the roses in the garden we will sojourn, you and I.

Since the gladness and the sadness of the world alike are nought,
I will give you wine to drink of from the ancient wells of thought,
Where it's lain for ages ripening, whilst the traders sold and bought.

What is heaven, that we should seek it? Wherefore question How or Why?
See, the roses are in blossom; see, the sun is in the sky;
See, the land is lit with summer! let us live before we die.

Selections from

THE RIME OF MELISANDE.[1]

From *Nature and Her Lover*, pp. 19—35.

"O Melisande,
By Surrie strand,
Red Rose of Tripoli,[2]
From Paris town to Askalon,
In all the lands the sun shines on,
Was never maid like thee.

[1] The complete poem is printed in *Nature and Her Lover*, published by Thomas Wright, Olney, near Bedford.

[2] In Syria.

Blue are thine eyes
As summer skies,
Thy hair as ripening corn;
On good and vile
Thy sweet lips smile,
Sans ever trace of scorn.

All hearts rejoice
To hear thy voice,
Like linnets on the wing:
E'en Rudel right,
That witsome wight,
Thy praise uneath might sing.

Unto this end
A man might spend
His life, to gain thy grace;
There's none may think
Of care or swink
That looks upon thy face."

The palmer sang;
The ghittern's clang
Called all the folk to hear.
"All over the world," quoth he, "I've strayed:
"But never I saw so sweet a maid,
"So fair and frank and dear!"

The fair one's fame,
Like wind-borne flame,
Went spreading, place to place:
Full was the land
Of Melisande,
Her goodness and her grace:
And those among,
To whom Fate flung
The tidings of the case,
The news of her
To Rudel's ear
Came in a little space.

"ROOFS ROSE AND TOWERS" (Tripoli).

"Rime of Melisande." (See p. 71.)

[Rudel hearing of her beauty could think of nothing but her.]

No more his rhymes,
As aforetimes,
Of divers ladies were:
One only praise
Was in his lays;
None other maid might share
His minstrelsy
With her whom he
Held only worth and fair.

All Europe rang
With what he sang
In praise of Melisande:
From hall to court
Flew his report
In every Chrisom land,
Till oversea
It won where she
Abode by Surrie strand.

And she,—for kind
And mild of mind
She was as sweet of show
And keen of wit,
—By word of writ
Gave him full fain to know
Than all above
She held his love
And service evenso.

Now in those days
That prince of praise,
Who fell by Antioch wall
Kaiser and Knight,
That Redbeard hight,
A new crusade let call
And Paynim-free
Christ's sanctuary
To make, bade Christians all.

His standard raised,
Whereon there blazed
The Cross, all thither ran:
Whoso delayed
From the crusade
Must bear the dastard's ban:
From France to Greece,
There was no peace
For any Chrisom man.

[Rudel full of joy resolves to join the Crusade in the hopes of seeing the face of Melisande.]

So for good gold
His land he sold
And for his lady dear
Gifts, with the price,
Of rare device,
He bought and travelling-gear.

His wede he shed
And donned instead
A palmer's hat and gown;
Then, taking horse,
Came, in due course
Of time, to Marseilles town.

There, for his need,
A ship of speed
He hired, a caravel,
With arms and crew
And all things due
For travel furnished well.

So, on the main
Launching, Sardaine
And Corsica between
He passed and through
Th'untroubled blue
Drove of the Sea Tyrrhene.

[After a rough voyage the ship comes in sight of Tripoli.]

"A LILY OF LIGHT . . . THERE SAT A SHINING MAID."

"Rime of Melisande." (See p. 73.)

From the sea's face
It rose apace,
Like visions in a dream;
And on its marge,
Where light lay large,
He saw spires flash and gleam.

Roofs rose and towers
And domes, like flowers
Of gold, against the sky;
Upon that sight,
So glad and bright,
A man might look and die.

"The saints I thank!"
The captain sank,
Thus crying, on his knee;
"I know that land,
"That silver strand,
"Fringed with the date-palm tree.

