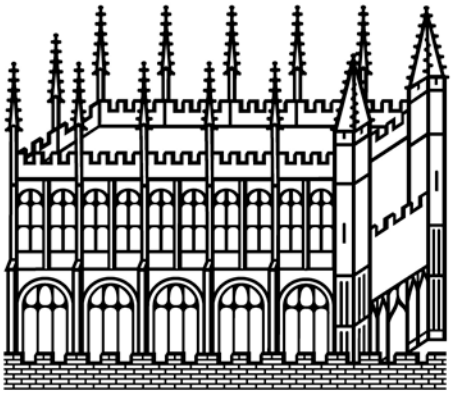

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THE POET'S DIARY

EDITED BY LAMIA

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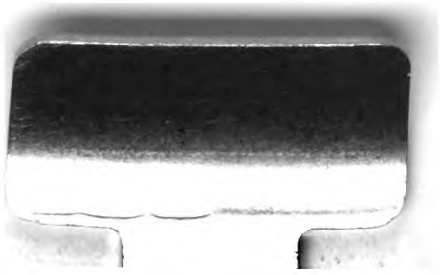

OET'S DIARY

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Life is worth living, not so much for what it gives as for what it suggests.

London
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1904

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DEDICATION

My dear Veronica,

I trust no one needs to be told that, though I may be the Editor of the Poet's Diary, *my labours have not been undertaken without your countenance, nor concluded without your approval. Lest ill-natured persons, if there be such in this amiable world, should associate the statement with the* Permissu Superiorum *seen on the title-page of certain works of dogmatic theology, let me hasten to add that you are so tolerant of all I say and do, that even the sanction you lend me is evidence rather of your indulgence than of my discrimination, which, I have little doubt, has frequently been at fault.*

But I want you to grant me yet one more favour, which is to accept from me the Dedication of this little volume. I owe you so much, and I cast about me in vain for any way of repaying you. Not only have you given me a free entry, at all times and seasons, to the garden that I love, but you have helped to rescue me from the worst fate that can befall any one, as expressed in the opening line of what

Newman declared to be the most beautiful lyric of a great Poet,

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away.

You both have taught me, what Sages in every age, language, and clime have asserted, the superiority of 'the life removed' over one of consuming ambition, idolatrous fashion, and social rivalry. It is to the Poet and you I owe the knowledge of the real value of things, as contrasted with the conventional estimate of them. Renunciation and the Life Removed are one and the same thing; and Renunciation is the oldest doctrine of practical wisdom. In one of not a few passages which the Poet tells me Tennyson has admirably paraphrased from Lucretius, you remember he exclaims:

O purblind race of miserable men
Who take the false for true, the true for false.[1]

If I have learnt to avoid that mistake, you twain have been my tutors; and that is why I ask you to accept this Dedication from,

Yours ever gratefully and tenderly,

LAMIA.

[1] *O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca!*
Qualibus in tenebris . . .
Degitur hoc aevi!

De Rerum Natura. Liber II.

THE POET'S DIARY

EDITOR'S PREFACE

'Do you not think,' said the Poet, as we leaned over the orchard gate that looks out on the avenue of limes beyond, where I had been urging him to allow me to edit and publish selections from his Diary, 'that the world has heard enough of the denizens of "The Garden that I Love," whether at home or abroad; of helpful, methodical Veronica; of your sometimes paradoxical but always entertaining self; of the world-forgetting and he would be glad to think by-the-world-forgot individual you dignify with the name of The Poet; and, finally, of their chronicler whose volumes, though received, I must own, with much

kindly favour, must have exhausted whatever interest was latent in so limited a theme?'

'I must avail myself,' I replied, 'of what I have heard you call the logician's expedient of distinguishing. Of my irrelevant observations I am sure the world must have had more than enough, and possibly it is satiated with our Biographer's horticultural infatuation, more especially since it has been so extensively copied. But I should not wonder if it would tolerate yet more information about Veronica's purchases of apparently valueless, but, as it generally turns out, inestimably precious, articles of the cast-away Antique; and I am certain it would fain know more about *you*. You smile incredulously; but, to show you how unprejudiced I am, let me add that I readily believe it does not desire to form any closer acquaintance with your works; for, as far as the main body of readers is concerned, Literature seems to have fallen on strange times. The novel has ousted in general affection poems of lofty strain and purpose; and politics, pleasure, and gossip, the higher diversions of the mind. Am I wearying you?'

'Not in the least. I always,' he was good enough to say, 'listen to you with pleasure, and

perhaps, most of all, when you indulge in a little playful exaggeration.'

'Well, then, as you may observe, I give away two and perhaps three out of four of our garden-party. But you are still in demand, precisely because little or nothing is known about you. To the amiable applications of the Interviewer you have shown as rigid inhospitality as Goldsmith's "Carinthian boor" to the houseless stranger; and hence the public have not yet ascertained at what hour you rise of a morning and retire at night, whether you take tea or coffee, Quaker Oats or nectar and ambrosia, for breakfast, the precise place, year, month, day, and hour you were born, how and when you write compositions it has not the slightest intention of reading, whether you have ever had what is classically called a boom, and if there now is a slump in your poems; whether you are descended from John of Gaunt and Catherine Swinford, or were born under a haystack, what is the amount of your income, what is your opinion concerning Predestination and Preferential Tariffs; if you have written your own Life, and if you think you will die within a reasonable time, so that present subscribers to the Circulating Libraries may have the pleasure of

reading it when there is nothing better to do; in a word, all those prodigiously diverting things of which an enterprising press is full, and on which, as far as you are personally involved, you have hitherto refused to vouchsafe the smallest information.'

'But, dear Lamia,' he observed, 'you do not suppose that in one's Diary will be found the remotest reference to the utterly unimportant matters you have mentioned?'

'Perhaps not,' I said. 'But when people see the title of my work, they will imagine the contrary. "The Poet's Diary" naturally suggests a sort of *Confessio Amantis*, since Poets have always been supposed to be of a fond, not to say fickle, and, as perhaps Veronica would add, fatuous disposition; and the *Confessio Amantis* of a Poet could not fail to be attractive, since it would tell what the world in these days chiefly wants to know concerning not only the man himself, but necessarily about other people as well.'

'Do you think there are any grounds for the imputation against Poets to which you have just alluded?' he asked.

'Conclusive ones,' I replied. 'Poets, like thrushes, have always been notorious poachers;

and you show your kinship with them by liberating them when you find them under the strawberry nets. You cannot find in your heart to kill a song-bird. Moreover, the Muses are one and all feminine, and apparently Apollo could not get on without nine of them, to say nothing of the Three Graces, of Hebe, who doubtless was perpetually leaving a kiss on the cup of Inspiration, and, were I a more erudite classical scholar, of I daresay several other divine creatures I never heard of.'

'But, my dear Lamia,' he again urged, 'you do not suppose that my Diary will contain any such disclosures as you indicate, even assuming there are any to make?'

'Who shall say?' I answered. 'I am quite sure you will not be intentionally indiscreet. But do you remember once telling me, when I urged you to write your Life, that you had done so already, and that I had read it, to your knowledge, several times, a man's poems being inevitably revelations about himself, however veiled? Your Diary now and then may be equally treacherous. For, as I once observed, and you commended the observation, it is the peculiarity of men to betray their own secrets and keep other people's, as it is

the privilege of women to tell other people's secrets and to keep their own.'

I could see this way of putting it appealed to his sense of humour, since it suggested a kind of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, while at the same time, by reason of that masculine want of penetration regarding certain matters which he shares with the rest of his sex, it did not occur to him that female readers might conceivably be able to disentangle the *Wahrheit* from the *Dichtung*. Finally, I added: 'You doubtless have heard of the lady to whom it was recently observed, "You seem to take a keen interest in Politics?" and who at once rejoined, "I don't know that I do; but I take a very keen interest in Politicians." In the same way, women at least, though they may now take but a lukewarm interest in poetry, at any rate, of the more serious kind, still take a fervid interest in Poets, good, bad, and indifferent, provided these are not indifferent to *them*. Publish the Diary I must. I am absolutely bent on doing so; and *femme le veut, poète le veut.*'

'But think,' he still urged, 'of the passages you will have to suppress, if you show yourself an editor of ordinary discretion.'

'Quite so,' I answered, 'and where this has to

be done, and even where it is wholly unnecessary, I will insert a number of mysterious-looking asterisks, indicating how tantalisingly conscientious I have been; and, if you wish it, Veronica shall read the proofs, in order to satisfy you that I have left nothing contrary to public morals.'

I paused; for, like another eminent personage, intoxicated by my own verbosity, I had half forgotten to whom I was speaking, and imagined for the moment I was addressing our Biographer, whom I love to torment by discourse of the utmost levity; and now I half feared I had defeated my purpose by advancing too far in frivolous dialectic. But the Poet was in one of his indulgent moods; and he only said, as we turned away from the orchard gate over which we had been leaning:

'Very well, my dear, be it as you wish. The Diary, embellished by your editing, may possibly prove a readable book, like another. But I cannot help thinking you have, with your customary humour, somewhat exaggerated the curiosity of the public regarding the more unimportant matters in the life of individuals that are sometimes talked and written about.'

'Is it possible to do so?' I replied. 'Let me cite a fact that has actually occurred. Our Biographer showed me the other day a letter from one of the best-known booksellers in London, to the following effect:

'DEAR SIR—Will you be good enough to tell me who Lamia is? A member of the late Government, who is one of our principal clients, and whom therefore we are anxious to oblige, has asked us to make this inquiry for him. We shall therefore be extremely obliged if you will give us the information we desire.—We are, etc. etc. etc.

Our Biographer is what Dr. Johnson, somewhat less appropriately, declared himself to be, the politest of men, and invariably returns a reply to letters I myself should commit, unanswered, to the nearest waste-paper basket. On this occasion he did adopt the latter course. But now you are in a better position for judging if I indulge in any exaggeration of the nature and extent of prevailing public curiosity.'

'Alack!' he exclaimed, in one of those sudden outbursts that, though so rare, seem so natural to him, and that once led a scholarly statesman[1] to

[1] [The late Lord Carnarvon, who described how he and the Poet had addressed an open-air gathering of rapt bucolics from a rustic waggon in the middle of a meadow to the usual accompaniment of collective enthusiasm.

say, in my presence, 'If I had not read his writings I should have thought speaking was his natural bent,'—'alack! if one could be only a *nominis umbra*, and no one want to know what particular vile integument of flesh imprisons one's mind! No one is worth inquiring about until he becomes more or less legendary, and inquiry concerning petty details fruitless. Happy Chaucer! Happy Spenser! Still happier Shakespeare! About the first and the second we know comparatively little outside their works, and of the last next to nothing. Whether he was tall or short, what was the colour of his eyes, what his bodily bearing, who and what like was his wife, what were the chief love passages of his life, had he a Veronica to admonish, or a Lamia to stimulate him, we know not, and shall never know. About the great Athenian Tragedians we are equally ill informed, and whether there was a Homer or not who shall say? Horace has given us some corporeal particulars about himself, but

When I lately reminded the Poet of the graceful remark of his cultured fellow orator, he only expressed his distrust, and almost his disdain, of popular oratory, as though he was thinking of the expansion to which it has attained of late, saying, 'Platform and even Parliamentary speeches are not infrequently made more by the audience for the speaker than by the speaker for the audience. Any one who has a copious vocabulary can talk electrifying nonsense indefinitely. The gift of public speaking, like the gift of writing mellifluous poetry, is a sorry and dangerous one, unless inspired, sustained, and restrained, by "Reason in her most exalted mood."'—*Lamia.*]

Virgil and Lucretius, on that subject, remain silent; and their contemporaries, as far as I know, are equally reserved concerning them. Was Beatrice a Florentine maiden, or only a Beatific Vision? When Dante was driven from Florence, what was the exact itinerary of his exile? Did Laura live in the glowing loveliness of Provence, and was she a Provençal rose, with or without a thorn, on Petrarch's breast, or only one of those "creatures of the mind" that Byron, of whom we know far too much, and rummagers for scandal are perpetually labouring to discover more, says "are not of clay"? Unfortunate Shelley, with his attendant ghosts, carnal enough once, of Harriet and Mary! Yet more unfortunate Keats, with his displeasing love-letters to an inexorable coquette! The world is welcome, and perhaps entitled, to a man's thoughts, if he have any; to his poems, if they happen to be beautiful and wholesome; to his wisdom, if he be a sage; to his wit and humour, should he blend in it kindliness with true knowledge of, and deep tenderness for, human nature. But what he eats, drinks, and avoids, when he rises, how long he takes to dress, what he thinks of his critics, about whom I was invited only yesterday to express an opinion

in print—"Pah! Give me an ounce of civet to sweeten my imagination!"'

He had been pacing the gravel backward and forward, as is his habit, suiting the action to the word, when he gives free rein to the impulse of his impromptus; and perhaps it is then one knows him best, save in his writings, which I know proceed from the very soul of spontaneous sincerity. But, checking himself as suddenly as he had given way to his reprobation, he returned to the white gate, looked at me with a smile of indulgent humour, and added:

'But remember, Lamia, since you insist on editing my Diary, two grave misfortunes have happened to me in life, of which, otherwise, I have no complaint to make. I was born in a respectable family, and then I married into another of the same blameless character.'

'True,' I replied, 'and so acquired a bad habit of behaving rather too properly. But you will allow that, since my adoption into the polite circle of the garden that we love, I have done my best to counteract that drawback; and I will do the same by your Diary.'

So now to work with my editorial labours, with the fruits of which, if successful, I hope to

be able to give Veronica a number of priceless Apostle spoons; and, if I fail, I shall at least be able to figure as a deserving but unfortunate authoress, entitled to apply to the Poet for assistance from his private 'Benevolent Literary Fund,' which, at my instance, is replenished by contributions from generous enthusiasts all over the world, in exchange for Autographs which, with his usual thoughtlessness, he for a long time gave away gratuitously.

LAMIA.

THE GARDEN THAT I LOVE,
The Month of Roses, 1903.

THE POET'S DIARY

I

Rome, December 190–.—Once again in Rome! Forty years have been added to the diaries of the Past since I first wrote the words, 'In Rome at last!' Youth is impatient; and though, looking back, I think one reached the Eternal City neither too late nor too soon, one seemed to have had to wait so long, so long, before making the pilgrimage that had been from boyhood the most cherished of visions. 'And why are you going to Rome?' was asked by those who, not unnaturally perhaps, thought they were entitled to put the most searching of questions. What could one answer, unless one had broken into enthusiastic rhetoric that would have sounded ridiculous, save that I was

going to Rome, because—well, because Rome is Rome? 'And for how long?' 'For a period as yet uncertain, but for six months I should think.' 'And your future? You can scarcely have come into a fortune, or we should have heard of it; and there is nothing to be made in Rome, is there, except what are called converts? You must have some reason for so strange and reckless a step.' I remember I replied, with the grave levity that gets one out of so many difficulties, 'Well, since you press me so hard, I am going to Rome because the one ambition of my life is to be Pope.' Am I to set down here the real reason? Lamia says I must. Some people are born rebels against mere conventional ideas, and I fear the writer of this Diary was one of them; and, though in earlier years outwardly submitting, save with occasional outbursts of insurrection, to the usual discipline imposed on the young by those who cherish correct ideas, one inwardly refused assent to them, and sometimes hated them with all the fervour of boyhood. I have heard that once, he being then six years of age, when told that he was to figure in some social ceremonial or other, he exclaimed passionately, 'I wish I had never been born!' which brought on him a

sermon of the most austere sort. Even before that age, he used to creep out of his little crib, as soon as the nursemaids were sound asleep, and steal bare-foot to the window to see the moon rise, a simple enough proceeding, but not without its significance, I suppose. He cannot bring himself to pursue that childish theme; but, leaping over many years, he remembers sitting afront the English Channel one brilliant autumn day, with several algebraic formulæ before him, since he was preparing for an examination then well in view, and suddenly composing the following quatrain:

> The sun is shining on the roofs,
> The boats are tossing in the bay,
> And I am labouring at the proofs
> Of X contained in N times A.

That was a *reductio ad absurdum* with a vengeance; and the vengeance followed swift on reaching it. He closed the book of formulæ with a bang, leaped to his feet, felt that he had broken every chain that enslaved him, and had won his liberty; and from that moment to this he has never looked back. But what he verily felt cannot be described in prose. His feelings were akin to those of Winckelmann, when weighing the for and against

outwardly accepting admission to the Roman Church at the hands of the Papal Nuncio :

> And to think
> As I sit starving here, body and soul,
> Are silvery fountains flashing in the sun
> Of Rome's blue spaciousness ! Thuswise, without.
> Within, in silent corridor and hall,
> On their pentelic pedestals the Gods,
> Mute in imperishable marble, stand,
> Abstract of power and passion purified
> By dominance of beauty ; their aloft
> Unwrinkled foreheads rapt in starlike calm,
> Rebuking man's perplexity ; Pagan gods
> Robed in majestic nakedness, adored
> By Christian Pontiffs, 'mid remorseful Saints
> Radiant and unrepentant in their joy ;
> Gods, demigods, and heroes, pliant nymphs
> In grasp of sinewy satyrs, Goddesses
> Flowered from the foam, or fathered by the brain,
> Winsome or wise, for pleasure or for rule,
> Teeming divinities ; all there ! there—there—
> In universal Rome !

Thus, many years later, one conceived Winckelmann as feeling; and that was exactly what I felt at the moment. And *that* it was which caused my first visit to 'universal Rome.'

. . . . .

Lamia's reason for coming to Rome, for it is

Lamia who has incited us to come here now, was not quite in order to become Pope; though, familiar with the foregoing reminiscence, she avers such might have been her main motive, had not historical researches of the most laborious kind convinced her that there never was such a person as Pope Joan. I was frequently asked, on returning to England after that first winter and spring among the Seven Hills, and few people asked anything else, unless it were about the Roman hotels, concerning which I could supply no information, since I did not stay in any of them, 'Did you not get the Roman fever?' To which inquiry I replied, with, I fear, the same solemn flippancy as before, 'Yes, and I have had it ever since; and I hope I shall lose it only with life.' Lamia declares she caught it from me long ago, adding that it is the most agreeable disease in the world, and has to be treated on the last new therapeutic principle (though what of new there is in it one scarcely sees, if one remembers the old proverb of 'a hair of the dog that bit you'), viz. that like cures like, and that the only medical adviser to whom one can say, with Romeo, 'O true apothecary!' is one that prescribes microbes of the malady itself.

I tell Lamia, however, rather unkindly perhaps, that she can never have the Roman Fever as badly as I once had it, seeing that there is now so much less than there used to be of the Rome that caused it. In a slightly altered sense one may echo the words Byron told Hobhouse he heard the pitcher-bearing columnar-throated peasant-girls plaintively chanting round the walls of Honorius, '*Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più com' era prima!*' Alas! Rome is no longer what it was! The Gods, according to the Athenian sage, sell all things at a price; and the price they asked for '*Italia Libera ed Una*' and '*Roma Capitale*' was a heavy one. Augustus rebuilt Rome of marble. Kings of Italy, good honest constitutional *Galantuomini* I have no doubt, have rebuilt, or suffered it to be rebuilt, of shoddy bricks and already crumbling mortar, made the rough places smooth, stripped the sanctuaries of Time of their nature-woven vestments, substituted the side-arms of the *Guardia Civile* for the *fasces* of the Lictor, the fugitive sheets of evening newspapers for tablets of brass, steam-trams for processions along the Triumphal Way, and, if the whole truth must be told, Venus Meretrix for the Sacred Flame of the Vestals. I no more complain of these things

than did Horace when he described Time as *edax rerum*, or Virgil when he exclaimed, '*Fuit Ilium!*' But renovated Rome no longer resembles the Rome of Piranesi; though his imaginative reproductions, in the eighteenth century, of the battered walls, prostrate columns, desecrated altars, vegetation-robed amphitheatres, headless statues, and protruding but as yet undisinterred Forum of the Eternal City, still faithfully represented them thirty years back.

> Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
> Matted and massed together,

where are they? Lamia knows most of the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* by heart, as did I when I first came here. But I found all that Byron had described. She will look all but in vain for it; and, by the mutability of things which he so magnificently chanted, his noblest poem seems to have lost much of the realistic foundation on which Imagination rears its majestic superstructure. There lies before me a copy of the *Essay on Man*, published about the time of Pope's death, that belonged to my grandfather, who, shocking bad literary critic but uncompromising moralist, after the manner of

our race, as he was, declared the line in that poem,

An honest man's the noblest work of God,

to be the finest in the language. The frontispiece is a representation of the Rome of the time, with a broken pillar whereon is engraved *Capitoli immobile saxum*, a headless warrior on a pedestal inscribed *Viro Immortali*, and tumbled fragments of ruin bearing the words *Roma Eterna*. Withal, Rome still remains Eternal in the sense then ascribed to it. If a man was deemed one of the Immortals then, immortal he still is, not necessarily because he deserves so to be held, but because Rome thought so. The Capitol is yet where it was, and is built on and buttressed by the Cyclopean walls of an epoch wholly legendary.