"I know the port with the white-walled town
"And the creek where the golden sands slope down,
"To meet the mounting sea;
"I know the beach, with the babbling rill:
"The grey old castle upon the hill
"And the tower I know, with the standard still
"That beareth the lilies three;
"The spires and the pinnacled palaces
"I know and the domes. It is, it is
"The land of Tripoli!"

The town lay silent; beneath the skies
It slept in the dawning glow;
There was never a sign for the straining eyes.
But "Up with the flag!" the captain cries;
"'Twill waken the folk, I trow."
So up, with a shout and the halyards' creak,
The black ball ran to the topmost peak,

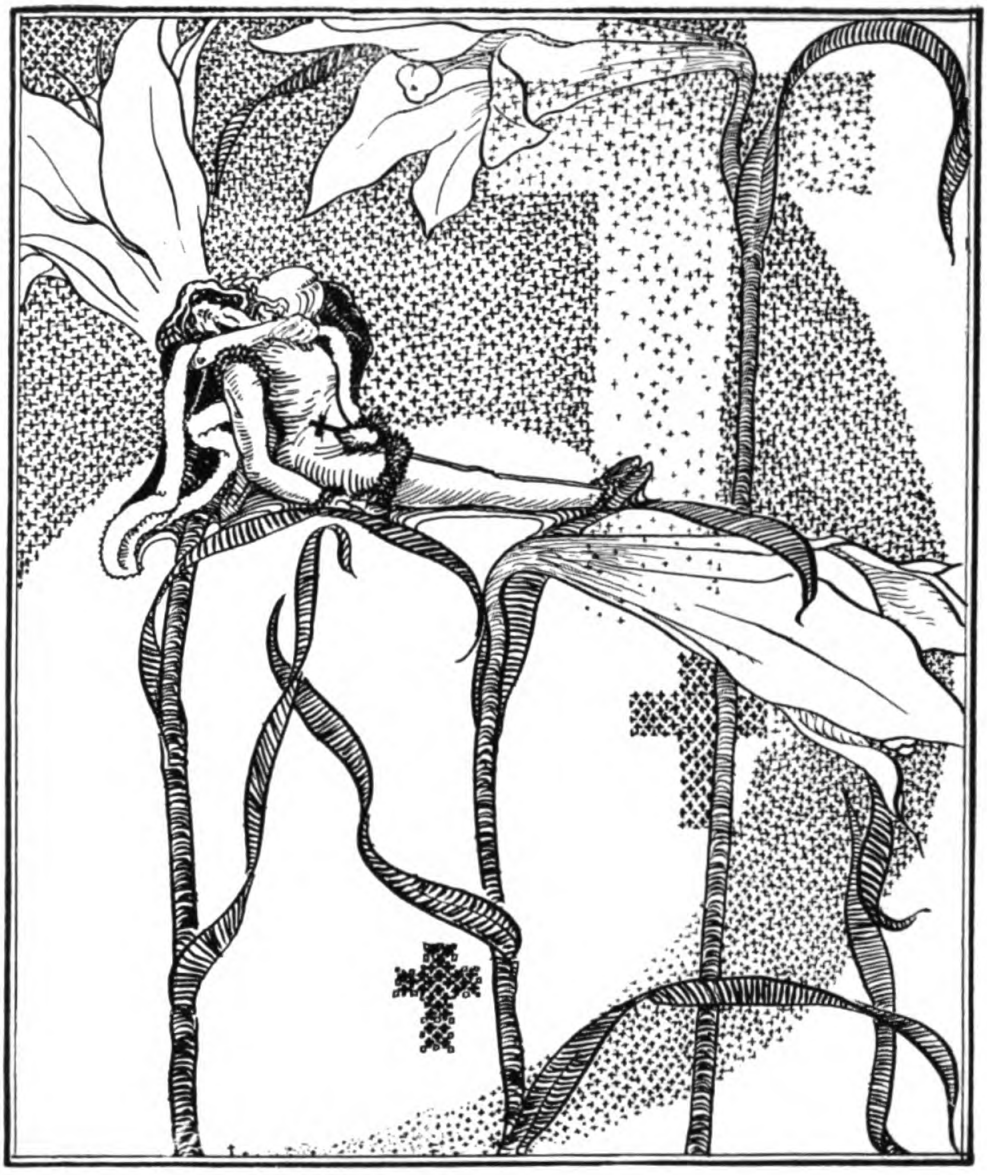
And the banner of France at the main broke out
And hung in the calm, as if in doubt
Of welcoming, ay or no.

[Above the ramparts of Tripoli fluttered the banner of Raymond, Lord of Bar, and eventually the caravel crawled into port.]

The count's folk hailed as the ship drew nigh,
Loud calling from the quay;
"Ho, ye of the carvel!" was the cry:
"Why come ye hither to Tripoli?
"Whence, whence and whither, and what bear ye
"Withal for lading, say!"

"From France," the captain, "we come," replied.
"Long, long have we tossed on the angry tide,
"Have toiled and travelled it far and wide,
"Driven of the winds astray.
"Nor stuffs nor jewels we bear for freight;
"Yet that, which is more of worth and rate
"In wise men's eyes than they,
"We bring, nought else than a minstrel wight,
"Whose like is none in the sheer sun's sight,
"To wit, Sir Geoffrey, of Rudel hight,
"Baron and Prince of Blaye.

"The sweetest singer in all the land,
"For love of the Lady Melisande,
"His last hath he looked on the fair French strand
"And launched on the surging spray;
"He hath given himself to the salt sea's guile,
"Hath wended and wearied him many a mile,
"So but he might see her sweet eyes smile
"And kiss her dainty hand,
"So but he might hear her welcome say
"And louting low in her presence, pray
"For favour on his suit.
"But sick, alas! is the bard to death:
"There's little left in his breast of breath;
"The death-swoon holds him mute.



"HE DIED IN HIS LADY'S ARMS."

"Rime of Melisande." (See p. 75.)

"He'll never again the folk rejoice
"With ditties dearer than gems of choice;
"He'll never again uplift his voice
"Or sing to the laughing lute."

All rent, that heard
The captain's word,
With cries of grief the air;
For known was Rudel of every man
That numbered his name of the Chrisom clan;
And straight to the palace one there ran,
As if the news to bear.

[Presently a stately barge put out to meet them.]

But none on the barge or the crew might look;
For lo! at the stern, in the curtained nook,
Like a pictured saint in a pious book,
Under the awning's shade,
With eyes of azure and hair of flame
And forehead flushed with a rosy shame,
A lily of light in a golden frame,
There sat a shining maid.

Her hair was gold
As the corn-crowned wold,
Her eyes as summer sea;
Since God in heaven set day and night,
Was never a maid so sweet of sight,
So fair of face as she.
Men looked on her face and bent the knee;
They gazed in her melting eyes of blue;
They noted her princely port and knew
The flower of Christiantie,
The loveliest lady whom ever upon
The sunbeams burned and the moonlight shone,
A brighter of blee than any star
And whiter of wit than lilies are,
The Lady Melisande of Bar,
The rose of Tripoli.