How leisurely one then came to Rome! I remember bidding a willing farewell to what we should now call a slow train at Geneva, lingering along the Savoy side of Lake Leman in the imaginary company of Rousseau, Saint-Preux, Héloïse, and Madame de Warens, never quite under their spell, but not yet quite liberated from their unwholesome enchantments, and recalling some of the wisdom of *Emile*, notably of the

Savoyard Vicar, and likewise some of its mischievous sciolism. How appropriate is the verdict of a French moralist on the characters of Rousseau and Voltaire, the other chief Gallic man of letters associated with Geneva and its neighbourhood, 'When I think of one I prefer the other.' But Voltaire has not impregnated Ferney with himself as the southern bank of Lake Geneva is impregnated with the 'self-torturing sophist,' as Byron designated Rousseau. How virile, alike in his melancholy and his mockery, is the English Poet, compared with these two Frenchmen! Betake yourself to the other bank of the lake, or sail upon its now smooth now turbulent surface, and the air 'breathes, burns' of the never-to-be-satisfied-in-time Pilgrim of Eternity. It is an abiding resource to be able to summon at once to the memory passages from a Poet inspired by the very scenes on which one is gazing. No poetry is thoroughly appreciated until it is known by heart, and that perhaps is one of the reasons why years are required for the Appellate Jurisdiction of Time to assign poets their just place in the Aristocracy of Letters. The far-and-wide wanderings of Byron through lands familiar by name, but not yet rendered trite and almost vulgar by

the 'personally-conducted' footsteps of our modern Barbarians, gave him splendid opportunities for descriptive, pathetic, and majestic verse. The plains of Waterloo, the castled crags of Rhineland, the lofty and aloof snow-peaks, the companionable lakes, the solemn solitudes, whispering pine-forests, fearlessly leaping cataracts, frantic thunderstorms, and saffron-dappled meadows of Switzerland, were then materials awaiting some master muse; and in Italy, Greece, Albania, he found equally fertile themes to set to sonorous verse-scalings and cadences. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire had found an adequate historian in Gibbon's grandiose prose. But Poetry had yet to add the spell of Northern meditation and melancholy to the prose epitaph on its Imperial Past.

How what one writes retrospectively takes its character and pace from the time and the conditions one is recalling! Forty years ago one journeyed to Rome very leisurely, no matter how impatient one might have been before starting to get there; and I observe that the reminiscences craved for by Lamia are beginning at pretty much the same loitering rate. One has been to Italy so frequently since then that, if one is to be accurate,

it needs a conscientious call on one's memory to be quite sure which route it was that first brought one there. But now there come back to me Vévey, Chillon, Montreux, Villeneuve, as yet unmarred by hotels, *pensions*, and tramways, mere hamlets lying and dozing like weary wayfarers along the eastern end of the lake, and the unseen lapping of the water against the shore in the vanished twilight, as I waited to mount the Rhone Valley up to Sion and the Pass of the Simplon. How vividly I feel the night passed at Sion!

> All is still in the little town,
> Now the belfry sounds eleven.
> All is still, and the moon looks down
> On the snow-peaks far and the near ones brown,
> From an untroubled heaven.

With like distinctness can I recall the morning walk up to Château Tourbillon, name long afterwards imaginatively employed, lying on the closely nibbled grass, and gazing across the wide plain that stretches below the castle in the direction in which one was thus slowly wending. The only living occupant of the diligence beside the driver and myself was a marmoset, labelled like luggage, for Genoa; and there are worse companions on a journey than a silent one. The cheerful carillon

of the horses' bells, the occasional crack of the driver's whip, the swift zigzagging down the hills, the slow ascents, where one got down and gathered heather and harebells to the humming of mountain bees and those 'unsown flowers of the air,' mountain butterflies, the fragrance, the freshness, the freedom of it all, how different it was from the summary '*En voiture, messieurs et dames!*' the '*Pronto, Partenza!*' of these later days, the whistling, the screaming, the smoke, the stench, the grime, the martinetism, the close packing with rather too many of one's fellow-creatures, their guide-books, and no doubt kindly but tedious chatter, to 'kill the time,' that, in older and simpler conditions, never seemed too long.

Shortly after traversing the *col* of the Pass, the lofty landscape seemed to be gradually growing softer, warmer, and more human. The crags overhead looked less awful, their fronts less furrowed and deterrent, and the slopes below them greener and kindlier. There were fewer forests of aloof-looking pines, there were open spaces cheered by vine and walnut trees; the belfries crowning the hamlet houses of prayer were more graceful, the peasant folk less churlish, and saluted one as one passed along; and then, suddenly,

there was a tall granite wayside Cross, on the transverse arms of which was engraven, in deep-cut letters, the magical word, ITALIA. I trembled for joy ; and then, as one does from a momentary plunge into chill water, glowed all over with the after-warmth of that exhilarating word. More silvery sounded the music-making bells round the necks of the diligence horses, that tossed their heads for pleasure, as much as to say, 'This is something like a land.' There were walnut and Spanish chestnut trees everywhere, whose trunks and boughs were what sketchers call full of drawing. It was the season of truce between Autumn and one can hardly call it Winter, but rather the decline of the year, and sun and wind seemed to have cried a halt to change, and everything was still. Time seemed to have tempered waning beauty by a heightened and almost hectic colour ; and lo ! Lago Maggiore lying smooth and soundless in the downward distance, the Borromean Islands floating on its surface, and little Baveno, for little it then was, gazing on them from the shore. The eyes of the peasant girls glowed with a more tender and amorous light, the ripple of their hair gleamed glossier and more ample, they watched one approaching with a fearlessly familiar

yet vestal gaze, they saluted one graciously as one passed, and followed with their sympathising eyes as we zigzagged swiftly and merrily down the mountain road. The very names of the hamlets were softer, 'syllables writ on satin,' even the more majestic ones, like Domo d' Ossola, retaining something of the *morbidezza*—translate the word for me, if you can—that ever underlies the Italian tongue. I have sometimes thought that the Italians, living in a land of hill and valley distances, came to end all their words with a vowel, because vowel sounds carry farther than do consonants, prolonging themselves thus through the air. There was one little Inn at Baveno, and I was bound for it, and on either side of it were a few primitive shops, if you like to call them so, under solid low arcades, and these were all now coming into view. Then the ear grew sensitive as the eye, and I heard the Ave Maria bells ringing :

> Ave Maria ! 'Tis the hour of prayer :
> Ave Maria ! 'Tis the hour of love.

For Baveno was praying. Out of the cloister of a little church there came, as the wheels of the diligence grated on the rough stony pavement of its one street, a Procession chanting the Litany of

Loreto, and carrying the Banner of the 'Consoler of the Afflicted.' The beauty of Roman Catholic ceremonials is that they not only comfort the believing Faithful, but appeal to those likewise who do not accept the dogmas of the Roman Church, awakening in them, so they are not polemical fanatics, a sentiment of pious sympathy. Who could refuse to join in that simple Lakeside hymn :

Mystical Rose ! Pray for us !

Walter Scott, the most staunch of Protestants, could not refuse, as witness his lyric, so exquisitely set to music by Schubert. Byron could not refuse, even in his defiant progress along *Don Juan*, when he wrote :

Ave Maria ! blessed be the hour,
The time, the clime, the spot where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.

One was too young in those days to be exacting in things material, and I only remember I found the little inn very comfortable, though the fastidious

youth of to-day would probably think otherwise of it, if it still existed. But it has long since vanished, and been replaced by a Grand Hotel, and another, and another, and another, all with equally flaring and flaunting designations, ill according with the unostentatious lake, the immutable mountains, and the *Isola dei Pescatori*, seemingly but an arrow-shot from the shore.

The morrow was the First of November, the Feast of *Tutt' i Santi*, and, after assisting at a portion of the early devotion of the peasant folk of the place with the same strange feeling of sympathising aloofness as that stirred by the vesper chants of the preceding evening, I made silent signal for a boat, and said I wanted to be rowed to Laveno. '*E molto lontano, signore!* It's a very long way, sir!'

'I suppose it is,' I answered. 'But you are men enough for that, surely.'

'*Altro!* That we are, sure enough,' they said promptly; their observation about the distance being only a delicate, roundabout way of introducing the question of remuneration. That was soon arranged, for in those days they who rendered service in Italy had not learnt covetous exorbitance, and I had no mind to offer less for what seemed

so little already. Even yet, though Italian boatmen and drivers will still ask you what or whom it is you want to see at the place you have told them to take you to, the question is not put from vulgar curiosity, but from a certain human desire to enter into your purposes. Moreover, it leads the way to friendly discourse, which they like best of all things in the world. So my oarsmen inquired of me, as soon as we had settled down in the boat and were being smoothly rowed over the smooth water, what I was in search of at Laveno. I answered that I wanted to see Sir James Hudson, an English diplomatist long since passed away, but whom Italian patriots still remember as one of those who lent a quiet but helpful hand to the shaping of *Italia Una e Libera.* I did not add that I wanted also to see a fresco by Luini. How well I remember being taken when I was about sixteen to the Royal Academy, whose annual Exhibition was then held in Trafalgar Square, feeling, I am afraid, somewhat insensible to the merits of what I saw there, and being addressed with the reproach, 'Evidently you do not care for pictures.' Two years later I strayed, alone, into the National Gallery, much smaller and less representative then than now, and was spell-bound. So now I was

going *molto lontano* to see one picture by Bernardo Luini, reward enough in case I did not find the Minister. And thus it fell out; for he had gone back the previous day to Turin, then Capital of so much of Italy as was yet under the sceptre of Victor Emmanuel I. It was not till late in the twilight that I was back at the little inn at Baveno; and, when a fire of chestnut logs was lighted after dinner against the chill of the autumn evening, a small group of elderly English ladies, then as now generally to be found lingering on in the smaller Italian lakeside inns, betrayed a curiosity somewhat less pleasing than that of my boatmen in the morning. After a few skirmishing inquiries, the purport of which I at first scarce surmised, their anxiety to acquire useless information drove them to put a leading question, and ask whether I was the new *attaché* appointed to the English Legation at Turin. Then it was that I discerned the drift of previous inquiries concerning my day's excursion, its goal, and its result. The inquiry was answered in the negative, whereupon interest in me, I was glad to observe, began to wane. I awoke next morning to an ideal Saint Luke's Summer. Cloud was there none over the hills, wind was there none in the air, ripple was there

none on the water, but only a sort of vague, unmoving, silvery atmosphere, autumn's meditative haze, which made the Borromean Islands seem to hover over rather than to float on the quiescent lake ; a day expressly made and provided by Fortuna Virilis for the expedition up the chestnut-tenanted hills I had been meditating. I chose an unimportunate guide, less as such than for the sake of having a companion I could talk or remain silent with as the humour took me, and in order to have opportunities of educating myself in colloquial Italian. Many people, and nearly all travellers, seem to think they can by words enable you to see the outward aspect of the countries through which they have passed. I confess I think otherwise, just as I have always felt the futility of novelists in their endeavours to present to their readers the facial aspect of their heroine. The poet may, by the witchery of verbal music, thus employing two of the Arts at once, throw you into the state, as the phrase is, so that your vision may approximate to his. But only he can do that through the medium of language, thanks to the subtle power of intercommunication of which he alone has the secret. And thus it is that of that long, lovely rippleless day I remember

only having a frank, manly, charmingly mannered peasant companion, of his suddenly exclaiming, *Ecco! Lago d' Orte*, and there the diminutive Lake lay amethystine below, set in emerald meadows. But athwart the twisting mule-tracks, up and adown which we trudged unweariedly hour after hour, the *funghi, Anglicè* agarics, which with nut-brown loaves form the staple food of thousands of stalwart subalpine mountaineers, were more than ready for the gathering, and fallen walnut leaves lay black, while chestnut foliage of more than every Phrygian dye hung overhead in motionless layers, now curtaining, now almost obstructing the path. I daresay it was that day of Summer's dethronement and Autumn's accession that prompted, many a year later, the lines :

> The Autumn, thoughtful Autumn,
> Who does not know it well,
> When the leaf turns brown, and the mast drops down,
> And the chestnut splits its shell ;
> When we muse on the days that have gone before,
> And the days that will follow after,
> When the grain lies deep on the winnowing floor,
> And the plump gourd hangs from the rafter.
>
> . . . . . .

So long as the last days of Summer, according

to Saint Luke, followed each other in uneventful succession, so long, though never quite forgetting that I was a pilgrim to Rome, I lingered among the talkative old ladies at Baveno, and the silent hills behind and the speechless lake afront it. The first I saw only of an evening, for I was brushing the dew away, though not with hasty feet, before they were down of a morning, and took my chance of finding a mid-day meal of one sort or another in some primitive *osteria*. Epicureanism in food is not, or was not wont to be, the foible of youth; and a couple of hard-boiled eggs, a hunch of rustic bread, and a flask of *vino del paese*, shared with genial hosts, were good enough for one who had not left school long enough to have forgotten the disdain even of Falernian-loving Horace for Persian apparatus. It may be that, with memory enchanted by distance, I remember over-vividly and estimate too highly one meal especially partaken of on the *Isola dei Pescatori*. I believe the luxury I am going to mention is now as crowdedly sought for as once whitebait was, and, for anything I know to the contrary, still is, consumed at Greenwich, or were maids-of-honour at Richmond. But of one thing I feel sure. The dainty dish then set

before me is no longer as carefully prepared as it was then. Sitting-room in the nowadays sense was there none, though there were plenty of seats in the whatever-you-like-to-call-it where dwelt the happy family whose acquaintance I made that day, and room for me was promptly found among them. Such dark, rippling hair! Such radiant eyes! Such richly coloured cheeks, such bow-shaped lips, such faultless teeth, brawny arms, ample busts, incessant talk, and welcoming smiles! And what busy dark-stained fingers as they deftly peeled the newly fallen walnuts! On the table before them were small bowls, holding in various depths of fulness pale-coloured, transparent liquid. How pleased they seemed to see me, father, mother, and beautiful daughters! Had I come far? Was I not hungry? Should they not fry for me some lake perch in the fresh walnut oil, for such it was? They liked Englishmen so much, and they loved England, for it was helping forward the making of Italy. Such perch I never ate before or since, nor was I ever in more delightful company. Veronica, who knows Italy so well, always says she can see how they 'canoodled' me, whatever that may mean; but it sounds uncommonly like what they did. I was young and took no heed of the

morrow, and neither did they. We had never been together before; we should never be together again; and, since I as yet spoke their tongue but brokenly, they had to help me out, and this necessitated, did it not, a certain amount of proximity and merry laughter, followed by consoling explanations, and the blind God knows what not, and all with the approbation of *il Babbo*, and to the delight of *la Mámma*, who looked on smilingly, and knew exactly what it was all worth. And when I was fain forced to go, I told them I was enamoured of them all; whereupon they lifted up their siren voices, and averred they one and all felt *similmente*, and I was so *gentile;* and I declared they were *belline*, and *carine*, and I should like to pass the rest of my days with them. And then, with rustling kirtles, they accompanied me to the primitive landing-stage, and with glittering eyes followed the receding boat; and when I still could see their Juno-moulded forms, but their Olympian eyes no more, they broke into a song the notes of which reached me like a far-off carillon, but all I could catch of the words were, 'Addio, mio bel, addio!' 'Amore,' and again 'Amore,' and 'Non ti scordar! Addio!' And I sat in the boat somewhat sadly, and thought how delightful

life might be, if it were only a little different from what it really is.

> But Summer days, like happiest fairy story
> That ever of love and love's crowned longings breathed,
> Sadden to close, and slowly-fading glory
> Of dell, and glade, and runnel meadow-sheathed,
> And breadths of bracken green round beeches hoary,
> Die, and to memory only are bequeathed.

And so it befell the days of Saint Luke's Summer on Lago Maggiore that I have been trying to recall ; and, loud above late Autumn gusts and pelting of mountain rain, I again heard the august name of Rome. How it rained in Turin ! How, for three nights and days it rained without respite at Milan ! I read, for the first time, by blazing subalpine logs, *I Promessi Sposi*, still the most classical, and therefore the one most likely the longest to endure, of Italian prose romances ; long after the pornographic pretentiousness of later days is ignored by periods of better literary taste than the present. I was beginning to read the more simple, straightforwardly written Italian books with tolerable comfort, and I remember that, at Genoa, where the narrow streets and passages were running with water, I bought and read an Italian translation of *Les Misérables* that had just appeared.

I did not want to have my first sight of Rome till this generally expected spell of Autumn wet had passed away, as it shortly did. Then I took boat to Cività Vecchia, and thence started, behind jingling bells and whip rhythmically sounding, for the Imperial City.

But dusk had fallen before I reached it, and so it mattered little that I entered by the Porta Aurelia, perhaps the least impressive of the many approaches to Rome; and I was being driven, swinging and swaying on ill-fitted wheels, all making a separate track for themselves, over the unevenly paved, scarcely lighted streets of the Trastevere. I could just see the colossal outlines of Saint Peter's and the Castle of Sant' Angelo looming through the twilight, and in the dark narrow ways here and there a figure with a cloak flung across from shoulder to shoulder and carefully crossing the mouth, making one feel as if the stiletto-bearing emissaries of Roderigo or Cæsar Borgia had come to life again, and were ready to strike the assigned victim, and then vanish into the darkness. But within an hour of the diligence driving into the Piazza di Spagna, and drawing up at the doors of the Albergo di Londra, the moon had risen, and it was the November moon at full.

Do you ask if I went to the Coliseum? Yes, and alone, yet not alone; for Commodus and Christian Martyrs accompanied me, and I heard in its mysterious and majestic solitude the roar of underground lions hotly breathing for their prey, and grave Roman Senators and pitiless Roman matrons applauding Dacian gladiators as they advanced, retreated, rallied, and struck at each other's lives. And as I wended innward, and met ever and anon a batch of French Zouaves patrolling the deserted streets, I found myself murmuring to the Night the exquisite line Ovid makes Paris address to Helen:

Accipe me lectu, nocte silente, tuo,

and then slept the sleep of the weary traveller.

Awaking somewhat late, and flinging back the *persiane* from the window of my room on the topmost storey of the hotel where I had sought shelter till finding quarters more congenial, I beheld—well, what many years later I strove to describe:

The sluggish mountains, donning crowns of gold,
Uprose to greet the Morning. O'er the plain
Of blight and wreck a roseate wave was rolled.
Glowed in the sunlight aqueduct and fane,
No longer ruined. Amorous Gods of old
Would soon, it seemed, their ancient seat regain,

And rule once more from oracle and shrine
A Realm for mortal Empire too divine.

Rome, Rome itself, bathed in auroral sheen,
Its domes, towers, columns, fanned by Volscian gales,
Scanned from above, one well indeed might ween
A sunlit sea flecked with Ausonian sails.
Here, sportive fountains leaped, and laughed between ;
There, bright-trunked stone-pines hung their sombre veils
'Twixt earth and sky, and cracks in temples hoar
But dimples seemed, wherewith they smiled once more.[1]

[1] *The Human Tragedy*, IV., lxxxii., lxxxiv.

II

A ROMAN REVERIE

Rome, 186–.—Lost in a labyrinth of leafage, on the topmost tier of the Flavian Amphitheatre, harbouring no dread lest some Lectius should come and tell me to quit a position in excess of my rank,[1] I am, as far as I can perceive, the only occupant, this Lenten afternoon, of seats that once accommodated eighty-seven thousand spectators, and could still surely leave at their ease one-half that number. *Sedere primo solitus in gradu semper*, which, with permission of the Roman epigrammatist, we will modestly translate—'Accustomed as I am to sit down in whatever row of ruin takes my fancy'—I have to-day selected my seat well

[1] 'Lectius ecce venit, sta, fuge, curre, late!'—MARTIAL.

up among the plebeians. Indeed, is not this where the *pullati*, or common folk with dirty togas, used to huddle together? though, be it added, whatever Englishmen take or forget to take to Italy, they at least wear a transalpine decency of garb. Yet it is but a surmise, after all, that I am the only lingerer in this vast and universal theatre, wherein the performance has for centuries been over. No one can perceive me; of that I feel quite sure. I am hidden by the I know not how many hundred different plants that wind, and bird, and insect, have sown there. Nay, even denser covering than that, the undisturbed growth of years, conceals me from observation, and I need no Tyrrhenian sailor from Antium to come and pull the *velarium* over my head against the glow of the Roman sun. But if I am as lost to observation as an owl in an ivy-bush, how can one know but that other eremitically minded pilgrims have not likewise drawn the cowl of the Coliseum over their heads, and are not meditating somewhere in this vast soaring circle of tangled brushwood? Six acres of ruin are a large allowance for one person; and what does it matter, so long as my brother recluses, if such there be, are equally invisible, and maintain a quiet

demeanour in this silent and stupendous solitude? Much about the same time that Vespasian laid the foundations of his gladiatorial arena, he projected an equally imposing edifice as a Temple of Peace. It soon disappeared under the waves of a warlike time. But, for all that, human combats have long subsided, and the Flavian Amphitheatre itself is now the real *Templum Pacis*.

I fear I have been imitating Vespasian in a small way; for was he not transferred from Rome to the East by Nero, for having fallen asleep during the reading of one of the poems of that sensitive author? and I must own to having had a siesta in the afternoon sunshine-shadow of my comfortable seclusion, though Dante's page lies open before me. I had read five cantos of the *Purgatorio* before the exposition of sleep came over me, and I nodded at the lines:—

> O frate mio, ciascuna è cittadina
> D' una vera città; ma tu vuoi dire
> Che vivesse in Italia peregrina.

When one has once reached Rome, one feels like a pilgrim who has got to the end of his journey, and is in no hurry to take the backward road. More than ever, when the Forty Days of

Lent have come, does one recognise the special fitness of the Eternal City as a penitential abode. Even Cardinals have had ashes laid upon their foreheads, and been reminded that they too are but dust. *Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.* Who is likely to forget that —in Rome? The *Apollo*, the *Argentina*, the *Valle*, and even the *Capranica* with its *Marionetti*, are closed. There are placards at the street corners, bearing the signature of the Cardinal-Vicar, forbidding *ristoratori* to serve their customers with flesh-meat on abstinence days, unless they do so in private apartments; that all the world may see Rome is the capital of the Christian World. If they transgress, sharp penalty awaits them. Prayers and church ceremonies are more frequent than ever; but the organ everywhere is silent. No native Romans entertain during Lent, and only the more irreverent strangers. The bulk of these last departed as soon as the final Carnival *confetti* were thrown, and the last *moccolo* extinguished, for Naples, for Sicily, for Florence, and will not be back before Holy Week, or perhaps not till the Church fills the air with jubilant music, chants Alleluias, and exclaims *Resurrexit sicut dixit.* Meanwhile, the few who

have remained have the walls of Honorius or the knoll of Antemnæ wholly to themselves. When the beautiful but sometimes depressing desolation of the City itself waxes too heavy to bear, why not resort to the saddle, and try to out-gallop the untiring stride of the Claudian Aqueduct? The untilled ground has broken into spontaneous flowers. You canter on violets, anemones, and asphodels. Clouds are there none, but the Alban hills make their own soft shadows. To the tinkle of sheep-bells and the melodious eddies of mounting skylarks, you ride towards, but seem to get no nearer to, Tivoli, snugly nestled in a dimple of the Sabine Mountains. How far one has to go, to get beyond the blight of sadness radiated by Rome across the Campagna! The fig-tree flourishes in the soil where Frascati preserves the traditions of philosophic Tusculum. What woods are more umbrageous than those of Lariccia, what vineyards better tilled than those of Monte Giove, what olives strike deeper into the rich brown clods than those that slope down towards Porto d'Anzio? It would be right pleasant to make for these, but if you are to be back in Rome by night-fall you must turn your horse's head and ride straight for the arches of the Acqua Felice.