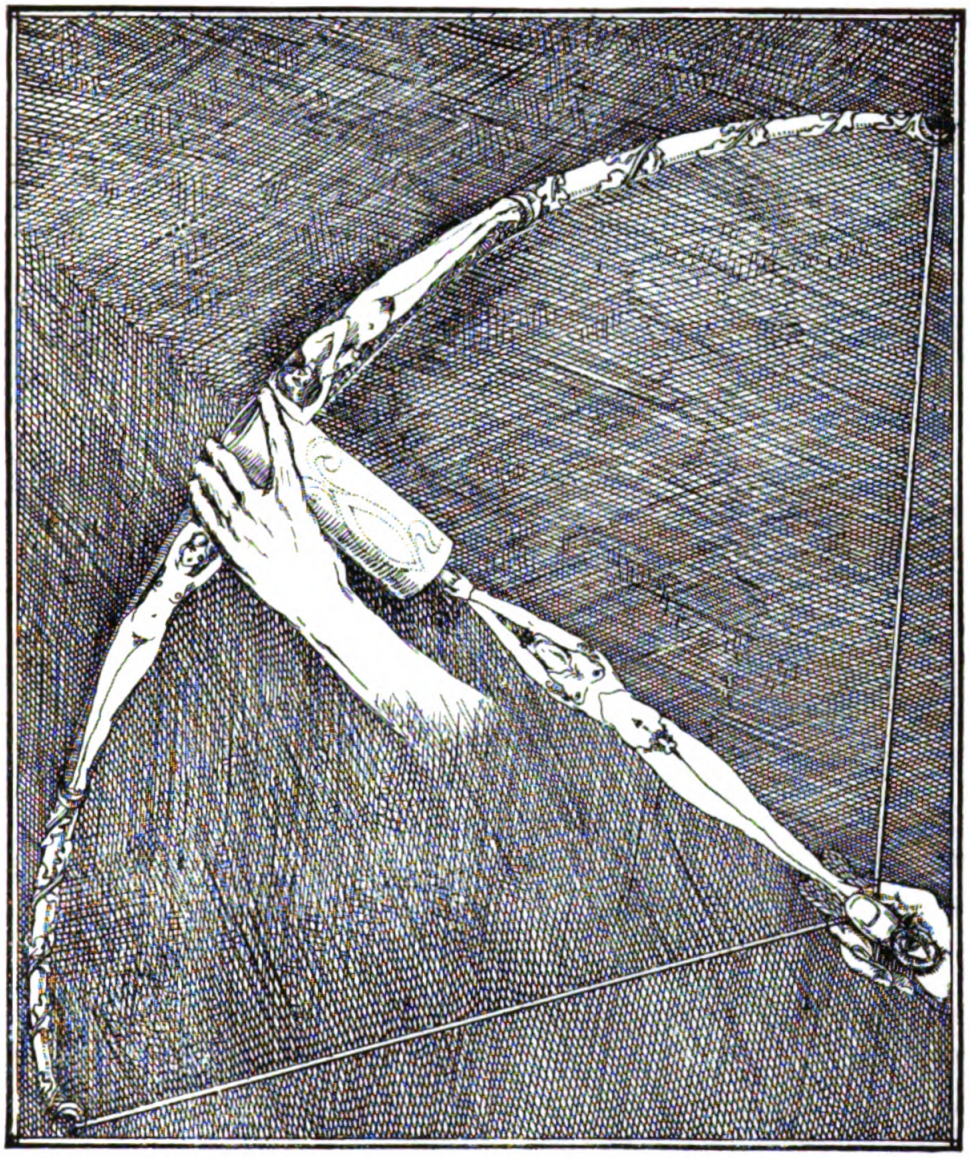
The bark lay low;
The barge slid slow;
And up on the deck stepped that lady light;
She took her way
Where Rudel lay
And kneeling, bent o'er the dying knight.

The death-swoon held
His sense enspelled:
But syne on his brow her lips she prest;
And with the bliss
Of that her kiss,
The breath came back to his bated breast.

He opened his eyes: by Our Lady's grace,
Life flickered up for a moment's space:
He opened his eyes on his lady's face
And met her look of love.
He felt him pillowed upon her breast
And thought him already at rest, at rest,
Encompanied round of the ransomed blest,
In Paradise above.

He gave God thanks for the gotten goal;
Nought more to wish for; Life made whole,
Love's blisses over the sated soul
Full-flowing, tide on tide!
He had lighted at last on the Golden Shore;
He had entered in at the Heavenly Door;
There was nothing on earth to live for more;
And so in Heaven he died.

Under a monument sweet to see,
In the Templars' chapel at Tripoli,
They laid him with mourning and melody,
As one of high estate;
To rest they laid him on royal wise,
Bewept of the tears of his lady's eyes:
And there,—till the day of the Great Assize,
When God all peoples, both small and great,
Shall call to reckoning up,—await,
Geoffrey of Rudel lies.