What a sundown! What a twilight! Is that verily a city, or only a mirage of the imagination? The bells of Ave Maria testify to reality. Shoals of young priests are hurrying homeward. Rome is older by one day more.

This afternoon, however, I am too lazy to quit my curving arbour, in which botanists tell me upward of four hundred different plants find ample foothold. It must be these that make the air smell so sweet; here where, in the days of Domitian, fountains used to fling scented sprays of extract of saffron and crimson wine. What a barbarous refinement! A worthy accompaniment, truly, to the slaughter, at one sitting, of nine thousand beasts. What would Cicero have said to such a sacrifice, he who several years previously, and before the Flavian Amphitheatre had yet risen from the ground, asked indignantly, 'Quæ potest homini esse polito delectatio, quum aut homo imbecillis a violentissima bestia laniatur, aut præclara bestia venabulo transverberatur?'

Are the eighty-seven thousand spectators hurrying to that spectacle once more? I hear the sound of human voices swelling hitherward; and, as I peep through the leafy loopholes of my ruinous retreat, I descry a long procession of

human figures slowly and sinuously pouring into the arena. But it is headed neither by Flamen nor Lictor ; and where the fasces and the eagle would once have towered, I discern a more humble and more sacred emblem. The pace of the procession is slow and solemn, not impulsive nor triumphant, as it defiles from underneath the arches where the imperial athlete once was hailed with servile acclamations. What are they chanting ? No hymn of triumph surely. Rather may it be the lines of Luigi Biondi,

> Santa religion ! gli aspri costumi
> Tu raddolcisti, e fai stille di pianto
> Versar dove correan di sangue fiumi,

so appropriate to the scene and the hour. It seems strange that not till the middle of last century did it occur to any of the successors of Peter to rescue from the desecration of indifference a spot saturated, one may say without hyperbole, with the blood of the martyrs. Everybody knows that earthquake, fire, and inundation, competed with each other for its destruction. Guiscard's troopers stalled themselves there, and the Frangipani transformed it into a fortress. When less turbulent times supervened, it became by tacit

consent the common quarry of the more powerful Roman Houses. When for a time friendly enough with each other, they held tilt and tourney within it, and then Mystery-Plays restored for a time its theatrical character. Sixtus V. had a scheme for turning it into a woollen manufactory, and another Prince of Peace thought it would serve capitally as a powder magazine. Meanwhile it remained a convenient market-place for the sale of vegetables. But in 1750 an earnest Ligurian monk, Leonardo da Porto Maurizio, came to Rome, craved audience of Benedict XIV., and, obtaining papal sanction for the new form of devotion known as the Via Crucis, induced the Sovereign Pontiff to consecrate the Coliseum, to celebrate Mass there, and to erect a large wooden cross in the very centre of the Pagan arena. Ever since, the Stations of the Cross, commemorating the journey to Calvary, have encircled the vast ellipse, and the new-comers, whose rising voices disturbed my reverie, are wandering hither behind a tall, bare-footed, bare-headed Franciscan friar, to make the dolorous pilgrimage. All the fine ladies of Rome are there, and, heedless of delicate flounce and furbelow, they kneel on the unswept ground at every halt made by the rosary-girdled

monk, and bow their heads in audible lamentation. Then, when the long sad service is completed, he rebukes them for their transgressions, and invites them to a holier life. That much I can make out from where I sit, in sympathetic contemplation of the scene, though no small part of his exhortation reaches me but in fitful vowel sounds, musical, but somewhat vague in meaning. Before they have come to a close, a blare of trumpets tells me that a body of French Zouaves are coming along the Via San Gregorio, between the Palatine and the Cælian Hills, on their way back to barracks from the exercising ground that lies beyond the tomb of Caius Cestius and Shelley's burial-place.

> The insolence of alien drum,
> Vexing the bright blue air,
> To smite a people's anguish dumb,
> Or speed a rash despair,
> That once had wrung
> That prophet tongue
> To challenge force and cheer the slave,
> Rolls unrebuked around his grave.
>
> . . . . .

But what Rome is this? the reader of to-day will ask. It bears no resemblance to the swept and garnished seven-hilled City that he knows.

In the Coliseum is now no Via Crucis, no Cross, indeed, of any kind. Flowers are there none on its huge bare masonry; and the bugles of no Foreign Power outrage the majestic capital of United Italy. The Rome thus recalled was Rome as I first knew it in the winter of 1862, when it was my good fortune to have for cicerone the most amiable, as well as the most erudite, of companions. The name of Felicia Hemans has still its modest place in English literature; and I hope English children still repeat 'The Stately Homes of England,' and 'I come, I come; ye have called me long,' which were lisped by their predecessors in the nursery and the schoolroom half a century since. Her son, Charles James Hemans, inherited from his mother a love of letters and a gentle spirit, and with these he combined a certain semi-claustral sanctity, which, I fancy, was easy of cultivation in the Rome of that period. I do not remember how I first made his acquaintance. I had a couple of rooms in the Piazza di Spagna, next door to the house where Keats lodged and died, and Charles Hemans was living, I know not exactly where, but with some religious Confraternity or other. Looking back, I fear I was often very selfish, and claimed more

of his time than I was fairly entitled to. Indeed, I was entitled to none of it. But there are some persons who cannot refuse you anything, even their precious companionship; and it was so delightful to leave guide-book and map at home, and have at one's side, whether one strolled about Rome, or roamed beyond it, a companion who could answer every question, could tell one the origin, the traditions, and the purpose, of every Pagan temple and every Christian church, and told it in so quiet and dreamy a manner, that it almost seemed the ancient ruin or the mediæval shrine was talking to you, and telling its own story. I suppose it was some pleasure to him to satisfy my craving for information, and thus to diminish my ignorance, and that was how I got to know Rome and things Roman, in so far as I do know them. He was of the South by temperament and habit, as well as by adoption, and a meditative pedestrianism was exercise enough for him; and I could see he was a little perplexed to understand how one who took so kindly to ruins and to tales of virgins and confessors, could tear himself away from these to scamper over the Campagna on other legs than his own.

It was barely December when I first reached

the Eternal City, and it was well into May before I quitted it ; and when, three years later, I passed an equally long Winter and Spring there, once again, though not so frequently, I had the same *duca e signore* for guide. He wrote and published several volumes on the Pagan and Christian antiquities of Rome, and they are choke-full of all one wants to know. But they are written in a style begotten of close familiarity with the most crabbed German prose, and the sententious Latin of ecclesiastical annalists, and the words somehow never seem to be quite in the right place. To make confusion worse confounded, though with the laudable desire of reducing the cost of works which he well knew would detract from, rather than add to, the contents of his scanty purse, he had them printed on the spot, and they abound in grotesque errata. None the less are they extremely valuable books of reference. I may write thus freely, for their kindly and accomplished author sleeps with the Saints, who, indeed, are the only fitting company for him. One would have thought that so pious a being, and living in Rome of all places, would have troubled himself little about theological dogmas and differences. But, from his great erudition, he had acquired the

historic conscience, and, when I first made his acquaintance, he had formally abjured what he deemed the errors of the Reformation and been admitted into the Papal Church. But, when Pius IX. summoned the Vatican Council and proclaimed Papal Infallibility, he once again had grave searchings of heart, recanted his recantation, as Lingard says of Cranmer, and asked to be re-admitted to the bosom of the Anglican Communion. Had he lived in less controversial days, he would have deciphered palimpsests or illuminated choir-books for the monastery of his choice, have told his beads, and contentedly accepted dogmas as he found them.

Thanks to such companionship, and perhaps in some degree to an inborn love of what has lasted a long time, whether in ruins, as in Pagan Rome, or still in apparent vigour, as in the Rome of the Pontiff-Kings, one grew fanatically attached to the place, and the partiality of affection resented the suggestion that it could in any sense be changed for the better. Not only its desolation, but its very dirt and lack of decency, its Immondezzaji no less than its prostrate columns, its monks, its beggars, its streets unilluminated or lit by one solitary swinging lantern, entered into one's general

conception of the Sacred City. It was like no other place in the world, and it was worth all other places in the world together. The buffaloes taking their mid-day siesta in the Forum in the sloping shafts of Sabine wine-carts harmonised so well with the Sisters of Charity, 'meek, circumspect, and wan,' with the shock-headed *pifferari*, with the splendour of the Church ceremonies and the squalor of their congregations, with the mournful Tenebræ of to-day and the triumphant silver trumpets of to-morrow. All the centuries seemed to have survived in Rome, and, though contemporaries, to be at peace. With the coming of the kalends of May one quitted it, but with the *animus revertendi*, and needing no draught from the Fontana di Trevi to bring one back. One felt that, when everything modern palled and everything civilised satiated, there was the City of the Soul still awaiting one on the Tiber.

Therefore, much as one might have disliked the Temporal Power of the Papacy, and warmly as one may have sympathised with the war-cry of 'Italy One and Free!' when Rome not only became the Capital of a Kingdom, but a modern city, one rebelled against the change, feeling as though something of one's very own, and some-

thing one prized most of all, had been violently taken away. One went and looked at a scraped and almost whitewashed Coliseum, at a trim Forum, at a laid-out and labelled Palatine, at streets after the Milanese or Turinese pattern driven through the Vicus Sceleratus, and when one found that bustling tramcars had taken the place of the slow, deliberate, stately Cardinals' coaches, that Ave Maria bells had been silenced by shrill-lunged boys vociferating the publication of the *Giornali della sera*, that newspapers were to be found everywhere and peace nowhere, is it wonderful that one turned disconsolately away. If one extended one's excursions, one discovered yet more distressing obliterations of the footprints of the past. Perhaps the two most impressive prospects in the Rome that have vanished were to be had from the steps of the Lateran, and from the Porta Pia as one looked out from it towards *Sant' Agnese fuori le mura*, and along the Nomentan Way. Was it possible to see, without a pang, the view in each case curtailed and disfigured by rows of mean monotonous houses, from the windows of which insensible occupants hung out their linen to dry? Wending one's way towards the Baths of Caracalla, one was greeted by the

same distressing spectacle, not even compensated by a bold Via Nazionale or an ambitious Corso Vittorio Emmanuele. The transformation shocked and saddened; and one vowed one would see Rome no more.

. . . . .

But that is a vow mortal hard to keep; and, as the years passed on, the majestic melancholy of Rome continued to haunt the memory, and with the mind's eye, from time to time, one saw it again, but always in the garb of desolate grandeur in which one had first beheld it. How banish the remembrance of one's richest and fondest experience? Why voluntarily exile oneself from what was once one's most cherished abode, and must for ever remain for the imagination the head-quarters of human history? Is not reconciliation possible between the Past and the Present? and who is he that dares say Rome must be made after his own affections, or for ever remain as he first found it? To whom does Rome belong? To no one; to every one. Not to Leo XIII., nor yet to King Humbert, neither to Sacred College nor to Signor Crispi, neither to you nor to me, but to the unstable world, and to endless time.

These philosophical reflections notwithstanding,

I confess I felt, if not a reluctance, a strong dread mixed with my longing, as though I were about to meet an old friend after a protracted misunderstanding, when in the Spring of a year later I drew near and nearer towards Rome. In order to make the *redintegratio amoris* less embarrassing for myself, I had resolved not to sleep in Rome, but to gaze on it from afar, from the commanding slope of Frascati. The only railway station that admits one to Rome lay on its outskirts; and though I had two hours to spend before starting thence for Frascati, I was saved from the necessity of penetrating into the City, by a hospitable welcome that was awaiting me in a palace and garden in the same quarter, close to the Porta Pia, which every English visitor knows, at least by repute, and where, in old days, and with other diplomatic tenants, I had spent many happy hours. Half the garden I found had meanwhile been sacrificed to the parsimonious spirit of the British Treasury, but something of its ancient seclusion and tranquillity has survived, and roses still clambered to the topmost spires of the tallest cypresses. It is but a three-quarter-of-an-hour's run from Rome to Frascati; and for the better part of the way you travel in sight of the Claudian Aqueduct.

But the Campagna was canopied by the low, lurid menace of an inevitable storm, and I looked in vain through the gathering darkness for Monte Cavo and Rocca di Papa. Suddenly there was a flash of lightning and a roll of thunder ; and then, as if at the word of command, the rain-spears slanted and swept over the sterile expanse between the mountains and the sea. In the electric spasms of the storm I surmised rather than descried my bourne ; and when we halted for a couple of minutes at the lonely station of Ciampino, I could hear the Ave Maria bells jangling through the thunder-peals, as if summoning the faithful to the prayer—'A fulgore et tempestate libera nos, Domine !'

That was the last experience of rain I had for the next month, and until I was again on the hither side of the Alps. When, on the following morning, I opened my bedroom window and flung back the *persiane*, Rome lay visibly before me, looking but some three miles away, in reality but ten—*vetturini* would tell you twelve—and the dome of Saint Peter's soared, as of old, in majestic primacy over the *campanili* and cupolas of the Sacred City. In the intervening space, and, indeed, all around the Campagna, were those

innumerable and indefinite iridescent tints which Claude Lorraine used to study day after day, and in vain laboured to reproduce. Yes! there, familiar as of old, was Mondragone, there Monte Compatri, there Rocca Priora, there Marino, the site of Alba Longa, Hannibal's Camp, and, towering over all, Rocca di Papa, and no-longer-monastic Monte Cavo. For, if one window looked Romeward, another faced eastward and seaward; and what I could not thence command, I was soon surveying from more open vantage ground. When last I had found bed and board at Frascati, it was at the primitive Lione D'Oro in the town itself, within eyeshot of the Cathedral, and as a guest of gallant Papal Zouaves, who forgave my longings for Italian Unity, in consideration of many youthful tastes and sentiments we had in common; amongst these, a perfect toleration of *vile Sabinum*, hard mattresses, and indifferent fare. The lapse of three-and-thirty years has brought Frascati an admirably placed hotel, and a comely and commanding terrace, where ecclesiastical seminarists, picturesque nursemaids, and peasants waiting for an employer, do nothing in particular with perfect grace, and without any appearance of being bored. Nigh at hand are the

umbrageous gardens of the Villa Aldobrandini, of the Grazioli, of the Lancelotti, all hospitably open to wandering feet, and where the irises seemed never to have gone out of flower, and the refreshing fountains of a surety had never ceased spouting and splashing since I had seen them last, when Pius the Ninth was King. To an Italian it must seem a reproach never to have had a Pope in his family; and you will with difficulty find a villa of any pretensions, certainly none at Frascati, where memorial tassels and tiara carven in stone over porch and doorway do not attest Pontifical kinship, at some time or another, with the owner. The very phrase 'at some time or another,' seems to be not only the fitting chronology, but, likewise, the appropriate chronicle, of Frascati, as of most other places thereabouts; little chapters and passages of history suddenly confronting you as you climb or loiter. How touching is that inscription in the Cathedral, in which his Eminence, Cardinal the Duke of York, records his intention and his hope, both frustrated, to erect a more splendid and more worthy monument to his ill-fated brother. We can all afford to think kindly of the Stuarts, now that we no longer live in dread of their corrupt Sceptre. Is it possible to think

unkindly of anybody or anything, when you are surrounded by the silence of the Past, which condones all that has ever happened? Here is a very dirty and precipitous street, but it tells you that it is Via Sepolchro di Lucullo, the street of the Tomb of Lucullus. Modern antiquaries will doubtless say there is no authority for the statement. What authority, save long tradition, is there for the most cherished of our beliefs? And I am well content to believe that the giver of good suppers was inurned hereabouts. He must have been buried somewhere; and why invent so purposeless a nomenclature, unless it recorded a fact handed down from father to son in days before erudition and criticism had come into being?

It is only in a mood of pious credulity that one can hope to taste the real savour of Rome, and of all, for leagues around, upon which Rome has set her seal; and, surrendering myself once more to the domination of the ghostly past, I began to feel anew the *veteris vestigia flammæ*, the old feeling and unquestioning fondness for Rome. Two days later I was standing in the piazza of the Fontana di Trevi. It used to be a quiet spot enough; but now carriage after carriage rolled by, well-horsed and well-appointed. But if you will only turn

your back to these insignificant equipages, will listen to the plashing of the fountain instead of to the grinding wheels, will concentrate your gaze on the lovely virgin in stone who found the water for the thirsty Roman legions, instead of troubling yourself about any stray maidens in fashionable attire that may be passing, you will gradually find yourself reascending the centuries, and forgetting altogether the events and interests of to-day. A heavier tax, no doubt, is now laid on the imagination that would fain find in Rome a refuge from the exactions and despotic uniformity of modern life. Rome is now the cleanest capital in Europe. It is well paved, well watered, well lighted, well drained, in every way well cared for. But, in or near the best-swept street, you suddenly come upon a crumbling arch, a broken marble column, an inscription, a memorial of some kind, that all the modern ædiles in the world cannot divest of its antiquity, and it all depends on yourself which of these exercises the greater hold on your attention, it or the adjoining shop-front, its silent eloquence, or the curve of the contiguous tramway.

You will fare similarly, according to your capacity for abstraction and detachment of mind, on descending from the Capitol—for it is thus

you should approach it—into the Forum. The 'nameless column with the buried base' has got a name, and its pedestal is open to the air. Indeed every scrap of excavated architecture, every shattered column, every bit of battered plinth and corroded entablature, has a name now, and it is all as spick-and-span as your own premises at home. At first you are aghast, and ask if it would not have been better, more reverential, more conformable both with art and archæology, to leave at least a few wrinkles on Rome's old and venerable face. Moreover, on recalling certain passages in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, you find they have almost lost their significance, and you have a fresh quarrel with the furbishing innovators who have taken half the meaning out of one of the noblest of poems. You mutter something about a fresh race of Huns who cannot even produce an Attila, and then you feel you are becoming unjust. What would you yourself have done had Papal Rome been handed over to you, and you had been allowed the re-ordering of it? Should it still have been a Campo Vaccino—or worse? Would you have left it in possession of buffaloes and hay-waggons? Or would you have retained just a few of these, or admitted them there now and then, by

way of picturesque ornament, and as a concession to the romantic spirit? Surely the insincerity of dilettantism is out of place where the air burns and breathes of Cicero. The air is there still; no one has obliterated Roman history, and the Forum, stripped of what the centuries had shot there, and reduced to a shattered and imperfect skeleton, is still a site suggestive enough for the reflections of the most poetical of pilgrims. Is the Via Sacra any less redolent of Horace because you know, or think you know, more accurately, which way it went? Have the Vestal Virgins lost their charm for you because it was here, not there, they kept alive the sacred fire? The general outlines of the spot, moreover, have not changed. The Capitol does not move, the Palatine does not shift, and the distant framework of the Sabine and Alban Mountains has suffered no modification from man or time. Of course you must select your hour for visiting the places that perplexed and fascinated you of old, must go early, or must go late, in order that your meditations may not be too heavily weighted with the presence of crowds that remind you of the words of Horace,

> . . . Britannus ut descenderet
> Sacrâ catenatus viâ;

for the bulk of the Britons who now descend the Sacred Way still move in chains, the chain of their personal conductor and their many companions. Selecting early forenoon or the hour before sundown, you will probably not be interrupted in your renewed contemplation of that truly triumphant procession on the right-hand pier under the Arch of Titus, where the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, the seven-branched candlestick and the golden table, are being borne along by monumental figures wearing the very freshness of their conception. Had one lived a hundred years earlier, and when no doubt the Forum was yet more 'picturesque' than any of us alive can remember it, one would not have seen that joyous group, for the last remnants of the fortress of the Frangipani that once enclosed and concealed it had not yet been removed. It is idle to quarrel with the vicissitudes of Rome. It is enough that Rome has survived them all. The commonplace and presumptuous labels that once disfigured the Palatine —'The House of Cicero,' 'The House of Seneca,' etc.—have happily disappeared, and one is left in peace to be one's own archæologist, to determine the site of the Cave of Cacus, of the *humilis tectus* underneath which Evander entertained Æneas, or

where the she-wolf of Mars licked and fondled her human cubs. No amount of digging, scraping, or speculating can expel from their cradle or their tomb, or eradicate from the faith of our imagination, the personages to whom Virgil has given a local habitation and a name.

> Fecerat et viridi fœtam Mavortis in antro
> Procubuisse lupam; geminos huic ubera circum
> Ludere pendentes pueros, et lambere matrem
> Impavidos: illam tereti cervice reflexam,
> Mulcere alternos et corpora fingere linguâ.

There is no explaining away, no possibility of forgetting, no way of making unreal or even merely fabulous, the twins immortalised in such a picture as that, and when sceptical erudition has said its last word, Romulus and Remus will remain enduring tenants of the Palatine. They have outlived the Golden House of Nero, and survived the investigations of Niebuhr. I have no wish to decry the costly labour and the patient investigation that have robbed one, on the south-western side of the Palatine, of the finest mass of vegetation-mantled ruin Rome once contained, nor am I competent to question the dogmatic learning that, having cleansed it, has parcelled it out with hard-and-fast exactitude, into the Palace of Augustus,

the Temple of Apollo, and the Stadium Palatinum. But I am more grateful, I confess, to the considerate hands that have planted shrubs and laid out flower-walks where drunken Emperors once hiccupped over a degraded world, and that have brought Madonna lilies to bloom over the levelled alcoves of Venus Meretrix.

I did not enter the Coliseum, I looked at it and passed, with a certain Dantesque nervousness.