LIFE'S MOTIVE FORCE.

"The Way of the Winepress." (See p. 76.)

There sleeps he, freed
From all Life's need,
From all its cares and charms:
Solved is his soul
Of joy and dole,
Of gladnesses and harms.
Men hold him mad;
But his hope he had;
For he died in his lady's arms.

SCORN AND SYMPATHY.

From *Carol and Cadence*, p. 177.

"Unendliche Verachtung, unendliches Mitleid."

(Schopenhauer's formula of the philosopher's attitude towards mankind.)

Nothing with men it profiteth the sage
To swell or seek their dull delirium
With words to allay. The time must cast its scum,
Like wine that 'gainst the enclosing cask doth rage,
And the fool commons, children in each age,
Deaf to all music but the huckster's drum,
Through own experience must to wisdom come
Nor heed the scripture on the Past Time's page.
So will the wise upon life's labouring main
Gaze, unpartaking in men's pride and greed,
As one who, in a madhouse only sane,
His frantic fellows watches, moved indeed
To limitless contempt by their unwit,
But full of pity no less infinite.

LIFE'S MOTIVE FORCE.

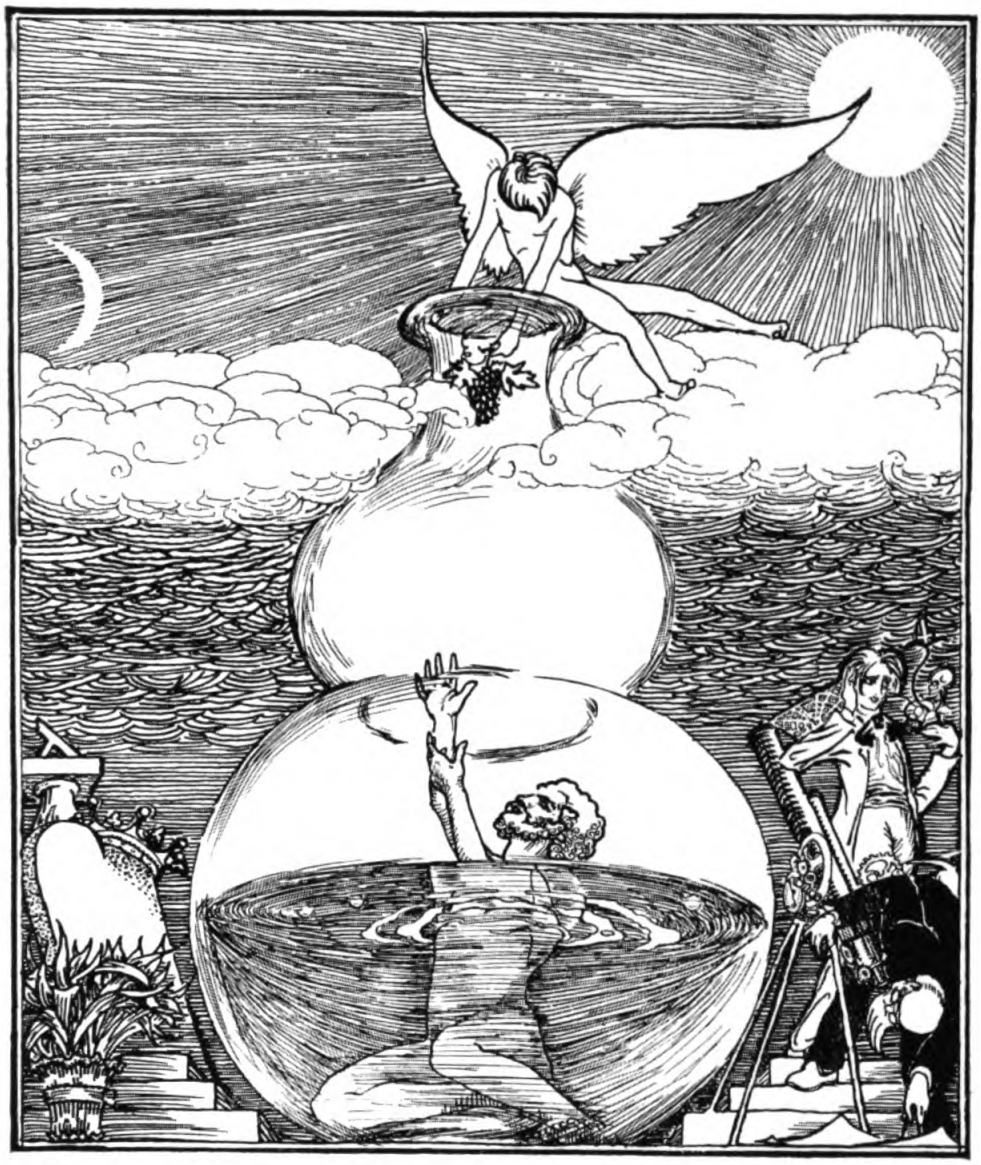
From *The Way of the Winepress*, p. 25.

Imagination is the spirit's light:
Without it, through Life's pageant, deaf and blind,
We pass, all hearing as a babbling wind,
All seeing as a cloud-rack in the night.
Without its purging, sublimating might,
Dogs drowsing in the dark were humankind.
It is the spur that vivifies the mind,
That stirs the sense to dare the heavenward flight,
The influence of the Past and the To-be,
Moulding the Now, that makes us see and feel.
Still in Thought's shallows and Doubt's shifting sands
The vessel of the soul sticks fast and stands,
Except it urged and furthered o'er Life's sea
Be by Imagination's driving-wheel.

DRUNK OR SOBER.

From *The Way of the Winepress*, p. 28.

Drunkenness, (old Hafiz 'twas that said,)
Drunkenness is better than dead dryness.
In this world of rottenness and wryness,
Where the Gods among the folk might tread
And be no more noted for their nighness,
In this day, when lowness scoffs at highness,
Better drunk than sober go to bed.
Either aching heart or aching head;
Make thy choice, o servant of the highest;
Sick at heart and sober, with the Real,
All thy life to languish, or, instead,
Day and night to be, until thou diest,
Drunken with the wine of the Ideal.



DRUNK OR SOBER.

"The Way of the Winepress." (See p. 76.)

The man "Drunken with the Wine of the Ideal" has a clear passage pierced for him through the clouds which hide from the prosaic and perverted those Ultimate Mysteries and Realities which are typified by the balance of the Sun and the Moon.

THE SOUL'S VENTURES.

From *The Way of the Winepress*, pp. 89—91.

The winds blow South, the winds blow North;
They blow no luck to me.
A fleet of ships I built and forth
I sent them all to sea.

They all were furnished and equipped
With wonder-goodly gear;
And I for venture on them shipped
That which I held most dear.

The first, Ambition, forth I sent
To fetch me golden store;
But on the seas astray it went
And came again no more.

The second I despatched, Desire,
In quest of wine of fame;
But in mid-ocean it took fire
And foundered in the flame.

The third, Love, sent was by my soul
To seek the Isles of Spice;
But, chancing on the frozen Pole,
It perished in the ice.

The fourth must fare (its name was Hope)
For frankincense and oil;
But tempests shattered mast and rope
And vain was all its toil.

The fifth Endeavour was by name;
I chartered it for grain;
But on a reef it ran and came
Not back to me again.

Fancy, the sixth, to the sun-lands,
For apes and ivory,
Despatched, was driven upon the sands
And shattered by the sea.

For fruit of peace the seventh, Faith,
To fare I fitted out;
But it encountered storm and scaith
And brought me back but Doubt.

And many another carrack tall,
Which should for me have earned
Rich store, I launched; but of them all
But few to me returned.

Some perished in the seas icebound
And some the corals tore;
And some the world went wandering round
And came again no more.

And some few staggered home again,
Scourged by the scornful gales,
With nought to show for all their pain
But shattered masts and sails.