> The garland forest, which the grey walls wear,
> Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head,
>
> *Childe Harold*, Canto iv. s. 194.

has utterly disappeared, and the Coliseum, I am told, now requires the aid of limelight to produce the illusion of imposing antiquity. Nor, though I sate long on the steps of the Lateran, could I reconcile myself to the brown, bare, exercising ground in front of me, where the broad expanse of green turf used to lead slowly down to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, nor yet to the characterless, unnecessary blocks of building which have superseded the jungle of bamboos that used to grow hard by the Latin Gate, and which mar the prospect towards the Campagna and the hills. I had an excellent opportunity, however, of renewing my

acquaintance with these last; for, musing overmuch on a desecrated Past had made me forget the present hour, and oblivious of the fact that I was dwelling at Frascati, not in Rome, and that the last train thither starts at twenty minutes to six. When I awoke to a sense of my forgetfulness, I had no quarrel with the mishap—fancy vexing oneself in Rome about anything!—but asked a handsome fellow, with a light carriage and a likely-looking animal, what he would drive me to Frascati for. 'For fifteen *lire*,' he said. I offered him twelve, more from habit than any meaner motive, for in Italy haggling is part of the day's diversion for the native inhabitant, and he closed, without demur, with my offer. A pair of heels is pleasanter in front of one than a locomotive, any day, and at any hour; but, with that perverse pondering on the Past I could not chase, I for a time contrasted my being thus submissively conveyed along the Latin Way with my recollection of the more independent and self-assisting saddle-seat of former times. But we trotted along so merrily, and the bits of ruin, here happily left to Nature and to Time, which I recognised and remembered, were so many, the mountain pictures in the stone framework of aqueduct arches were

so frequent, that regretting anything, or wishing anything back again, seemed rank ingratitude. Indeed, the prayer of Evander—

O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos,

seemed to have been granted, and old Rome, by some spell of its own, to have made one young again. An Italian of the lower orders—if I may be allowed that epithet in these democratically super-sensitive days—will never remain silent so long as you will converse with him, and when your capacity or inclination for talk is exhausted, he will sing, whistle, crack his whip, then exhort or objurgate his horse. At the same time, he is quick to observe your mood; and my handsome young driver doubtless noted at length that I was looking at the Campagna rather than listening to his prattle. Perhaps he thought a draught of wine would make me talkative anew; so, turning round, he asked if he might stop at the half-way house and have a *mezzo-fiaschetto* of white wine, noted for its excellence. The tumbler offered us to drink out of contained what some previous traveller had left; and had I not been present, the old and the new wine would have assuredly been quaffed together. But, as my companion

wished to 'stand treat,' and I had to drink first, he sent for a clean glass with an air of admirably assumed fastidiousness. I thought the opportunity a good one for trying to borrow a rug of some sort, horse-cloth or mule-cloth, it mattered not which, for the cold of a twilight on the Campagna was beginning to penetrate. But this only led to his producing his own sheepskin-lined overcoat, and his insisting on my encasing myself in it; and as I saw that, if I persisted on his wearing it himself, he would suspect I regarded it as—well, wanting in cleanliness, which assuredly was not the case, I had to submit; and he assured me that the wine had made him warmer than twenty coats could ever do. On starting he had boasted we should be at Frascati in an hour and a half, '*circa*.' Most things in Italy are *circa* or *quasi*, or, as we should say, there or thereabouts. I had made up my mind to a couple of hours, and to the last hour of it being passed more or less in the dark. But, as we got nearer to our goal, the roads waxed so bad that black night shortly folded us about; and then the spirits of my vivacious guide sank to zero. Like too many of his countrymen he was paralysed rather than braced by difficulty, and his little horse was of the same short-lived mettle.

Had I likewise desponded, I almost think we might have spent the night *sub Jove*. But, after all, it was not my horse nor my carriage, and I knew that bright lights and a comfortable meal awaited me at the end of the journey. So he at length caught fresh cheerfulness from mine, and, with that readiness to follow anybody distinctive of his race, asked if I could not take him with me to England out of his *miseria*. For the strange part of it is, that these people who sing or joke or gibe from morning to night, will tell you, if you give them the chance, that they are poor, overworked, underpaid, underfed wretches. His case, he said, was a peculiarly hard one, for he was *molto istruito*—Anglicè, highly educated, and came of well-to-do, indeed, of opulent people. At this point we had got to the top of the slope on which Frascati stands, and his hat blew off in the rising night wind, and diverted his interest into another channel. When we at length ground the gravel of the Albergo di Frascati, I did not hold him to his bargain ; and, though I could not gratify his ambition to live in our chilly climate, I gave him back his coat and we parted excellent friends. Italy is the land of haphazard, and I did not regret the overlooked time-table and the belated drive.

With Frascati for headquarters, you can be in Rome by seven o'clock in the morning, or, if that be too early an hour for lie-a-bed northern habits, then by ten; and in either case you can have a long day among the Seven Hills. The train travels leisurely across the Campagna, but who could ever tire of that lovely journey? Indeed it grew more and more beautiful with each fresh experience, for as Spring advances then Nature says, 'Ruins or no ruins, I too will again be young,' and every crumbling bit of wall breaks into verdure, and every gaping sepulchre smiles with flowers. One did not make the journey every day. But, after long absence, there are certain shrines, certain ruins, certain works of art, are there not, to which one feels one must pay one's homage afresh, and a new pilgrimage to which will help to keep alive one's sense of beauty. An art critic, or an art student, needs to spend many weeks, some would say many months, in the Vatican. But, for the irresponsible searcher after the beautiful in art or nature, one morning passed in the Stanze of Raphael, or in the Museo Pio Clementino, is enough till the next occasion arises. Of course I am assuming that one is already tolerably familiar with them. In the same way,

who could be near to St. Peter's and not enter it?—though the penalty I had to pay for doing so was to see an English pilgrim strutting about it in knickerbockers and shooting-stockings! Sant' Onofrio, San Pietro In Montorio, Santa Maria del Popolo, the Pantheon, are yet more delightful to visit when one has no longer to ask anything about them, and one can surrender oneself without qualification to the influence of the place, the hour, and accidental mood.

After such an experience, it is an agreeable contrast to find oneself, a few hours later, riding on a donkey up to the ruins of Tusculum, through chestnut woods blue with scillas, or planning an expedition for the morrow to Albano, Castel Gandolfo, and the Lake of Nemi. But it was my purpose to go further afield, and to visit once again Tivoli, Subiaco, and Palestrina, the remembrance of which seemed to belong to a former stage of existence. Concerning these, however, I must be silent here, for they scarcely fall within even the somewhat vague delimitation of a Roman Reverie. Is it not enough to be able to say to those, and there must be many, who have gone through the same experience as myself, who loved the old Rome, and have turned in disillusion

away from the new Rome, 'Go and heal your feud with Time and the inevitable, and be at peace with your oldest and most cherished memories'? After all, what right have we to dictate what the Italians shall do with Italy, or the Romans with Rome? I confess that when I hear people from Droitwich or Chicago, nay, from Oxford or New England, criticising things Italian, I cannot help feeling they would do better to cultivate a little humility, and a little thankfulness. One is not disposed to underrate what has been done for mankind by one's own race, whether on this side of the Atlantic or on the other. But only a fanatically partial patriotism would deny to Italy the proud privilege of having most enriched the world with what the world values most. Neither Spain, nor France, nor Germany, nor even England, can boast to have grafted civilisation on conquest so successfully and so widely as Rome. Religion, Science, Art, Literature, Law, all have to trace their fertilising streams back to Italy; and nothing is more astonishing than the persistent vitality of Italian civilisation. Italians have had their periods of despondency, and even of degradation—what nation has not? But for nigh on three thousand years Italy has had its architects, its sculptors, its

soldiers, its lawgivers, its poets, its navigators, its searchers of the stars, its rulers of men. When one goes to Italy, one should go, not to censure, but to adore, to learn, not to criticise nor to carp. To every educated person Italy is 'the old country'; to every filial mind Rome is the *alma genetrix*. Only in Rome can we trace the majestic pageant of the centuries, following each other, now with elate, now with faltering footstep, but always contributing something to the onward, if at time devious, march of man. Anon we find Rome sitting in the far-stretching shadow of its Imperial or Papal past, out of the glare and tumult of contemporaneous life. Then, all of a sudden, it stretches its mighty limbs, awakes from its disdainful lethargy, confronts the Present with questioning eyes, and weaves for itself fresh raiment even out of its sepulchral cerements. Hence, while modes of civilisation elsewhere come and pass, Rome remains; and, when some other conception of society shall have created other Londons and another Paris, Rome will still be the foster-nurse of the poet, the home of the archæologist, the goal of the artist, the bourne of the pilgrim, and the sanctuary of the saint. You may read on many a fountain in and near Rome

some such inscription as '*Hanc aquam vitio ac vetustate corruptam restituit*, Pontifex Maximus,' etc. Restoration has never ceased in Rome, and oftentimes when you approach an ancient tomb you find it has been transformed by pontifical or private piety into a well of sparkling water. Oftener in Rome perhaps than anywhere one is disposed to exclaim, in the melancholy language of Lucretius, '*Eadem sunt omnia semper.*' All things for ever remain the same. But even in Rome that is not true, nor was it ever so; or things remain the same, with a difference. As you turn to cross the bridge of Sant' Angelo, you may read on the pedestal of the first statue to the right, these words, '*Hinc superbis retributio; Hinc humilibus venia.*' Punishment to the proud; pardon to the humble. What is this but an unconscious repetition of the well-known line—

Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

The approach to St. Peter's thus bears the same admonishing motto that Virgil conceived for the Roman Empire. Nor is the later boast an empty one, for of the two mightiest sceptres of to-day, that of the Vatican and that of the British Empire, which is the wider and which is the more

likely to survive the other? If the Papacy were not, like Rome itself, so deeply rooted in the Past, there would be something fatuous in its attitude towards the Kingdom in whose very capital it too maintains its centre. But Italy without Rome would be a headless trunk, and the Past has decided that the Papacy shall abide in Rome. Over the main doorway of the Quirinal Palace there stands untouched, and indeed reverently cared for, the sculptured Virgin and Child that were naturally placed there when the Successors of Peter passed in and out. It takes two to make a quarrel; and the Quirinal has no quarrel with the Vatican. Time, which has for centuries worked so slowly and continuously in Rome, will end by reconciling the Papacy with Italy.

Thus one comes back ever to that consoling word, Reconciliation. There are only two ways of being wise, only two of being happy. One is, by bringing the conditions that surround one into harmony with oneself; the other is by bringing oneself into harmony with surrounding conditions. Who is there presumptuous enough to think that he can fashion Rome after his own image and likeness? Rome is the fullest and most visible

embodiment of the Past one knows ; and the Past is Fate. I miss many things in Rome, miss and regret them, but end by being thankful for the Rome that survives. Wandering where once stood the long, sombre avenues of the Ludovisi Gardens, one murmurs—

Pinea silva mihi multos dilecta per annos.

And then the very beauty of the line brings balm with it and a submissive mood. A City of the Soul is a delightful thing to play the monk, the philosopher, or the dilettante, in. But what if this agreeable reserve can be maintained in 'ruinous perfection,' only by the maintenance at one and the same time of sacerdotal despotism, material stagnation, and artistic trifling? No nation can be sacrificed to the æsthetic sensibilities of collectors and connoisseurs. Surely it is enough that Italy should once have had to exclaim, in the ignominious words of the Imperial buffoon, '*Qualis artifex pereo.*' That was the end of her first Renaissance, the culmination of a race of copyists, sonneteers, and ballet-dancers. The second *Risorgimento* of Italy may be less beautiful, less attractive to the traveller, less gratifying to the artistic voluptuary, but at least it is more

manly. Modern Italy has been reproached with Megalomania, or an excessive passion for greatness. Englishmen, at least, will pardon that last infirmity of noble nations.

III

Rome, December 190–.—Lamia wants to know how I learned to speak the Roman tongue, and I tell her it was thuswise. Before leaving England I studied the Italian Grammar as intently as if there had been pedagogue and ferule over me, though, in truth, my only master was a brother-in-law's sister with a riding-whip in her hand; and she, who knew nothing of Italian and little of anything except how to bewitch, heard me my day's lesson as we leaned over a little wicket-gate in a small bachelor home in Hertfordshire, before we scampered forth into the woods, parks, and lanes, at that headlong pace at which it pleases young women when in the saddle to scour the world. But, indeed, who knows the Latin or French grammar easily learns the Italian one; and, as

Latin had not yet been expunged from what was then called a liberal education, I had a goodly portion of the Italian vocabulary already at my command. So, mindful of the old saying that the way to learn to swim is to throw yourself into the water, I found a *Professore* who was hungering and thirsting for journalistic news a little more cosmopolitan than that provided by the *Civiltà Cattolica*, and translated for him, straight off, news and comment from the English paper that was posted to me every day in England. A pretty hash, as you may suppose, I made of it at first; but I was always understanded of my intelligent mentor, who corrected every blunder as it was made, with the result that in a fortnight I could discourse, without embarrassment to myself or too much mirth-provoking astonishment in my hearers. As for pronunciation, that is the gift of the gods; and for many years I have observed that it is granted but to few of my countrymen, who, though some of them may learn to speak Italian 'trippingly on the tongue,' so 'mouth it' as to 'offend one to the soul to hear.'

Have you never been disappointed, after describing some one as still very beautiful, by hearing the person to whom such description has

been addressed, observe, after seeing her, that he could perceive nothing beautiful in her at all? The explanation can only be that the impression made by a once incontestably lovely face on one who knew it in its bewitching dawn or dazzling noon, and on another who sees it for the first time in its afterglow, is entirely different. It is the same with places. Like the child in Wordsworth's poem, *We are Seven*, who could not be made to see that, if

> Two of us in the churchyard lie,
> Beneath the churchyard tree,

they were now only five, but

> . . . . . still
> The little maid would have her will,
> And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

so the Rome of to-day is still, and will always remain to me, the Rome of forty years ago. In vain the Subalpine spick-and-span martinet has come and scraped, torn down, plastered, and whitewashed, the city unrenovated for centuries; I still behold the familiar fissures under their ephemeral paint, the cracks of ruin beneath their transitory stucco and varnish, amphitheatres of self-grown vegetation over stripped curves of tufa and travertine. Happily Lamia has enough imagination to see, with the aid of *Childe Harold*,

the Past through the pretences of the Present; and the very fact that she makes no lament, nor expresses any sense of the contrast between the recollected and the actual, assists me to maintain my first impression of forum, wall, and aqueduct. In what a haphazard fashion one set to work to make acquaintance with Rome, in so far as Rome permitted of such familiarity! With no guide-book in hand, one used to wander away to the Baths of Caracalla, mount and hide oneself, half way up to the sky it seemed, in some recess of towering ruin, and follow the majestically musical march of Dante's *terza rima* through the various circles of Hell and the plaintive dove-moanings of Purgatory, up to the angelic chant that accompanies celestially glorified Beatrice. There, one among the followers, generation after generation, of the stern-souled Florentine, *desiderosi d'ascoltar*, and so following in the wake of the bark *che cantando varca*, I insensibly got admitted to that loftier side of the Tuscan tongue, with whose colloquialisms, at its other end, I had grown familiar, thanks to the daring experiment with the quick intelligence of the news-craving Professor. The second venture was almost as rash as the first, but, like the first, it more or less succeeded, perhaps all the

more because, on some days, the immitigable Tuscan Poet was laid aside, and my companion was the courtier tenant of the Sabine Farm, who interlarded his glorification of Rome with the confession, '*Vixi puellis nuper ideneus*,' and the Bacchanalian exhortation, '*Nunc est bibendum.*' Or perhaps it was one greater than he, Dante's mentor and master, who laid the foundations of the Imperial City on the lasting illusion of incontrovertible legend, and made the myths and mists of the Past sponsors for the noble origin of the Roman People and Roman Dominion. But it was in no exclusively studious temper that one had trampled prejudices and conventions under foot, and made one's way to Rome. I paid, I think, the equivalent, in *scudi*, of eight pounds a month for the hire of a riding-horse, keep and all, to Jarrett, Yorkshire-born, and looking as though he had just returned from Doncaster Races. He had no knowledge of Italian beyond 'Nome di Dio!' 'Santa Madonna!' 'Corpo di Baccho,' and other Pagan and Christian objurgations, with which to spur the activity, or reproach the carelessness, of his Roman stablemen. Once in the open Campagna, either with the hounds in front, or far behind them, one could canter, draw rein, gaze,

wonder, and ponder, and find consolation from the surrounding malarial desolation by lifting one's eyes to the Sabine and Alban Hills, and noting their lofty tranquillity. *Pacem summa tenent.* Serenity dwells upon the heights. Was it in some such mood that, motionless awhile in the saddle, one composed the following Sonnet :—

Nay, dear, farewell ! You must go on alone.
I am too feeble of heart and faith to scale
Those towering peaks where, beyond snow and hail,
Jehovah glitters on His awful throne.
Did I, through your strong will presumptuous grown,
Mount with your mind, poor weakling of the vale,
My blood would falter, and my breath would fail,
And I should disenchant, and you disown.
On then, still on, past torrent-cloven glen,
Deep chasms sheer, rough slopes of dwindling pine,
Upward and onward with your dream divine ;
While I bide here, a woman among men,
Bent to the lowlier labours that are mine,
With pitying Christ, and penitent Magdalen.

[I try so hard, but quite ineffectually, to prevent it ; but the moment the Poet seems to be about to be really interesting, he invariably grows enigmatic. I ask him, but in vain, to let me know who it was the remembrance of whose engaging humility suggested the foregoing sonnet ;

he only smiles, and says it must have been 'some anticipation of Lamia.' I need scarcely say that I know much better than that, and pertinaciously pursue the inquiry by suggesting that perhaps it was 'the gifted child,' to whom a Poem entitled *Fontana di Trevi*, written much about the same time, was addressed in the following stanzas :—

The light that gilds my world no more,
  But only now just breaks on thine ;
Thy shadows stretch all bright before,
  Behind, in darkness, mine.
Leave me my unillumined shore,
  And in thy lustre shine !

Forth to thy future, gifted child !
  May it be fair as thou,
As thy sweet tones and temper mild,
  And cloudless as thy brow !
And thou wilt then be reconciled
  That I am silent now.

Will it be believed that he replies, that he seems to remember how, after having dined in the Piazza Fontana di Trevi with a sculptor of some nationality or another, and, on descending into the Piazza with two other guests, a beautiful young girl and her father, he found it bathed in moonlight, and suggested that they should sit awhile on

the travertine steps of the famous fountain ; how, after a brief spell of silence, she dipped her hand into the water, and raised her shell-shaped hand for him to drink out of ; and how, having done so, he found the father had vanished, and the girl was slowly transfigured, in the moonlight, into the exquisitely modelled maiden one may still see in the left-hand recess of the Fountain, the same that led the parched soldiers of the Roman Legion to the Acqua Vergine ; and how he then walked homeward alone, meditating, like Horace, on many things, and *totus in ipsis.* Would it be possible to be a more exasperatingly reserved Diarist ? When I ask him what age he may have been when the shadows were stretching 'all in darkness behind,' he answers, 'O so old ! About twenty-three.'—*Lamia.*]

The fox generally had the best of it ; for, as soon as he grew tired of giving the hounds a lead, and showing them the country, he ran to earth, and, unless the hunt was prepared to engage in a long and tortuous amount of tunnelling, he was perfectly safe against disturbance. His security was not unwelcome to me ; for, while another spin, if desired, was easily to be had, a sunny contemplative hour or two were at one's choice,

if one preferred to let the fields fade away beyond dip and distance. Then, while larks trebled upward, and got lost to sight but not to sound, I could trace, with loosely held bridle-rein, the construction of shepherd's hovels out of vanished villas, discern fragmentary temples of the gods of an abdicated Creed stuck into rubble walls, and little Madonna-propitiating oil lamps suspended in cracked recesses of down-toppled Pagan shrines. '*Signore! Signore! mi dia un baiocco! Qualche cosina, per carità!*' 'A half-penny for dear love's sake!' Who could refuse, especially when the petitioner had in her cheeks 'the bloom of young desire,' the budding make and mould of Juno in a raiment of rags, and an importunity not to be denied. The prayer once answered, unembarrassed discourse would follow. But in these fair descendants of Shepherd Kings the words oftenest recurring are *fame* and *febbre*, hunger and fever; and one leaned over one's saddle-bow wondering that out of such scant sustenance such loveliness could be begotten. *Fortes creantur fortibus;* and it takes a long time to eradicate the transmitted strength of the offspring of the forceful sons of Romulus and Sabine women. There are so many things in Roman Story, so many centuries of

Roman dominion, to suggest thought; and they are not over even yet. Riding homeward with intermittent aqueduct for guide, suddenly I would hear the bray of French bugles, and remembered who was momentary master of Rome just then, according to the chorus in Byron's *Deformed Transformed:*

> The Black Bands came over
> The Alps and the snow.

They have melted away now, and, unlike the snow, with no sign nor prospect of returning. Then once again the Ave Maria Bells fell a-ringing; and one felt, as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' enabled one to feel many a long year after:

> The last warm gleams of sunset fade
> From cypress spire and stonepine dome,
> And, in the twilight's deepening shade,
> Lingering, I scan the wrecks of Rome,

until I heard a voice close behind me, an English voice, saying, 'Are you coming to the Palazzo to-night?' the Palazzo named being that in which then resided the hospitable banker who had given me the address of the apartment I had hired hard by the *Trinità* steps. 'Yes, I suppose so. And you?' 'Of course. Is it to be the first or the

second waltz ?' 'The first, and, if you can spare it, the second also.' 'Agreed. *A rivederci.*' And away trotted the Amazon interlocutor, with her indulgent sire.

One never knew, in those days, which of the centuries one was in, they blended with each other so tolerantly, wave after wave of successive sensation. Were the Gods to grant, as alas! they never do, the gift of retraversing some one stage of the journey of life, I for my part should say, 'Give me back that first winter passed in Rome.' I should certainly not repeat the refusal of Cicero in *De Senectute*, 'Si quis deus mihi largiatur ut repuerescam, valde recusem!'

[I ask the Poet, from time to time, whether there is not a danger lest, by citing passages from classical Latin authors, he may not touch the susceptibilities of some of his readers, seeing that so few of them in these days have any familiarity with the so-called dead languages. 'But,' he answers, 'they ought to have it, and Rome is not to be understood in the absence of acquaintance with Horace, Virgil, Tacitus, and Cicero. I am well aware I am no scholar, but an exceptionally ignorant person, as information goes in these times. But superficial omniscience did not prevail in my

youth, and what little was taught one was taught thoroughly, and, if I am to be honest, I would not surrender that little for all that constitutes the mental lore of the well-informed person in these days.'—*Lamia.*]

Lamia has been asking me what I wrote during that winter in Rome. The answer must be, Nothing that I can recall, beyond those stanzas flowing from *Fontana di Trevi*, which have moved her curiosity, and the equally spontaneous ones, rather more numerous, of 'Two Visions,' the genesis of which was, I think, peculiar. They were forty-two in number, yet it is certain they came to me, one after the other, one sleepless night, as I lay listening to the plashing of the fountain under my window, the only audible sound during those otherwise silent hours. I had imagined, if I may be pardoned for casting aside for a moment the reserve with which Lamia upbraids me, that among other good things I should find there, Rome would stimulate whatso capacity for utterance there was in one. As a fact, it silenced me absolutely; and, in the narrowness of vision incidental to youth, I fell under the melancholy conclusion that, in my presumption, I had sacrificed substance for misleading shadow. But

this saddening suspicion was accompanied by no repentance, no wavering, no thought of turning back. The man who *tries* to write poetry can have no idea of what Poetry is, its fount, its force, its channel, and I made no attempt to draw water from a Hippocrene that seemingly had run dry. I grieved, but submitted, trusting that, if one had anything to say, some mode of expression would be found for it somehow in due time. The truth was one had nothing to say, either in verse or prose, nothing worth any one's attention. But later experience showed that one was getting a little something to say; and if one may have said in later years anything that is worth listening to, it was being taught unconsciously to one by Rome. What little I had had to say in verse I had already said; and, though what I had said was, I still think, essentially true and had some little vogue from the serio-satirical way in which it was said, it was partial truth only, narrow, and too insurrectionary. 'No youth,' says Goethe, 'can be a Master'; and one was young. Rome was the very place to teach one that lesson. 'Silence!' says that awe-inspiring Teacher, 'amidst my august desolation'; and I was silent.

The opulence of Rome in objects of suggestive

interest is inexhaustible; more especially if one goes about seeing them leisurely, and what to the precipitate tourist of to-day would have seemed lazily. I had not come to Rome merely to see; I had come likewise to feel. I remember one of the most charming Englishwomen of our time, whose gracious hospitality I have frequently enjoyed both in Italy and England, once saying to me, as we leaned over the terrace wall of a villa she was occupying near Fiesole, and that looked down over budding vineyards to the domes and towers of Florence, 'Do you think so-and-so understands Florence as well as we do?' 'I feel pretty sure she does not,' I answered. 'Why is it?' 'Is it not because she strives to take possession of Florence and we allow Florence to take possession of us?' Assent was given to the explanation, which was only another way of saying that deep feeling rather than extensive erudition is the vestibule of understanding. Rome can no more be felt than as is said it was built in a day. When I first wintered in it there was many a spot where it could be *felt*. One of these, and one of the most commanding, was the summit of what has been called alternately the Basilica of Constantine and the Temple of Peace. A temple of peace

it then was, all soaring ruin and tangled vegetation, and access to it was to be had for a few baiocci given to the female custodian, who was the custodian of nothing. It was generally in vain that I carried with me, as companion, a volume of Horace, Livy, or Gregorovius. There was so much to look on and to feel, that reading, so often but the ready resort of an inert mind, was impossible. So, like the buffaloes in the shafts of the wine-carts in the Forum below me, I lay in the sun and blinked ; letting faint cloud-shadows float slowly over my head and faint fancies flit through my brain. Such an attitude, as Byron says, though

> Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.

All one had to do was to bring a submissive and sympathising spirit, and twenty-six centuries had a good deal to say to one. Alba Longa, Tusculum, Corioli, the Oscan Shore, the whole scene of the chief books of the Æneid, the favourite city walk of Horace, the take-off of the Curtian Leap, the Tower of the Capitol, the spot where, in the secret interviews of night, Egeria communicated to Numa the great secret, the tombs of the Via Appia, the snowy brow of Soracte, the dome of St. Peter's, the statue-turreted

façade of the Lateran, all these and more were to be seen and felt, from that vantage-ground of crumbling masonry, with no other roof than the lapis-lazuli space of Rome's arching sky. There lies before me, as I write these lines, an old vellum-bound volume published in Venice in A.D. 1548, entitled *Delle Antichità della Città Di Roma*, written by one Lucio Fauno, of the period. The publisher, Michele Tramezzino by name, however, and not the author, dedicates the work and places it under the patronage of Messer Giacomo de' Meleghini, just as the piratical publisher of Shakespeare's Sonnets, and not the poet himself, as is conclusively proved, dedicated them to 'W. H.,' and styled himself 'the only Begetter of these Poems.' The work of Lucio Fauno is a gossiping Guide-Book of the time to Rome, and therefore far from uninteresting. Writing of the so-called Temple of Peace, he says it was once not only the largest but the richest of Roman Temples, because in it were all the splendid ornaments of the Temple at Jerusalem, brought in triumph by Titus to Rome, many of which may still be seen represented in the bas-reliefs of the Arch of Titus, and the precious things found in the House of Solomon were added to these; all of which, he

says, some people assert, were carried away by Alaric when he captured the City. But, anxious to show that he is not credulous in such matters, he goes on to state that the vulgar have a tradition that it was burnt out on the day of the Nativity of our Lord, and on every anniversary of that Sacred Festival a huge fragment of the ruin falls to the ground; but that such a tradition is manifestly fanciful, since the Temple was erected by Vespasian eighty years after the beginning of the Christian Era.

How distinctly I remember my first pilgrimage to the grave in the English Cemetery, where one looks for the words *Cor Cordium.* They were scarcely to be deciphered; for Shelley-worship, in later years perhaps carried somewhat too far, had not then yet become the fashion. The tomb was lichen-covered and grass-invaded; and, scandalised at the sight, I wrote an anonymous regretful letter to some English daily paper, to which of them I do not remember. Weeks passed on. I went to the grave, and, as I had first found it, such it still remained. Not without some hesitation I had it reverently cleaned, and relieved of the weeds that trespassed on it; and then, carrying my temerity still further, I planted pansies and violets round

it, and, before leaving Rome some months later, left with the *custode* of the Cemetery a trifling sum for keeping the spot neat and flower-girt. Fully a quarter of a century later in London I took down to dinner Lady Shelley, whom, with Sir John, the poet's son, I saw for the first time; and, in the course of conversation, she told me how, once upon a time, she had read an anonymous letter lamenting that Shelley's grave was utterly neglected; how she and her husband travelled to Rome as soon as they conveniently could, expressly to repair the neglect; how they had found his resting-place cared for and embellished; and how on asking the *custode* who it was that had seen to it, he said '*un certo giovane Inglese, di cui non mi rammento il nome*,' a certain young Englishman whose name he did not remember. The '*certo giovane Inglese*,' I said, 'was—well he who has the pleasure of talking with you now.' Not unnaturally the avowal led to a friendly intimacy, which might perhaps have been turned to more account but for one's persistent partiality for the Face of the Beloved.

[Lest there should be any misapprehension as to whose the Face of the Beloved is, I had perhaps better explain, as an editor who lives in the fear of

Veronica, that it is only that of Nature. I once heard a London-haunting lady say to the Poet, 'I almost think I love the country as much as you do.' To which he replied, 'Possibly you do. Only is there not some little difference between your affection and mine? You love the country. I am in love with it. Hence I observe you frequently desert it. I cannot.' I will avail myself furthermore to observe that he must have written, however little, rather more verse during that first winter in Rome than he seems to recollect; for I have seen a poem, entitled 'At Shelley's Grave,' dated 'Rome, 186–,' concerning which he has just been telling us something in prose, and of which I remember one stanza:

> Was it a marvel, though thy corse
> Submitted to the pyre,
> Thy 'Heart of Hearts' should foil the force
> Of the seawind-blown fire?
> It was but just that what was dust
> Should own the cradle whence it came:
> But when did flame e'er feed on flame?
>
> LAMIA.]

Lamia has heard much from others who knew Rome in the days when Pio Nono, after returning triumphantly from Gaeta under the protection of French bayonets, reigned supreme, of the Music

in Saint Peter's, St. John Lateran, and other less conspicuous Basilicas, and has been curious to know if it still survives. In Saint Peter's it is no longer to be heard, and in none of the Churches in Rome does it now prevail in its pristine vainglorious vigour. In former days one heard it to the best advantage, not at Vespers in Saint Peter's, where the fame of the sacred edifice and the vogue of Mustapha attracted crowds of strangers, but in the Basilica of San Giovanni In Laterano on certain appointed afternoons. Then the *Magnificat* was sung in what I must own was a very captivating manner ; for it represented more fully and adequately perhaps than any other pomp or ceremony could do the Church Militant and Triumphant. The words of the magnificent Psalm, *Deposuit potentes de Sede*, He hath lowered the Mighty from their seats, and exalted the humble, were sung to strains of exulting self-complacency by the choir of the Dominus Dominantium. But it was not till every voice in that well-trained orchestra vociferated in stentorian notes, '*Donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum*,' that the highest pitch of vocal victory was reached. How plainly I still can hear across the silence of the intervening years the *scabellum*,

scabellum, thus proudly reiterated, *pedum tuorum*. The combined words and music expressed the innermost thought of the triple dominion of the Papal Cæsars, against which neither the Gates of Hell nor the Mighty Ones of the Earth, it is affirmed, shall prevail. It sounded like the defiance of the Church built on a Rock hurled against Transalpine Heretic, Greek or Russian Schismatic, Pseudo-Emperors, upstart Republics, Deist, Atheist, Agnostic, would-be masters or rivals, Bourbon, Hapsburg, or Hohenzollern, whosoever refused to prostrate himself before the lineal successor of Peter, the Holder and Transmitter of the Keys. It sounded and resounded, even like the intoning of the *Te Deum* in Saint Peter's, when all the Splendours of the Vatican mustered and marched in militant procession, after Mentana, into that universal Temple.

> Then, with one voice, unto the Lord of Hosts,
> Prince, Priest, and People, Te Deum proudly sang,
> Who hurls the waves against Earth's granite coasts,
> Swells with His voice the obedient tempest's clang,
> And brings to nought the Mighty's impious boasts.
> Loud up the spacious dome the anthem rang,
> And, in the air without, with rhythmic stroke,
> The accompanying cannon's bounding pulses spoke.[1]

[1] *The Human Tragedy*, iii. ccliv. Edition of 1891.

As I point out to Lamia, it would ill accord with the 'Prisoner of the Vatican' to allow his cosmopolitan choristers to chant that *Magnificat* at present. But no doubt he waits and waits with confident patience till again he shall be able to 'magnify the Lord,' and his enemies have once more become a footstool under his feet. Then all the choirs of Heaven and the Papacy will be liberated afresh, and Lamia is young enough to hope that she may live yet to hear the exulting vaunt of the *scabellum pedum tuorum*.

We have had a talk to-day, as we sat in the sun on the low wall enclosing the amphitheatre of turf in the Borghese Gardens, on the influence of Music and the Arts generally on the moral character—using the word 'moral' in its widest signification—of nations generally, and of the Italian nation especially; and I think the conclusions we arrived at were pretty much these. There is a sensuous element in all the Arts, which in some of them easily, and in others with more difficulty, but withal possibly, may degenerate into the sensual. Hence their danger to a People of artistic temperament. The Italian race is too mixed a one for it to be safe to dogmatise concerning its characteristics. As I have pointed out

elsewhere, Dante, Savonarola, and Michelangelo are three of the most austere divinities in the terrestrial Pantheon: and it would be a strange oversight to forget Palestrina and Pergolese. But, that notwithstanding, Italian music gradually became more and more sensuous,—I think it would be unjust to use the stronger word concerning it,—and culminated in the scarcely austere strains of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi. The Italian Renaissance, though not without its intellectual and rationalising elements, was predominantly sensuous; and Lorenzo de' Medici, Leo X., and others akin to them in temperament, rise to the mind, at the mention of it, as its most representative types. What followed? The Fall of Florence, the Siege and Surrender of Rome, the Decay of Venice, the degradation of Italy, a *Cesare Borgia* and a *Sigismondo Malatesta*. Architecture does not easily lend itself to sensuous treatment, and Poetry does so with repugnance. But Painting and Music are more amenable, and offer but imperfect resistance when some Son of Belial strives to plunge them into a lower depth. It might be invidious in an Age like the present, perilously sensuous, to illustrate the text and point the moral too explicitly. But, on listening to the

raptures of some of my friends on their return from Bayreuth, I have often wished to read to them the following passage from a French writer of high seriousness :—

Dans l'ordre de la beauté mystérieuse, Mozart n'a connu de rival, ou du moins de vainqueur. Mélodie antique ou grégorienne, mélodie de l'Italie qui chante, ou de la symphonique Allemagne, mélodie des Bach et des Haydn avant Mozart, des Beethoven et des Schubert, des Schumann et des Wagner après lui . . . aucune mélodie peut-être n'est parfaite comme est parfaite une mélodie de Mozart. . . . On est tenté parfois de résumer en quelques mots le caractère moral et, comme disaient les Grecs, *l'éthos* du genie d'un grand artiste ! Heureux les doux ! Heureux les pacifiques ! Heureux ceux qui ont le cœur pur.

To which I will add, from yet another French writer, 'If the angels of Raphael were to sing, they would sing the melodies of Mozart.' And perhaps I may take courage, since Lamia begs me to do so, to subjoin my own innermost thought on this momentous theme :

Sword of my Soul ! forth from thy fleshly sheath,
And scare these lewd auxiliaries of Sense,
Ere, swarming from their dark lair underneath,
You they subject to their omnipotence.
They, in nocturnal ambush crouching, trust
To take the slumbering Spirit unaware,

Fetter Love's freedom to enslaving lust,
And make that foul which Heaven created fair.
Into their sensual service they suborn
A bastard Beauty, meretricious Art,
And, like to too rank cockle in the corn,
Choke the slow-mellowing harvest of the heart.
Sword of my Soul, Imagination, smite
Back to their den these demons of the Night!

While then, as now, entertaining due respect for all that has been and is still being done by the Roman Catholic Church for the welfare of mankind, I never could bring myself to think the Temporal Power which it then still possessed was among the benefits it has conferred. There may have been a time when even its Temporal Authority was an advantage to Italy and to Europe, since so much other temporal authority was a bane rather than a blessing. But those times have passed away irrevocably; and one's sympathies were wholly with those who demanded its abolition. The presence of a French garrison in Rome as its protector was not likely to weaken this feeling, and, when one saw the name of *VERDI* (standing for Vittore Emmanuele Re D'Italia) surreptitiously painted in large letters on the walls, one rejoiced in the temper that dictated them, and embraced without qualification the cries of 'Italia

Una e Libera' and 'Roma o Morte!' More than that. When the 'miracle-working chassepots' baffled the Garibaldians at Mentana, one longed for the day when defeat should be avenged on those who inflicted it, and I vowed to be there when it came. Fate decided, in seeming, though scarcely in fact, against that resolve; for, when Sedan was the Nemesis of Monte Rotondo, though I was not with the troops of the King of Italy as they passed under the Porta Romana to the Quirinal, I was with those of another Monarch, at Versailles; and, when the decision had been taken at Florence to enter Rome and abolish the Temporal Power of the Papacy, I was riding from Rethel to Rheims, and suddenly heard myself hailed by Count Bismarck, whom I had not before seen, but who, as if he had known one all one's life, stopped the Victoria in which, belated by pressure of work, he was driving in order to join the suite of his King, rose from his seat, turned round, leaned with his gigantic frame over the hood, and exclaimed in perfect English: 'I owe you a thousand apologies. But we have red tape as well as you. Have you a copy of that Poem? I do not want it for myself, for I know it by heart, but to convince Von Roon that you are as good a

Prussian as he is. Come and see me to-morrow at Rheims.' I went, and found him comfortably housed in the Bishop's Palace, and in the highest spirits. Had I had luncheon? Should he order me some? Then we must drink of the local beverage together. Need I say the local beverage was champagne; for anything I know, the Bishop's. Not a syllable relating to *la haute politique* was uttered by him, and therefore none by me; and when I said I was sorry to see his second son had been wounded at Mars-la-Tour, he answered cheerily, 'I am told there were sixteen wounds, but fifteen of them were in—the saddle, and my wife' (*sic*) 'has no cause for anxiety about him. Just listen to what she says about the military music at Frankfort,' and he took her letter from his pocket and read me a goodly part of it. 'Now I ask you,' he added, 'if it could be worse than it is here. Ha! Here is Abeken. Come and see me again to-morrow, will you?' Again I went, in the afternoon of the next day, to the Palace, and again found him, but another Bismarck from the Bismarck of the day before: just as downright, but grave and thoughtful. 'I have just heard from Lord Granville, who wants me to see Jules Favre,' he said. 'There is nothing I would refuse

Lord Granville.' (How, more than once in after years, I recalled those words, when 'Professor Gladstone,' as he afterwards loved to designate him, was our Prime Minister, and Lord Granville, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had become abhorrent to him!) 'But what am I to do with these gentlemen of the pavement?' This was, I believe, his first description in such terms of the French Government of National Defence; followed by 'men with muskets,' and other scornful phrases. But this is not the place to repeat the hour's conversation that followed; or to dwell on one's impression of that embodiment of unscrupulous Will-Power, the Will-Power that governs the world; for am I not writing of Rome? But Sedan more than avenged Mentana, and the Investment of Paris fired the train that liberated Rome.

More than once, in revisiting Italy, I have been struck by what perhaps is a universal law, that every advantage has to be paid for by some drawback or other, and that the formal Unification of Italy one so much desired in one's younger days, looked at through the retrospect of many successive years, though indispensable, was at the same time in many respects a misfortune. The story of

Italy is Municipal and Provincial, not National; and no country can ever quite successfully part with its Past, or escape from its natural consequences. Hence the Unification of Italy is still, and possibly will long remain, nominal rather than real. It had to be unified under one Ruler as a protection against '*I Barbari*,' who for centuries quarrelled among themselves for possession of that attractive land. That has been put an end to; but for the *Megalomania*, and the resolve to be enrolled among the Great Powers, which have not unnaturally followed political unification, a heavy price has had, and still has, to be paid. The want of perfect sympathy between the various provinces and cities of Italy, deeply rooted in its history, still subsists; and this is aggravated by the weight of taxation imposed by Unification and its sequel on the poorer and more laborious of the Italian people. Once again one can only conclude that, to nations, as to individuals, the Gods sell all things at a price.

To the writer of this Diary likewise the Gods at Rome sold at a price what he, at least, must always deem well worth paying for. The silence that Rome, during that first winter passed in it, seemed to impose on him, though causing regret and

even pain at the time, was for him golden silence indeed. Little as he knew it at the time, he was being educated in thought and feeling, and at the same time furnished with materials that proved to be helpful towards later utterance. Just as physiologists tell us that length of gestation and length of life are closely allied, so conceivably works that the most slowly come to birth have the best chance of longevity.

Lamia has, I see, recalled some lines written that winter, which I had overlooked; and now there come back to me others of less gravity and more local colouring, that may perhaps pardonably be, by reason of the latter circumstance, reproduced here:

CHI È

I

When for a *buonamano*
  Cometh, at break of day,
Knock at the *terzo piano*,
  A little voice answers, '*Chi è?*'
'I, the poor Monk.' Just a little
  She opens, but naught doth say;
Gives him *baiocchi* or victual,
  And silently steals away.

II

When, with a long low mumble
Of lips that appear to pray,
There cometh a knock, so humble,
The little voice answers, '*Chi è?*'
'I, the poor *Cieco*, awaiting
The bounty of *cara lei*.'
She droppeth a paul through the grating,
And silently steals away.

III

But when, as the shadows longer
Stretch half athwart the way,
There cometh a knock much stronger,
The little voice trembles, '*Chi è?*'
And, when I answer her, '*Io!*'
No bolts nor bars delay,
But with the wild whisper, '*Ah! Dio!*'
We kiss, and we steal away.

[Again I say, '*Chi È*; Who is it? Who was it?' And the Poet has the hardihood to reply, 'Some forgotten phantasm, I suppose.' Forgotten, I daresay; but phantasm! I take my courage in my two hands, and hum the air from *Don Giovanni*, in which Leporello sings, 'In Ispagna, mille e tre.' And then he reminds me of the 'respectable family' in which he was born,

and of the other into which he married. But I am quite sure such subterfuges delude Veronica no more than they do me, and that she is much diverted by these pre-nuptial 'kissings and stealings away.'—*Lamia.*]

IV

Rome, 190–.—Where can one spend such full, such various, such fascinating days, as in Rome? One may begin by paying a visit to what in London or Paris would be a flower-shop, but here is an open-air fountain-stall, on whose broad round marble rim are laid, with all the freshness of morning dew on them, violets, anemones, tulips, roses, and freesias ; while arum lilies, branches of blossoming almond and peach, and what is inaccurately called mimosa, since it is botanically an acacia, tower over them. Purchases made and despatched homeward, one can then turn one's footsteps towards some early Christian Basilica, and, after loitering in it awhile, betake oneself to the Forum, the Capitoline, the Lateran or Vatican Galleries, or meditate the rest of the morning

away among the inexhaustible architectural relics of the Palatine. Of an afternoon one can ride to Veii through cork-tree woods over turf and seeded asphodels; and the day may close by a fresh visit to the Coliseum, illuminated by a moon 'round as my shield,' or, more profanely, with a ball at some hospitable Palazzo. Can London, can Paris, can any city, nay, can all other cities in the world together, offer the catholic, cosmopolitan mind, such varied entertainment as that?