The ship of Song, of all the pack
Whereon my hopes most high
I built, a freight of dreams brought back,
Which none to-day will buy.

Of all my soul did thus out fit
And forth a-faring sent,
But Resignation now with it
Abides and Sad Content.

With these, the storm though over-frail
To face, unto the end
My harbourage yet I may avail
'Gainst Fortune to defend.

The winds blow East, the winds blow West;
They blow no luck to me;
My ships, henceforth at home we'll rest
And go no more to sea.

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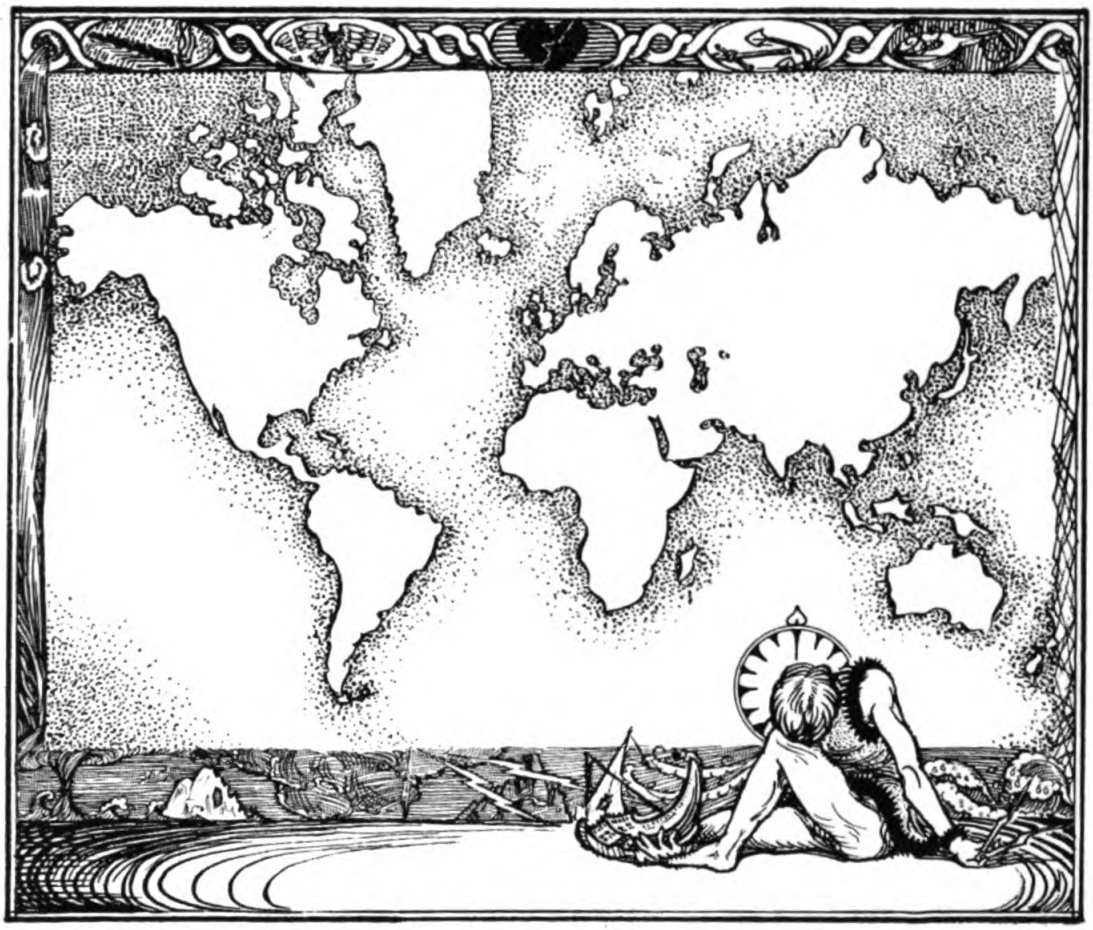

THE SOUL'S VENTURES.

(See p. 77.)

INDEX.

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