. . . . .

'If,' said Lamia, this morning, looking as fresh as the pats of butter on the breakfast table bearing the impress of Pliny's Doves, and not in the least as though she had been dancing till three o'clock after midnight, 'if I had the good fortune to be a trans-oceanic millionairess, the names of these Roman nobles are so sonorous, they live in such internally spacious and externally majestic-looking palaces, and their belief in their old Roman origin is so admirably simulated, that I do not think I could resist a petition I would grace their hearth with my enthralling loveliness. Veronica,' she went on, 'after all, shall I? But I forgot. No such petition has yet been presented; nor is one likely to be, since my face, such as it is, is my

only fortune.' And, heaving a profound sigh, she consoled herself with another impression of Pliny's Doves.

'Is it not rather remarkable,' asked our Biographer, 'that in an age supposed to be peculiarly democratic in temper, and more especially in countries where that temper is most conspicuous, there should prevail an ever-growing craving for titular rank, however insignificant?'

'Extreme, we are told,' suggested Lamia, 'meets extreme; and therefore perhaps mean meets mean. Still, I don't think I should care to be one of an anniversary dozen.'

'Hush, Lamia!' I exclaimed, 'or, on returning to England, you will be sent to the Tower, and then taken out to be beheaded.'

'O, that *would* be nice,' she said, 'for as Lamennais somewhere observes: "Il manque toujours quelque chose à la belle vie, qui ne finit pas sur le champ de bataille, en exil, ou sur l'échafaud." We poor women are not allowed to go into action, and the British Empire is now so vast, since it has annexed the whole of Africa, in addition to its previous dominions in Asia, America, and the South Sea Islands, that it would be no easy matter to go into exile. So I see

nothing else for it but the scaffold, if one is not to die, as one has lived, exasperatingly obscure.'

'Don't you think,' asked Veronica, 'that, with the aid of a little manœuvring, you might obtain one of those modest titular distinctions that are at present so plentiful? Let me see,' she went on, with unusual levity, which I felt sure would lapse into severe satire. I proved not to be mistaken; for she followed up the question with one of those ostensibly playful observations beneath which lurks a serious moral meaning, in which she excels. But, though it was most pertinent and proper in the privacy of domestic life, it would be somewhat indiscreet to publish it; and Lamia at once exclaimed:

'Hush! Veronica! Who will be sent to the Tower, now? Well, never mind. When you are led out to execution, I will be your tiring-woman.'

'And where,' I said, thinking these observations had gone far enough, 'shall we go, this morning?'

'Would not a secession to the Aventine,' suggested Lamia, who had not yet got to the end of her ironical tether, 'be the most appropriate place, after so woeful a display of plebeian feeling?'

So to the Aventine we went, to Santa Sabina,

and the lemon-tree planted by Dominic, and forgot all about stars, garters, and such-like. But perhaps it is worth noting, in a more serious spirit than that which dictated the foregoing game of conversational battledore and shuttlecock, that the Papacy, which more than any other institution, can say, 'Nihil Humani alienum puto,' has always paid, and continues to pay, much deference to titular rank. Ecclesiastics of all communions are usually, and on principle, devout worshippers of it; and this is most observable, perhaps, in Roman Catholic ecclesiastics. In their eyes there is a sacredness even in worldly station. True it is that they preach against the 'rich man' of Scripture, and make it, in theory, uncommonly difficult for him to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But the rich man is the contractor, the cotton-spinner, not one of the old blood with the land in his keeping, and the old name with the majestic escutcheon. Kings are kings by Divine right, and Queens are allowed to enter male monasteries, though no female footstep of lower degree must desecrate the threshold. And so downward, through the social scale, till the poor are reached, and then mankind is taken into favour again, in order that it may be apparent that the Church

loves the lowly and the humble. Is not the truth this, that Papal Rome, here again showing itself to be the real heir of Pagan Rome, always annexes whatever may subserve its claim to universal rule? Ancient Rome, when it captured a City or a Province, always admitted their Gods to its own tolerant Pantheon; and it would not be very difficult to show that Papal Rome has annexed not only all the Gods, but many of the Goddesses, of Pagan Rome. Both alike opened wide their arms to mortal and immortal, if thereby their claim to universal dominion could be strengthened still further. In all that pertains to Creative Art, Rome for two thousand five hundred years has shown itself signally unoriginal. Conquered Athens, as Horace says, taught conquering Rome; and Rome abounds in reproductions of Greek originals, not, as the uninstructed imagine, in the originals themselves. In the well-known passage of Horace just alluded to, comes the familiar but eternally instructive line concerning Creative Art, *Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.* But that would have clashed with the Virgilian *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos;* and the instinct of Rome was for Rule or Dominion. Its lineal successor, Papal Rome, resembles it in that particular also. With

the Popes, as with the Roman Emperors, it became a point of honour, if not of religion, to leave their names on as many halls and corridors as they could erect. Architects, sculptors, painters, and decorators were summoned by soft speeches and solid gifts from their Tuscan or Transapennine homes. Every hand and eye worth having were pressed into the service; none were permitted the privilege of direction. Colossal size and gorgeousness of material atoned, in the eyes of vainglorious Pontiffs, for simplicity and unity of design. The good and the bad are cheek by jowl. Most people scarce know one from the other; but the more discriminating are irritated by critical oscillation between enthusiasm and contempt. One sighs for the Palazzo Pitti or the Gallery of Bronzes at Naples. These are not so vast; they are not so marvellous; but they satisfy, and they are at one with themselves. Nor is the Vatican Museum alone in its character of discord: the blight extends to nearly all museums in Rome, both public and private. The glorification of Pontiffs or Princes was the purpose of those costly collections. Neither the things themselves, nor the halls wherein they were enshrined, were the natural products of the place which based its

importance on their display. Princes who, in deference to the softer temper of the times, were beginning to abandon the castle for the palace, might expend in gilding what had formerly been squandered among warlike retainers. Opulent Cardinals might move their residences from the sanctuary door to the suburban villa, and invest in mosaics what their predecessors had lavished on the poor. But they could not evoke, amid the ruins of Rome, the spontaneous Art with which Florence had beautified herself and was ready to adorn the capitals of less fertile lands. Let us thank Heaven that there was then, and still is, one thing that will not answer to mercantile demand. For your money the universe will sweat to supply you with rare wines, soft cushions, high-stepping steeds, gilded frames, and ormolu clocks; but, strive as it will, it cannot produce one stroke of Art; many carriages, but not one poet; plaster of Paris in abundance, but scarce a tolerable sculptor; millions of hands, but not a single architect. So had it been in the triumphant pagan days of Rome; and, when the time came for it to assume a still more pretentious sceptre, and it seemed only becoming that it should have palaces, museums, and churches commensurate with its

continued supremacy, Rome was obliged to crave for Umbrian devotion or Tuscan craft wherewith to carry out its designs of dominion. They came in myriad answer to her call, but her vulgar vainglory often paralysed their work. The hand so dexterous in Pisa or Perugia lost much of its cunning in the capital of Peter. In vain did the brains which had watched over the conception or wrought the execution of the Duomo of the City of Flowers, struggle to surpass or reproduce the glories of Apennine-girt piazzas. Venice had long boasted her Saint Mark's. Genoa was commencing to be as famous for her marble palaces as for her heavy galleys. Padua and Ferrara were homes of politest learning and severest taste. Even high-perched Spoleto or Arezzo opened exquisite doors upon specimens of architecture as artistic as they were devout. As for Florence, she had given the go-by to Antiquity; and, scorning imitation in any walk, had struck out new paths for herself, and succeeded unapproachably in all. But Rome had neither church nor palace nor municipal building to satisfy either the artist or the devotee. Art abounded within her walls, but either in ruins or in the shapes of excommunicated gods. She grew tolerant, and

cultivated these : collected the torsos and nymphs of a greater time, and resolved to have magnificent and pretentious what she could not have original and unique. Littleness on a large scale was her ambition ; and the wondrous dome and rambling Vatican set her longing at rest. Rich pretentiousness imposes on the majority ; and the city which, never producing a real artist for herself, spoiled a great many whom she invited from afar, is supposed to be the pre-eminently artistic city of the world. Sculptors and painters still make it their nursery, their schoolroom, their home. And a century, not unlike in many points the ones we have been describing, spends its enormous wealth in furnishing walls and corridors with the works of these exiled copyists. Well may Hawthorne say that there is no good modern work of sculpture that may not be traced to its antique prototype. Send a man from Bloomsbury to the Via Babuino, and, if he produce you anything more than a decent imitation, it will be strange. If he produce you that, you have reason to be satisfied. Great artists of any sort have never been generated in such a social and political atmosphere as that of Rome. No anatomical science, no skill in colouring, no deft-handiness with the chisel or the brush,

will make him an artist whom Heaven has not made a seer. And so one walks through the studios or gossips at the teas of Rome, and makes acquaintance with kindly, courteous gentlemen, whose simple lives almost give them in this pretentious age the semblance of genius, but who are very little more than—and it is something—honest workmen with superior sensibility and avocations befitting human dignity. If you be an amateur idler, you will find enough in Rome to satisfy you ; if a virtuoso, medals and coins and inscriptions abound ; if a dilettante or a dreamer, you will recognise it as your natural home. If you are to leave your mark on your time, go there by all means, and go often. But do not sojourn there too long, or you will be undone.

Nothing strikes one more, in renovated Rome, than the increased relief, in the sculpturesque sense of the word, into which the invasion of the modern spirit has brought its ecclesiastical monuments and basilicas, as compared with the subordinate interest they aroused when one came here first. Then Pagan Rome, the Rome of the Republic and the Empire, the Rome of Livy, Suetonius, and Gibbon, occupied the most prominent place, and absorbed the meditation of

serious sojourners from beyond the Alps. These have suffered hurt, and been thrown into the background by the ruthless cleaner and scraper, by the disappearance of the tangled vegetation that once draped the monumental skeletons underlying it, and by the transformation of what one may call Rome Ruinous into Rome labelled as a sort of open-air Museum. It might have been thought that the Quirinal, the Italian Court, Foreign Embassies, tramways, electrically-moved omnibuses, morning, afternoon, and evening newspapers, military bands, perpetual tramping of soldiers, in a word all the fever, fret, hurry, parade, and noisy monotony of modern city life on a metropolitan scale, assisted by the wranglings on Monte Citorio of Senators and Deputies of the People, together with continually recurring Ministerial Crises, would cast into the shade Pagan Rome and Papal Rome alike. It has done so to the first. It has not done so to the second. In vain the King and Queen of Italy are in the Palace of the Quirinal. In vain the Popes have shut themselves up in the Palace and Garden of the Vatican, and designated themselves Prisoners. In vain Cardinals no longer openly bear themselves as Cardinal Princes, but drive about Rome as

unostentatiously as possible, instead of, as of old, traversing it with an air of majestic humility, doffed to by all the world, and doffing to it in turn with sovereign grace and condescension. In vain the sumptuous ceremonies of Easter at Saint Peter's, the long, proud sacerdotal procession ending in the Peacocks' Feathers, the cushioned Triple Tiara, and, crowning all, the Successor of Saint Peter borne high on the shoulders of men in his Gestatorial Chair, the pompous Mass, the entrancing Silver Trumpets, the blessing conferred on the City and the World from the External Balcony of the Basilica, the illumination of the dome, from circle to summit by tens of thousands of oil-fed lamps and cressets, in vain, I say, these magnificent spectacles have been suspended, and equally in vain has the reproduction of them at the Lateran on June 29, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, suffered the same fate. Saint Peter's, the Vatican, the façade of the Lateran, and all they represent, tower above modern Monarchical Rome, and are more conspicuous than ever, because Pagan Rome has been robbed of much of its former significance. The Papacy, not the Kingdom of Italy, nor yet Hapsburg or Hohenzollern Emperor, is the Heir of the Cæsars; and whose is the

inheritance is now more clear and incontrovertible than ever. The successor of Augustus is at this moment Leo XIII., the Pontifex Maximus is he who has during the last thirty years restored and embellished all the most ancient Churches of the Eternal City; and the Roman Senate of to-day is not that unmajestic and powerless Body posturing as such at Monte Citorio, but the College of Cardinals. I set this down, not to glorify the Papacy, but to indicate the fact. Never in its history of so many centuries has such a stroke of good fortune befallen the Papacy as the abolition of its Temporal Power; and its shrewdest councillors well know it, though openly they may avow it not. Only the other day, I was walking in the Vatican Gardens with a well-known English Roman Catholic who lives in Rome, and he confirmed me in this suspicion by informing me that so it is. The Protest against Spoliation, for spoliation of course it was, is still maintained, for certain diplomatic and likewise certain financial reasons. But it grows fainter and fainter, and will in time, without explicit disavowal, die away; and then the Papacy, the true Heir of the Cæsars and the Pax Romana, will, I believe, be stronger than ever. I remember, on returning to

England after that first Winter I passed here, being informed by an English lady of extreme anti-Papal piety, that Pius IX., then reigning, would be the last of the Popes. I smiled, and said nothing. 'La Papauté est finie,' exclaimed a French Deputy in the Chamber, a few years later. 'Elle vous ensevelira tous!' shouted in reply M. Paul de Cassagnac; and, not very long afterwards, it beheld the interment of the Second Empire. It will see many more sepulchres. 'I shall never go to Canossa,' Bismarck proudly declared. Withal, he went. There is no more striking illustration of the fundamental distinction between the Passing and the Permanent than this distinction between any other Institution and any other Dominion one can name, and the Papacy. Every one knows the closing passage in Macaulay's Essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*. I believe the British Empire will live to bury some States of younger origin than itself. But, much as I may desire it, I cannot venture to think it will survive the Papacy.

All this, I say, I write, not from partiality, but solely from candour. Veronica's attitude is less sympathetic than mine, and I am sometimes inclined to suspect she fears Lamia's receptive temperament may, some day or another, betray

her into the meshes of the Spiritual Spider that lures so many other creatures with gilded wings. I entertain no such expectation. Indeed, I have heard experienced Roman Catholic ecclesiastics say there are none so unlikely to become 'converts' as those who entertain sympathy for their Faith, and none so 'promising' as pronounced opponents. This opinion of theirs cannot be disregarded; for they are profound students of human nature.

I have never been able to understand how persons can violently denounce opinions they themselves once held, and still more the Creeds that were theirs from accident of birth or training. Never to foul the well from which you have drunk, is one of the most admirable of Eastern proverbs. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive well-conditioned natures feeling otherwise than tenderly towards former associates and once-held Faiths. This sentiment, like all the more refined ones, is better expressed in verse than prose; and the following stanzas are perhaps more expressive of it than any more prosaic disquisition would be :—

> The tenderness that drenches the lone mind,
> Insensibly as dew distilled by night,
> Made him, of late, cast many a look behind
> Of fondness towards a Creed abandoned quite.

He felt his hands clasped by a parent kind
In infant prayer, he saw each dear old rite,
He heard the hymns of childhood, and he breathed
The scent of flowers with trails of incense wreathed.

For not in scorn, but he, bowed down and blenched,
Had passed out from the Temple. Ere he went,
With secret tears the altar-steps he drenched,
Aware he sped to utter banishment.
From home, hearth, Heaven, reluctant heart he wrenched,
The stern exiler of his past content,
Bidding adieu to Faiths which, well he knew,
Cease not to comfort, ceasing to be true.[1]

It is easy to make Lamia understand all this, though she herself has passed through no such experience. Hence I much relish revisiting with her, who sees them now for the first time, the ancient churches that have been so lovingly restored by the Popes since they have been relieved of the necessity of spending on an Army a goodly portion of the Peter's Pence so bountifully transmitted to them by their Spiritual subjects: Churches such as Santa Pudentiana and Santa Prassede, close to each other, and the latter of which we visited yesterday. All its original features, if we except the columns of the nave, have disappeared, and of the restorations effected early in the ninth century

[1] *The Human Tragedy.*

nothing remains save the mosaics on the apse and above the inner and outer archway of the choir. But these are inexpressibly interesting and impressive. They carry one back to the bygone ages of very simple faith, and are a strange contrast to the modern abominations of so-called art with which the rest of the edifice in the course of various restorations has been bedaubed. The principal mosaic of the apse represents Saints Peter and Paul, the former with his arm round the neck of Santa Prassede, the latter with his arm round the neck of Santa Pudentiana, presenting the two virgins to Christ, a large figure of whom occupies the centre. They are dressed like noble matrons of the ninth century, though they lived in the first. At the extremity of one side is Pope Paschal I., holding in his hand a model of the church, and round his head is a square nimbus, showing that he was alive at the time of the execution of the mosaics. At the other extremity is the figure of a saint with a large volume, thought to be Saint Zeno. We had completed our inspection of the apse and were proceeding down the nave when I was addressed by a delicate-looking French lady, evidently a religious by the badge on her breast and her attire. She was standing before a modern

kneeling figure in painted wood of Santa Prassede, and she asked me what the saint was doing. 'Squeezing the blood of martyrs into a sacred vessel,' we told her. This led to further talk. Did we think she could see the column to which our Lord was bound, and at which he was flagellated on the night of the Passion? She was a nun of the order of the Heart of Mary at Avignon, and had come all the way to Rome, and should not like to leave it without seeing this precious relic. Would I ask the sacristan? Off I went in search of him, and brought him back, with his key, and a taper stuck on a stick. In 1223 Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, titular of this church, being in Syria as Legate of the Crusade, was seized by the Saracens and tortured. His body was just about to be sawed asunder, when his tormentors became terrified by the dazzling radiance of his countenance. Awe-struck, they gave, not only liberty to the captive, but the column at which the Saviour was scourged. He brought it to Rome, and in the Church of Santa Prassede it has been ever since, in a chapel which was once called the Garden of Paradise, from its sumptuous beauty. The chapel gates are unbarred, and I am admitted; but the women, Veronica,

Lamia, the nun, the religious from Avignon with the sacred badge, must not enter on pain of excommunication. She wants to pray, and I only to see, but sex outweighs that difference of mood. Still those pious old eyes were not altogether baulked. The good sacristan led her round the corner to a grating outside, and assured her through me, who am an interpreter for the occasion, that she should see it all. She went to her appointed place, and the sacristan returned to where I stood inside the chapel, drew back a curtain, lighted four candles, and there it was. 'Do you see?' I asked her through the grating. 'O, yes,' she exclaimed, dropping upon her knees, 'the blood that bought our sins'—I could not catch the rest, for her wrinkled face was buried in her hands, and she was pouring out her tender soul in prayer. As she prayed, I examined, and saw part of a column of granite, about three palms in height, having a white ground and plentiful vivid black stains. I suppose she had chosen the better part, caring not to know what it was made of, where it came from, or whether there was the smallest likelihood of its being what it professed to be. By the time the sacristan had extinguished the candles,—though one lamp for ever burns there,—and redrawn the

curtain, the pious creature's appetite for wonders had grown, and she asked me if she could not see the Rod of Moses. I was not aware that it was here, though I knew a portrait of the Saviour, given by Peter to Pudens, is also venerated in this spot. She, however, pressed me so hard about the Rod that I again had recourse to the sacristan. This time, however, my request was of no avail. The Rod of Moses is in the church, he said, and is shown on Easter Sunday. On any other day special permission must be obtained from the Pope. I was so touched by her disappointment that I endeavoured to distract her from it by showing her a slab of marble on which Santa Prassede had slept. It did not seem to surprise her much. I daresay she sleeps on something quite as hard when she is at Avignon. But she thanked me sweetly for the sacred column, and then we parted.

Did she go afterwards to see the relics of her countryman, Saint Sebastian, whose feast-day it was yesterday? I cannot say, for her pace was slow, and we strode off to the Palatine to a spot which was once the portico of Adonis, but where now stands the church dedicated to the Prefect of a Roman cohort, whom we all know from his exquisite young frame pierced with arrows. It is

an odd thing that he should have come to be thus represented, and I wonder if Adonis and his Portico, where the saint's martyrdom commenced, have anything to do with this obvious falsification of history and reality. For the Prefect of a Roman cohort could not well be a young man. The 'Acts of Saint Sebastian' say 'that the soldiers revered him as a father,' not a likely phrase to apply to a youth. Moreover, in the chapel dedicated to him in San Pietro in Vinculis, there is a mosaic of the seventh century which represents him as an aged warrior with white locks. In the 'Acts' to which I have referred, it is narrated that he was not slain by the arrows with which he was first assailed, but was cured of his wounds by the care of Irene, the widow of another martyr. No sooner, however, was he restored than he rushed before the Emperor and reproached him for his barbarity to the Christians. Then he was dragged to the Hippodrome and beaten to death. His Church on the Palatine is not easy to find by any one who does not know that ruinous quarter. When we reached it, we found there were no celebrations that day, owing to the interior of the building undergoing repair. We entered nevertheless, and made our way through the scaffolding

to behind the high altar, where are to be seen some ancient, but rapidly-vanishing frescoes. By and by, I suppose, they will be 'improved' away and modern distemper occupy their place. The great veneration paid by the Romans to Saint Sebastian arises from the legend that in the seventh century a pestilence was raging in the city, when an angel and a demon were seen to go from house to house, the latter striking the doomed mansions with a spear, and indicating the number of destined victims by the times he repeated this act. Next a pious citizen was favoured by a vision, in which it was intimated to him that if the relics of Saint Sebastian were only brought into the city,—they then lay outside the walls, where a church on the Appian Way is still dedicated to him, and an altar erected to his honour,—the plague should cease. To San Pietro in Vinculis his bones were transferred, the pestilence passed away, and henceforth the martyr of Narbonne was reverenced as the driver away of the Plague. Here one sees a pretty jumble of fact, fiction, and ideas: arrows that send the pest, and the victim of arrows who stays it, the pagan and sacred, Homer and the *Legenda Aurea*, all mixed up together. In spite of all this, Saint Sebastian outside the walls still claims to

possess his body, and there too you may see one of the arrows that pierced it.

We had a slightly different experience, a little later, when our attention was attracted by a female figure, dressed very differently from the Avignon nun. But she also was absorbed in devotional acts; and Lamia bade me look on her, for she was strikingly fair to see. One of her devotions, performed quite simply, but very charmingly, suggested the following epigram, which Lamia, in a somewhat uncritical moment, insisted on writing down:

I

Although no careless scoffer, I
  Am somewhat at a loss
To apprehend the reason why
  You kiss Lorenzo's Cross.

II

For though 'tis true a hundred days'
  Indulgence thus you win,
Moves there a single lip that says
  That you did ever sin?

III

Ha! but I did not read the whole.
  I see it now; the gain
May be transferred to any soul
  In purgatorial pain.

IV

And oh! how many victims lie
In such sad anguish, through
Having too often passed it by,
While gazing after you!

V

You, you, instead, they longed to kiss;
Their wish, though vain, is clear;
They fondly thought they would by this
Make sure of Heaven here.

VI

'Indulgence' that yourself acquires
On them it doth bestow,
And you who lighted here their fires
Do quench their flames below.

VII

And thus you soothe, as is but fair,
The souls you lately vexed.
'Tis lucky you have 'grace' to spare,
For this world, and—the next.

Lamia, partly from sportive humour, and in part from curiosity to see what would happen, showed these lines to an English Roman Catholic Monsignore, who was good enough to pay us a visit. Do you suppose he was shocked? Not in the very least. He read them with much relish,

and then smilingly observed that they must have been written by one who has a more accurate conception of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory than is possessed by most 'heretics'; which caused Lamia to observe once more, when he had left us: 'Such things happen only in Universal Rome. Yes, that is the proper epithet. Rome! Rome! I do not want ever again to see any other City.'

She asked me, the other day, to show her where I lived, during my first winter in Rome; and I took her to the foot of the *Trinità de' Monti* steps, and pointed to the *terzo piano* of the house next to that in which Keats died, and where a mural tablet fittingly records the fact. There is a certain satisfaction in proximity, however fanciful, to the gifted ones who have gone before us. I remember applying, many years ago, to the then First Lord of the Treasury for the grant of a Civil List Pension to Keats' sister, who was in distress and far advanced in years. The application was granted. I have recorded my passing association with Shelley's grave; and a closer link once happened to me in connection with Byron. When an ill-advised authoress published her now discredited story about Byron and his half-sister, I

at once showed that it could not be true, seeing that Augusta was, to the last, after the separation of Byron and Lady Byron, the medium of communication between them. This brought the expression of a wish from Madame de Boissy, the Contessa Guiccioli, to make my acquaintance. I visited her, not long afterwards, at her villa near Florence, and I have several letters from her about Byron, in which her chief anxiety seemed to be to insist upon what she called his goodness. A yet nearer and perhaps more interesting reminiscence is that, in Tennyson's coffin, together with his wife's roses and the volume of Shakespeare he was reading shortly before he died, is a branch of Poet's Bay I brought from Delphi in the year 1881. Of such recollections one naturally says, 'meminisse juvant.' They associate one with the Past.

Lamia has an unmatched gift for arousing such reminiscences, and leading one on to communicate them. She presses me to tell her more of the period of 'golden silence' of which I spoke, during which one wrote nothing, or next to nothing, of what one had hoped to write with ease and plenitude; and I tell her that, sitting one evening in the bachelor's cottage in Hertfordshire

I have once before alluded to, I suddenly found myself composing some stanzas in *ottava rima*, till some seven or eight of them had taken shape. Then they halted as suddenly as they had come; but they seemed to point and lead up to something, though what it was I had no idea whatever. Ten years later, they proved to be the opening stanzas of a poem, concerning which Disraeli, whom the author then knew but slightly, and who had recently suffered bereavement in the death of Lady Beaconsfield, kindly wrote: 'I cannot go to rest to-night without writing to tell you how deeply I have been moved by your poem. It cannot fail to touch the public heart.' I came in time to know him well. He was very tender-hearted, and the wisest man I have ever known. Cardinal Newman, whom I never had the good fortune to know personally, wrote on the same occasion in a kindred vein, and said it had always seemed to him that the *ottava rima* is the finest form of verse even for the English tongue. Another eminent Statesman then in the enjoyment of unequalled popularity, good-naturedly, and with characteristic concern rather for the ethical than for the æsthetic side of things, also wrote concerning it at considerable length, and dwelt on the

observation that Butler's *Analogy* had placed him in an impregnable fortress. That statement was evoked by the circumstance that the poem in question represents objectively the tragedy caused by the conflict between sincere Faith and equally sincere Doubt. . . . Now, Lamia, are you satisfied? It would be difficult to be more unreserved; and the responsibility must be yours, not mine.

[May I say that I am responsible for what is published in the Diary, but not for what is held back. I have vainly pointed out that the foregoing lines may possibly interest some people, but that they are a little jejune. In order to do them justice, and to make them acceptable to the ungentle reader of to-day, the letters referred to should be reproduced textually, the very manuscript of them photographically copied, and portraits of the writers of them appended. Such is the habit, such the custom, of the times. But I urge him in vain to row with the current. He replies, *Nitor in adversum*, and asks if I do not think a photograph of myself would serve the purpose as well. I answer that I will consult Veronica. But that would be useless; for in the matter of behaviour she is more old-fashioned

even than he. All argument is unavailing. When I tell him he is deplorably behind the Age, he only smiles, and quotes Joubert's '*Mourons en résistant!* Let us perish standing on the ancient ways!'—*Lamia.*]

V

Rome, 190–.—'If I only could,' said Lamia, 'just for once, see Rome, the Forum, the Coliseum, the Baths of Caracalla, as you saw them when you came here first!'

'I wish you could,' I said; 'for, to the imagination, they are not improved by the change that has taken place. Much exploration, much erudition, historical and archæological, much controversy, have been lavished on them, and with what result? Are we any surer now than we were before which is verily the Sacred Way, where stood the *Novæ Taburnæ*, which are the precise pavement and pathway that led to the Hill of Triumph, where passed Tullia's chariot-wheels, splashed with the blood of her murdered sire, or where were buried alive the Vestals who had

violated their vow? And, if we were, what should we have gained? "The Tree of Knowledge hath been plucked; all's known," says Manfred mournfully, leading to the conclusion that the Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.'

'Just so,' said Lamia; 'or, as your gifted friend, Owen Meredith, put it, "The Unknown is life to Love, Religion, Poetry." For my part, I would gladly give all these labels and doubtful disquisitions for a yet more vivid impression of the transitoriness of things. Withal, I must not complain. You lend me your recollection; I lend you my attention; and, thus aided, I almost think I can see it all as it was. Moreover, it is only material vesture of which this Forum'—for we were standing in it—'has been stripped; and I must not forget that "you cannot kill the Gods."'

Still, even in the noontide glare,
The Gods, recumbent, take their ease;
Look rightly, you will find them there,
Slumbering behind some fallen frieze.

What though their Temples strew the ground,
And to the ruin owls repair?
Their home, their haunt, is all around;
They drive the cloud, they ride the air.

Build as man may, Time gnaws and peers
  Through marble fissures, granite rents;
Only Imagination rears
  Imperishable monuments.

Let Gaul and Goth pollute the shrine,
  Level the altar, fire the fane:
There is no razing the Divine;
  The Gods return, the Gods remain.

'You have cited enough, dear,' I interrupted; 'and I was wanting to add that none of time's changes irk me more than the barriers a financially embarrassed Government and a venal municipality have placed round the Forum, in order that they may extort a lira from those who formerly were free to wander here at their untaxed will. The Popes were artists enough for that; and they were gentlemen, not chapmen. They felt that Love, Art, Genius should not be articles of commerce. Modern Italian Materialism would tax your very soul, if it could. I can remember, when I first visited Florence and used to breakfast for sixty centesimi at a modest *caffè* that has now become a costly *ristorante*, a flower-girl, whose name was Margherita, used to give one every morning a little bunch of flowers, the prevailing fragance of which was due to a spray of sweet-

scented verbena ; since which time the perfume of its leaves instantaneously transports me to the Arno as it was then, with its circle of mediæval wall and its winding stone-staircased track, sentinelled by Stations of the Cross, up to San Miniato. Margherita wished one good morning, but lingered not to be paid ; and not till you were leaving Florence did you ask her to accept some trifle in return. If she thought you *così gentile*, she would ask at what hour you were going away, and from where ; and, when the hour came, she was on the spot, with a lovely posy for you, and for it she would accept nothing in exchange, save "*Grazie tante! A rivederci!*" Was not that better than haggling over so many beggarly *centisimi?*'

'Oh! don't! don't!' Lamia exclaimed. 'I would rather have those customs back than even buffaloes in the Forum. Alas! I was born too late.'

'Nay,' I replied, 'English girls of to-day cannot say that. When I recall the conventional trammels that, a generation ago, debarred them from doing themselves justice by the full cultivation and free exercise of their gifts, and compare that vanished state of society with the freedom

they now enjoy and the pleasure they confer by it, it is I, and others like me, who would be justified in exclaiming, "I was born too early." Or I *should* be justified,' I added, 'in such an exclamation had not gracious Heaven vouchsafed me a Lamia.'

[How I replied to that tender observation need not be set down here; for it is not my Diary, but the Poet's, that I am editing. What is more to the purpose is that, as we were all contemplating an excursion to the *Castelli Romani*, to Frascati, Albano, Tivoli, Subiaco, and Palestrina, I obtained from him a record he had kept of a visit to all these places in the month of March during his first 'winter in Rome.' After reading it, you will understand, I think, how it still further whetted my appetite for the journey on which we had decided.—*Lamia.*]

. . . . .

Rome, 1862.—One fair afternoon in March, as free from all suspicion of east wind as the road was from motor-cars and lamp-posts, I passed through the Porta San Giovanni on horseback, with one male companion, proceeding at first at a foot's pace along the Via Asinaria.

There were wine-carts coming into the city,

with a shaggy Pomeranian dog on the topmost cask. There was a Cardinal's carriage solemnly driving outward to take his Eminence a *piccola passeggiata*, and to give him that opportunity of stretching his legs which ecclesiastical etiquette then forbade him to do in the City, save on the Pincio. There was a white *osteria* on the left with a Bacchanalian bush hung outside, advertising, despite the proverb, the excellence of the wine within. Outside its threshold was a team of sleek draught oxen, waiting patiently, as they would wait till the crack of doom, for their convivial driver, who was refreshing himself out of sight. There were tall cannæ on each side of the road in which buffaloes might hide, as they hide further afield, in the Pontine Marshes. There was a straight, dusty road, a bit of broken aqueduct visible ahead, and a dome of blue above us. My companion had a fine appreciation of golden silence, and neither of us had any thought in the world beyond that of surrendering ourselves to the delight of such surroundings. I think we must have got beyond the Porta Furba, where the Marcian and Claudian Aqueducts meet, and close to the tumulus known as the Monte del Grano, to which certain authorities unauthentically point

as the tomb of Alexander Severus, but to which we are certainly indebted for the famous Portland Vase, before either of us made an observation. At that point an uncontrollable wish seized me not to return to Rome that night. My companion in the most obliging manner in the world declared that he cherished precisely the same wish. Should we push on, he asked, and sleep at Frascati? He is a poor traveller who does not rise superior, on an emergency, to the supposed necessity of having a 'change,' and we never hesitated in our sudden determination. It was the vernal equinox, and we were well content to reach Frascati by sundown. We were already passing the sign-post of the *Osteria di Mezza Via*, or half-way house, and it was only yet a quarter past four. The whole distance from Rome is about a dozen miles, and but six therefore were yet ahead of us. Presently we passed the stone-pines, shaggy landmarks, that mark the farmstead of Torre Nuova; and before very long we began the ascent to Frascati. We had both been in Rome since the beginning of December, but never had we seemed to ride into a genuine territory of man's cultivation. But here the Campagna seemed to retire from us, and we were awhile almost shut in by vineyards, now

getting their first bright greenery, and thriving olive orchards, dotted with occasional habitations actually not made out of ruins nor hollowed out of tombs. We had ridden rather hard the last three miles, but we slackened pace here, and let our steeds walk leisurely up the pleasant, fresh-smelling ascent, feeling how sweet it was for once to exchange the savage crook of the shepherd for the plough and furrow of the husbandman. Thus we reached Frascati as the *Ave Maria* bells began to peal in the square where stands the cathedral, flanked by the *Albergo di Londra.* We stabled our horses, saw our double-bedded sleeping chamber, ordered dinner, and then just had time, before sitting down to it, to gaze across the melancholy but beautiful Campagna we had traversed, before the mantle of night was thrown across it. Even then the dome of St. Peter's towered significantly clear in the upper twilight, asserting itself above lower darkness.

The dinner of the *Londra* was not all our expectations had painted it; and had it not been for an incursion of Papal Zouaves, some of whom we had met in Rome, and with the rest of whom we were very quickly made acquainted, we might possibly have repented us of the hasty resolution

taken in the afternoon. But we now were a goodly company, and these defenders of the Pope, mostly French and Irish, made the night less long with their happy laughter, and the fumes of the *baiocco-e-mezzo* cigars which his Holiness used to dispense at the Palazzo Mignanelli in the days before 'Cavours' were smoked in the Sacred City. Discipline, however, exacted that our companions should leave us early; and, with the intention of paying a visit the next morning to Tusculum, we composed ourselves to sleep. The clangour of the six o'clock Angelus bells woke us betimes, and before a couple of hours had gone we were bestriding donkeys, and in this truly philosophical attitude went on our way to the scene of Cicero's Tusculan Questions, the birthplace of Cato, and the dim traces of a city that successfully resisted Hannibal, and which as late as the twelfth century, under the command of its titular count, assisted by a Ghibelline army under the Archbishop of Cologne and Mayence, inflicted such a defeat on the Romans that contemporary chroniclers speak of the engagement as the Cannæ of the middle ages, and Machiavelli declares that Rome never recovered from it, nor was ever again thriving or populous. When the vanquished craved per-

mission to bury their dead, the answer was, 'Yes! but count them first.' Twenty-four years later Rome had its revenge. In 1191 the Romans obtained possession of Tusculum, and sowed it with salt. There has been no Tusculum since, save ruins which barely rise above the ground, or push themselves through long grass. But what a prospect! Who could potter among bits of pavement, or pry into the distinctions of baked earth which help to assign the precise century of this or that lump of masonry, whilst the eye could rest upon the whole of classic Latium? There lay the sites of Gabii and Collatia, and, beyond these, yet further north, Tivoli, Montecelli, Soracte, and all the Sabine Apennines. To the east were the Volscian Mountains, with Monte Pila, Rocca di Papa, Hannibal's Camp, Alba Longa, and the more modern Castel Gondolfo and Marino, full in view. It was whilst looking upon this extensive scene of supreme beauty and surpassing interest that a fresh temptation invaded us. Why go back to Rome to-day, to-morrow, or even the day after? The early Roman spring, when auspicious, is the most delightful season of the year; and, repeating to ourselves the *Diffugere nives, redeunt jam gramina campis*, we resolved to

saunter over hill and plain in the saddle, as fancy moved us. The question, 'what will Jarrett think?' was answered by the conclusive rejoinder that Jarrett might go to the Stygian pool, and that a little change of scene and food at our expense would do his horses all the good in the world. Nor was the somewhat more weighty matter of a 'change of things,' without a solution. One does not pass through a Roman winter without forming familiar acquaintances; and we remembered that a party of these were to be at Tivoli on the morrow for a day and a night. Between Frascati and Rome there already existed a railway, the only one beside that between Rome and Civita Vecchia in the dominions of his Holiness; and we should be able to send a message thereby to our friends to bring what we needed to Tivoli. So resolved, we turned away, not without such regret as one always feels in quitting sacred ground, from philosophical Tusculum, bestrode our donkeys, and made for Frascati once more. One of the most beautiful of shepherd lads, whose eyes would have resembled burning coals, could coals retain their blackness when they burn, and whose long ebon hair hung from under a hat like Mercury's in long careless curls over his young

shoulders, came slowly down one of the enclosed pastures, where, with crook twice as long as himself, he was tending his flock in solitude, and opened for us a gate before our guide could anticipate him. I dropped a five *baiocco* piece into his palm. He had been singing to his sheep a homely roundelay of the hills. When he looked upon the coin he gave me gracious thanks, but, alas! he sang no more. Whereupon I rode along, inly meditating a Tusculan question of very old import.

The rest of the morning was spent in a desultory visit to the Villa Aldobrandini, better known as the Villa Belvidere, Giacomo della Porta's last work, which had to be completed by Fontana. We troubled ourselves little about the Cavaliere d'Arpino's frescoes in the Casino, though it is generally understood that one is bound to admire them; and to this day, if I were put through a competitive examination as to the villa and its grounds, I could only say that I found the latter surpassingly lovely, and that we spent in them three exquisitely lazy hours. But as the day wore on it must be confessed that my companion, like myself, was carnal enough to remember the exceedingly sorry fare of our Frascati *osteria*, to

the prospect of a renewal of which not even a repetition of the joviality of Pio Nono's Zouaves could reconcile us. At parting with them last night we had sworn by all our gods to make another evening of it; but we were as false as dicers' oaths, and crept away to Albano before once again the sun sank over the Campagna, and sat down to a capital little supper at the *Albergo della Posta.*

The sun was just rising when we got into the saddle the next morning; and at the by no means early hour for Italy of six o'clock we were riding back to the Arician Viaduct. Our bourne was Lake Nemi, then Lake Albano, and finally Monte Cavo. But we could not resist turning aside to get no matter how passing a look at the Pope's country villa at Castel Gondolfo, though we had been told it was not worth a visit. My companion shared my curiosity; so, entering its courtyard unchallenged, dismounting, and fastening our bridles to iron rings, of which there was abundant choice, we walked straight through the first open door we came to. There was nothing to tell us that the place was inhabited, and the architecture manifested none of that splendour which most people associate with Papal dwellings. There was

plenty of masonry, as there always is in Italy ; and to English eyes no Italian villa can ever look diminutive. Castel Gondolfo—meaning thereby not the cluster of houses forming the village of that name, but the Pope's summer palace—is of goodly proportions, but in every way unpretending; and we at first thought we must have made some mistake. Presently, however, a domestic wearing a certain self-evident air of the sacristy, attracted by the sound of our footsteps in the long, empty, echoing corridor, made his appearance, and greeted us with the customary urbanity of his race. Was this the summer residence of Pius IX., the spot where he usually spent his *villeggiatura?* '*Sicuro*,' was the answer. Yes ; it was so. Might we see it? Certainly, if we wished ; though, he added, there was really nothing to see. But the Pope's apartments? Yes ; that was all that anybody could even pretend there was to see, and he would show us them. '*Faccino loro comodo!*' a round-about but extremely polite way of informing us that we were to put on our hats, for we might find the corridors cold, coming out of the sun as we had done, and were to make ourselves generally at home. He was quite right ; there was nothing to see, at least by the external eye. It was the

absence of anything to see that was so suggestive. No poor parish priest could have humbler rooms than these, which formed the residence for four months in the year of a man who was then a King as well as a Pope, and whose spiritual subjects still form, after the Chinese, the most populous empire in the world. A bed, a chair, a prie-dieu, a crucifix, and a shabby bit of carpet,—behold the furniture and apparatus of the Pope's bedroom at Castel Gondolfo. Here was Republican simplicity for you in the Monarch who clings to Divine Right more than all other Sovereigns! It may be doubted, however, if people really like Republican simplicity. It is a standing reproach to themselves, and the Cæsars of this world act sagaciously, perhaps, in making as much of their purple as possible. The world is largely governed by tailors and upholsterers.

As we rode out of the courtyard I suggested we should dash forward to Monte Giove, a short distance on the road to Porto d'Anzio. Why? asked my companion. My reply was that the situation seemed inviting, and that there once stood famous Corioli, where Coriolanus fluttered the Volscians. 'You're wrong there, I suspect,' he retorted, 'though probably you can adduce quite

an army of antiquaries in support of the theory. But remember what Pliny says, that "the city had not only perished but had left no trace"'; and he quoted Pliny's exact words, now no longer in my mind. 'And, what is more, remember that we must sleep somewhere to-night, and that we have much to see without going out of our way to imaginary sites.' This was unanswerable, and we trotted on towards Nemi. What a fairy-like yet uncanny-looking lake! That Cæsar should have thought of building a handsome villa above it I can readily understand; and that, after a considerable outlay, he should have pulled what had been erected down again, is equally conceivable. For it is not a spot to live at. The wandering Childe Harold hit off its peculiarity with much precision. It does look as if its cold settled aspect cherished hate, and verily it sleeps like a snake, round and coiled into itself. If one could only get over this feeling, the summit of the wooded crater, whose watery bottom it is, would make a charming residence, and there are few old feudal castles that have a finer site than that of the Colonna in the little village of Nemi. One should see the Alban lake first, and that of Nemi afterwards, for Nemi is far the more beautiful of the two. Indeed, Lake

Albano owes everything to association, which archæologists have done their best to destroy with their dreary dry-as-dust disquisitions and disputations concerning its *Emissarium.* As in duty bound, we dismounted to see this wonderful historic outlet ; but beyond the smell of smoky candles I remember nothing save, it need scarcely be said, the more than usually oracular character of the response from Delphi concerning it and the Siege of Veii, two things which were connected in much the same way as Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands. Perhaps one should not speak with levity of so celebrated a spot ; but, unfortunately, celebrated spots have guides and ciceroni, a hateful race, and they grate upon one's nerves with their unending loquaciousness, their stories got by rote, their strange jumble of true and false, and cheap finery of erudition. It was a pleasant relief to see the tranquil Franciscan monks sunning themselves outside their monastery at Palazzuola, and not caring one baiocco piece about all the antiquities in the world. There is a consular tomb in the garden of their monastery about which there has been no end of learned wrangling. The good friars neither knew nor cared anything about it, and, when interrogated on the subject, observed that it was

'*un sepolcro de' tempi antichi.*' That was quite enough for them ; and what is the use of bothering yourself when there are so many such, and you tread upon the dust of Etruscan or Latin heroes at every step? There is a good deal to be said for this view. A little knowledge is said to be a dangerous thing, but it is not dangerous to the imagination. Knowledge is to the imagination what fuel is to flame. A little feeds it ; a great deal extinguishes it. Not that one's bare-footed friends in their brown serge habits, girded with huge rosaries, possessed either that which feeds or that which extinguishes. They and their predecessors had gazed out from their vantage ground for many centuries over the Alban Lake, and across it at the Campagna, ending in one direction at Rome, in the other with the Mediterranean. They go a-begging round Italy, and then they come back, and pray, and contemplate. A wonderful thing that contemplation ! Like the Roman Catholic Religious Orders themselves, it divides itself into two categories. There is active contemplation and contemplative contemplation. The latter is deemed the higher since the less remunerative occupation, and approaches nearest to the Oriental *Nirvana* or annihilation. A

Franciscan says little, but he 'thinks a lot.' These of Palazzuola were very gracious, and offered us bread and wine. But we wanted neither, and left them to their—contemplations.

I doubt if there be anything in the world, if scenery and association be taken together, more beautiful than the ride by the shores of the Alban Lake, at Palazzuola, to Monte Cavo, the more so if one prolongs the brief journey by going round through Rocca di Papa. No minuteness of description, nowadays so much in fashion, no accumulation of details, however faithfully rendered, can do justice to a succession of prospects abounding not only in natural loveliness, but in centuries of story. There are woods as leafy and as sweet, no doubt, as the groves, all of them once sacred to Diana, that stretch behind Palazzuola; there are elevations as cool and commanding as that of Rocca di Papa, for it is only 2500 feet above the sea; there are hollows as smooth and undulating, in all likelihood, as Hannibal's Camp; there are views, though not many, as extensive as that obtained from the wall of the garden of Monte Cavo's Monastery. But at the foot of the leafy mountain we had just ascended there lay the lakes of Nemi and Albano, and the villages of Albano,

Lariccia, Castel Gondolfo, and Genzano. Beyond was the great plain of Latium, the scene of one half of a great epic poem. It was all spread out before me, on a map not of an inch to a mile, but league for league, *tale quale*, as the Italians say, precisely just as Æneas saw it, and Turnus, and their poet-historian. Monte Artemisio thrusts up an untimely shoulder to hide the Pontine Marshes; but you can follow the whole classic sea-line from Antium to modern Civita Vecchia, along a darkly-wooded coast sixty miles long. Lavinium, Ardea, Ostia, Cære, Laurentum, there they all are, or were, the shadows of great names. The Sabine Hills, forming themselves into the neatest of natural amphitheatres, hem in Tusculum, Tibur, —our modern Tivoli,—and Gabii. There soars Soracte, there stands *gelidus Algidus*.

It is not often one is repaid for climbing, but nothing save foul weather can disappoint the wayfarer who ascends Monte Cavo. And is it nothing to ascend a Hill of Triumph, even if secondary, but only secondary, to that of the Capitol, which was once trodden by the great Cæsar himself? Once there arose upon this very spot the Temple of Jupiter Latialis; and its ruins survived till nearly the date of the French Revolution, when

Cardinal York, the brother of Prince Charlie, appropriated them, and with them rebuilt the Church of the Passionist Monastery that has dispossessed Jove. The day was favourable to our desires, and we gazed long and silently upon the matchless panorama. The sun shone brightly and even hotly, though in passing through Rocca di Papa we had to dismount and lead our horses, owing to the slippery condition of the steep ascent, caused by a sharp night's frost. Between Rocca di Papa and Monte Cavo, and also beyond Hannibal's Camp, the woods swarmed with snowdrops, the largest and whitest I ever saw, though the chestnut woods were in places fast coming into leaf.

Our business was now to descend to Albano by a different and shorter route, and thence make the best of our way, after luncheon, back to Frascati. Our path lay through woodlands, which we determined to penetrate, if only because a celebrated instructor says no one ought to do so unaccompanied by a guide. The Prior of the Monastery of Monte Cavo sent a lay brother with us for a portion of the way ; but, partly on account of our extreme confidence, and partly because he did not much relish having to climb the hill again, he soon agreed with us that it was quite impossible for us

to go wrong, and bade us farewell. For a time we seemed to prosper. By degrees, however, the path, though it became broader, grew more rugged, and by and by assumed the aspect of a dried-up torrent. Finally it ceased to have any aspect at all, and was neither track nor empty stream, and we were in the middle of a wood of seemingly interminable extent. The obstinacy of man is proverbial; and therefore I need scarcely say we did not turn back. We had to dismount and lead our horses; and shortly this simple operation was exchanged for the far more difficult and intricate one of forcing a way for them and ourselves. But they were docile and long-suffering; and, after a monotonous but exciting fight with nature for about an hour and a half, we found ourselves once more in the open. We had had to push our way through the brushwood where it was least dense, and in the end all notion of direction had been abandoned for the one consuming idea of 'getting out of this.' We were now at a considerable elevation, and on a sort of scrubby moorland, with ground rising on our left. We believed this to be Algidus, and were right in the surmise. Albano was nowhere in sight, or any town or village. There were no habitations, no human forms to be

seen, even no sheep. But it was very beautiful, and we did not complain. Our only lament was that our flasks were empty, for we had counted upon being at Albano long before this. Path was there none; but there was a mountain torrent bed, and this time a real not a sham one, but quite empty of water. It had the natural advantage or leading downward, so we trusted ourselves to it. For an hour this was our high road, and I can only attribute it to sound Roman legs, and, perhaps, careful handling, that neither of our horses came to grief. At the end of that time my companion exclaimed there was a town in sight. And there was, but it was not Albano, nor any town that either of us had seen before. But ahead of us were sheep, and by and by there was a shepherd. The town was Velletri, about seven miles away. Such was his information. We laughed, as well we might, for we were altogether out of our bearings. We could see the high road plainly enough which leads from Albano to Velletri, and thence to Naples and Capua; part, in fact, of the famous Via Appia. But the shepherd told us we could not hit the road with any certainty, save at a place about a mile this side of Velletri; and it was clear enough that, if we attempted to join it

at any point nearer to Albano, we should only expose ourselves to a repetition of the experience from which we had but recently, and so thankfully, emerged. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to push on to Velletri, bait there, then return to Albano by the high road, make no more plans, but leave our future saddle-journeying through Latium to the benignant chapter of accidents.

. . . . .

Rome, 190–.—Of the transformation, not for the better as it seems to me, Rome itself has undergone, I have said perhaps more than enough. But once get beyond its now vulgarised suburbs, and little would need to be changed in the foregoing description of the Roman Campagna and the Castelli Romani as they were forty years ago. The Terrace at Frascati, whence one looks across some twelve miles of kaleidoscopic loveliness to Rome, and after sundown still plainly sees the dome of Saint Peter's when all beside is curtained by drooping night, is perhaps somewhat more cared for than of old; but the groups of young priests from the various Colleges thereabout, the picturesque nurses from the Sabine hills, and the lively children of all ages, that used to gather there of a sunny morning, still enliven the spot, and

induce a delicious sense of doing-nothing in an agreeable manner even in folk of restless Northern blood. Veronica herself ceases, in such enchanting atmosphere, to do anything or think of anything, but willingly sits smiling at the children who, there as elsewhere, seem to be peculiarly attracted by her. Neither does she hesitate, if she wants some special information about the stately Villas and spacious gardens that overhang Frascati, to ask for it from one of the clerical groups. Delighted to hear a foreigner talk their tongue so impeccably, they vie with each other in telling her all she wants to know, and a good deal more, and we thus become friends with the people, both pagan and sacred, of the place. Lamia says she wishes she were a nursemaid from Sora or Norba, or, for that matter, even a young neophyte for Holy Orders, so that she might live never doing anything in this narcotic neighbourhood ; overlooking the fact that all is not sunshine and loitering on drowsy terraces even for those she thus envies. We are still in the month of March ; withal, we have to resort to sunshades sometimes, or, better still, to the ilex groves of one of the Villas close at hand. They seem slowly mouldering away from generations of disuse, and the marble or travertine ruins of the

plashing fountains, like the stone steps that lead up from cascade to cascade, are surrendered to the tender grace and greenery of moss and lichen. But the water foams and falls just as abundantly as when, in the days of Papal nepotism, wealthy, cultivated, semi-Pagan Cardinals, like the one who made a home for Winckelmann at the Villa Albani outside the Porta Salaria, came hither and passed lettered summers in the halls of their own building and gardens of their own design. Their scarlet hats still hang from the ceilings of vast halls ; and their wise, graceful leisure still seems to haunt the rooms in which they once dwelt, prayed, and pored over newly disinterred gems and statues. He was not far wrong who said that, for choice, he would be a beautiful woman from seventeen to thirty, a successful General from thirty to fifty, and a Cardinal for the rest of his days. But of course he was thinking of Cardinals as they were in the days of Leo X., Julius II., and Sextus V., not as they are to-day, extremely pious and rather pinched for means. Were there ordinary creature comforts, or what spoilt sybaritic people from the North consider such, to be had at Frascati, it would be a much more agreeable headquarters than Rome, over and above its being far more healthy.

But the 'Hotel' that has been built since olden days is as little attractive within as it looks inviting without; and, though one can be at the Baths of Diocletian in fifty minutes by the railway that runs across the Campagna, the train service is as inconvenient and unserviceable as most things of the sort in modern megalomaniac Italy. It is a comfort to get beyond the reach of the attempt to rival England and France in material expedients, and to move among little towns and villages that have not yet been smitten with the ambition to imitate at a pitiable distance the material manifestations of wealthier lands.

I was curious to see to what extent Tivoli had succumbed to the influence of what in popular parlance is called Progress; but though it too is now connected with Rome by what is to all intents and purposes a railway, it had suffered but small hurt, though there were indications that it would shortly do so. When I first slept at the little inn, in a brick-paved room immediately outside whose open window stood the lovely Temple of the Sibyl, its only visitors were artists from the Eternal City, and occasional travellers; and the walls of its one sitting-room told what manner of men were these fitfully coming guests. They were

covered with the fancies of those who emptied their wine-flasks and smoked their pipes within them. Every haphazard whim that flits through the painter's brain was represented on some square inch or other of that diminutive rectangular room. Love, of course, was the protagonist; love in raptures, love in despair, love sighing, kneeling, and embracing; love in every stage and attitude; the ruling passion, in paint or pencil, in every conceivable phase. But fighting likewise was well represented, with pretorian guards, slaves, chains, servitude, and death. Merriment, too, was pictured lavishly, in jovial-looking fellows roaring with laughter, in huge pipes emitting volumes of smoke, accompanied by interminable drinking. Sometimes the artist had drunk more Falernian than was good for him, and his fancies had grown —well, a trifle voluptuous. But these had been treated by some late comer in palimpsest fashion, and had practically been obliterated. All of them had now disappeared under a Parisian wall-paper. When I told Lamia of the change, she exclaimed, as did Uncle Toby when, after speaking respectfully of the Rebel Archangel, he was reminded that the Devil was damned long ago,—'I'm sorry for it!'

Probably few English people are familiar even with the name of Pietro Cossa. But his *I Borgia*, *Nerone*, and other tragedies hold the Italian stage, and deserve to do so, both by their dramatic action and their literary merit. I remember giving some account of them in an English magazine, many years ago, probably with little or no effect. But I pointed out to Veronica, who is well instructed in such things, a graceful tablet let into the walls of the Sibyl, recording that Pietro Cossa used to come there frequently and write his plays. What a contrast there is between the reverence felt by all classes in Italy for persons of literary distinction, and the general indifference regarding them entertained in England! In the Subalpine Realm men do not receive homage for wealth or titles, but for what they have done in literature, music, or painting. I remember walking up to Bellosguardo to see if a hospitable friend of mine, the widow of an English Ambassador whose father before him had filled a similar post early in the nineteenth century, had returned from Sicily to her beautiful Villa and garden, both so much indebted to her energy and taste. I rang at her door, a domestic peered from the topmost story, and called out, '*Chi è?*' (Who is it?) The

gardener, who was pruning hard by, whose beard was of several days' growth, and who, I am sure, could neither read nor write, threw up his arms in indignation, and replied, before I myself could answer, '*Hè! Il Gran Poeta!*' His oratorical exaggeration caused me to smile. But his exclamation, as far as he was concerned, was perfectly sincere, and typical of the mental attitude of the race whose gondoliers recite the poetry of Tasso, and who speak of Florence as the City of Dante. One's own countrymen do not thus honour the mind. Were an English Sovereign to visit a King of Italy or a President of the French Republic, it is certain that among the guests invited to meet him would be men distinguished in the Arts and Sciences. Were such visits to be returned, I will be bound to say that in the long catalogue of the invited no such names would be found. Perhaps one who cannot possibly be thought to have any personal grievance to express may be allowed to note the above contrast, and to regret it. One has no wish to see poets, painters, sculptors, architects and musicians confounded with State officials. But if an example of esteem for what is specially estimable were delicately and tactfully set by the Throne, it would be imitated,

by degrees, by the nation at large, whose state would thereby become more gracious.

The mention of that lovely Villa at Bellosguardo recalls to me the time, twenty years since, when the diplomatist I have referred to presided over the English Embassy in Rome, and extended to me within it, and in its delightful garden, since then much curtailed in size, the most agreeable hospitality. He was an Englishman of Englishmen, of the old school of charming manners, flavoured by occasional downrightness of speech. I inquired of him, one day, if it was true that, as I had been told, Depretis, then Prime Minister of Italy, asked him in the course of an important diplomatic colloquy, what, in certain circumstances, Russia would do, and that he had replied, 'Russia be damned!' A smile broke over his face as he confessed, 'I am afraid it is.' There has been worse diplomacy than that on critical occasions.

When one lets oneself wander in a labyrinth of reminiscences, one runs the risk of seeming to be devoid of purpose, and perhaps I have been meandering in that futile fashion. But did we not yield to a kindred temptation, when, in our drive from Tivoli to Subiaco, and halting for the sake of our horses at Vicovaro, we went afoot,

as I had done in my younger days, in search of Horace's Sabine Farm? Yet how can any one find himself on the banks of the Digentia—

Me quoties reficit gelidus Digentia rivus—

and not try to persuade himself that he, he at last, has verily discovered the spot where the best boon companion that ever lived laid down his choicest Massic pressed from the grape in the Consulship of Manlius. At Subiaco one is on firmer ground; for in the picturesque Convent, approached through ilex woods above the town, is still the *Sacro Speco* of Saint Benedict, and likewise a small body of Benedictines, whose Priore begged me to stay with them as long as I would, whenever I wanted either to meditate or to write. Whereupon, Lamia, much to his delectation, for he had some acquaintance with English, having sojourned for a time at the affiliated Benedictine Monastery designed by Pugin, at Ramsgate, quoted the following stanzas, to which Veronica listened once more with patient and philosophic smile:

"'" Father, farewell! Be not distressed,
And take my vow ere I depart,
To found a Convent in my breast,
And keep a cloister in my heart."

And I have kept my vow. For when
  The cuckoo chuckles o'er his theft,
When throstles sing again, again,
  And runnels gambol down the cleft,

With these I roam, I sing with those,
  And, should the world with smile or jeers
Provoke or lure, my lids I close,
  And draw a cowl about my ears.'

VI

190–. *Between Rome and Florence.*

'We entered Rome, it is true,' said Lamia plaintively, 'across the shaggy Campagna, with the loitering Tiber and waterless aqueducts for appropriate guides, but withal by train. Surely we are not to leave it in like fashion? It would run too counter to itself to do so. Dear Veronica, to my rescue!'

'It has all been arranged,' answered Veronica, 'though not without some difficulty. Time was when it was an easy matter to travel by *vetturino* from Rome to Florence; now it takes some little trouble to find carriage, horses, and driver for the purpose. However, it has been done, and a five-days' journey will bring us to your, I hope, unforgotten Tuscan Winter-Quarters.'

The night before we left, the April moon being but forty-eight hours from full,—for Veronica had conspired with me to time our time of starting so that moonlight should accompany us,—we did not fail to pay farewell to the Fontana di Trevi and drink of the water that, taken on the eve of departure, is said to bring one back infallibly to Rome. Mindful of what she was pleased to call that compromising reminiscence of my first visit to the *Acqua Vergine* ever so many years ago, Lamia tendered her palm as drinking-cup to us all; and I fancied our Biographer showed himself as insatiably thirsty even as the Roman Legion of ancient story.

'Let us,' she said, 'believe as many legends as possible. I once heard you confess,' she added, turning to me, 'that one knows many things about men and women one should never permit oneself to think of them; and may I avow that I believe numbers of things I know to be not true? Is that foolish, Veronica?'

'Not in the least. It is the secret of Poetic Faith, perhaps of all Faith; thus accommodating, as Bacon says so admirably, the shows of things to the affections of the mind.'

'Then we shall assuredly return to Rome,' said Lamia. 'One always returns, is it not said, to

one's earliest loves; and Rome is, looked at retrospectively, or read backward, as we all know, Amor.'

We drove out of the *Porta del Popolo* in unuttered thought, and were well beyond the Milvian Bridge before the silence was broken, and many a league further on our way before we ceased to talk of Rome and what we had left, and began to think of what was before us. Our first halting-place for the night was to be Civita Castellana, and our other stopping-stages the Falls of Terni, Spoleto, and Foligno, but there would be little to wean us from our Roman recollections till we got to Perugia, and there made a halt of a couple of days, dedicating one of them to Assisi.

'Have you ever been to Urbino?' Lamia asked.

'Yes,' I replied, 'and on the same occasion to Gubbio, to San Sepolcro, to the little Republic of San Marino, and thence to Rimini, Faenza, and Forlì, whence my companion and I drove across the Apennines to Florence in one day, without travelling in the dusk at either end of it. But our conveyance was not a sumptuous carriage like this, but a *bagherino* drawn at a cheery pace by a Romagnole pony.'

'May we all go, some day, to Urbino,

Veronica?' asked Lamia in her most imploring manner.

'*Speriamo!*' said Veronica; 'let us hope so. But why Urbino especially?'

'Because of Raphael. Before ever I came to Italy I believed him to be the supreme Painter; and in that belief I am now confirmed.'

'I am glad to hear you say so,' I observed. 'Such was long the opinion of the best judges; and, though brushed aside in recent times in favour of artists of more violent or less balanced gifts, it will again, I cannot help suspecting, be the general opinion. Indeed, I think one can already discern signs of returning sanity in this as in other judgments, after a period that one once had the audacity to nickname the Age of Nonsense. In the long run, mankind is sane in its judgments on Literature, Painting, Architecture, Sculpture, Music, and even, to descend in the scale of dignity but scarcely of importance, in Politics. Otherwise, what would become of us?'

'Yet one can quite understand,' said Lamia, 'that continuous sanity, like absolute perfection or unblemished virtue, is rather exasperating. I once heard some one say that the one thing she could not stand in you was your equable temper——'

'She could not have known me very intimately,' I interrupted.

'And I myself,' Lamia went on, 'know so impeccable a wife that I often feel I shall not die happy unless I open the paper some fine morning and find her the heroine of the latest scandal. Raphael exasperates in a similar manner. He is perfect; almost what Tennyson in "Maud" calls faultily faultless. But am I wrong in thinking that, in Painting, if an artist has invention, variety, strength, refinement, and glamour, he cannot be too faultless in execution? In Poetry it may possibly be otherwise; but, in Painting, technique seems to count for so much, and the want of it is such a patent blemish, that, granted the other qualities one has named, too perfect he cannot be. Am I right?'

'I scarcely know why you appeal to me,' I answered, 'unless it be you think that one who may possibly have some knowledge of the secrets of one Art cannot be without apprehension of the secret of the others. Truly, the same principles underlie them all; so that what is true of one cannot but be true of the rest. But I should like to hear what Veronica has to say on the point.'

'Lamia seems to me to be right in what she

has said. One can put up with, indeed more than put with, a certain amount of technical carelessness in Poetry, provided it be in other respects of a very high order, as not unoften, for instance, in Shakespeare and Byron. But similar blemishes in a picture would be all but fatal to it in the estimation of connoisseurs, since it would be the first thing that struck them in it.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I think that is so. Yet has there not been a tendency of late to demand from poets the same technical faultlessness that in a painter is all but indispensable? Sitting one afternoon with Tennyson in his garden at Aldworth, where he had been recalling his youthful experience of the incendiary action of the Rebeccahites, I observed that what seemed to me two of his finest lines, though I had never heard them quoted, must have been suggested to him by what he had just described. And then I cited them:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion drawing nigher
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly dying fire.

'"Do you know where I got that idea?" he asked. "I got it from a Methodist magazine, where I had read of explorers in desert lands lighting watch-fires to keep off prowling beasts of

prey." "You made good use of it," I said, "yet perhaps there is what you would now regard as a slight blemish in the first line." "What is that?" he asked quickly, for his artistic sensitiveness was always on the alert. "The close approximation of the same vowel sound in lion and higher," I replied. "You are quite right," he observed, "it *is* a blemish. I never thought of it." "No," I took courage to say, "I should be quite wrong if I really thought it a blemish worth noticing; but I suspected you now would consider it such. You have laid an additional burden," I went on somewhat boldly, "on all future writers of verse by the fastidious finish of your own." "It isn't artificial, is it?" he asked with quick sensitiveness. And when I did not answer the question, he laid his hand on my arm and said, "Tell me! It isn't artificial, is it?" I knew how he loved truthfulness above all things, so I replied, "Yes, it is; but"—for I would not have wounded him, then advanced in years, for worlds—"I suppose it is the right sort of artifice." I offer this as an illustration of what we were talking about. Short poems cannot well be too fastidiously perfect in expression throughout, but long ones conceivably may be, and certainly should not be

severely judged because of occasional imperfection. A lawn should be smooth, and I have heard Veronica point out that garden-paths should be neat and orderly; but a mighty expanse of mountain can afford to be rough ever and anon, and a high road is all the better for a few undulations.'

We did not fail to halt at the Temple of Clitumnus, and there made the mid-day meal Veronica's thoughtfulness had provided for us. When it was over, I asked Lamia to recite the stanza concerning the spot in the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*. Whereupon she blended her silvery voice with that of the rippling water:

'And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportions, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee: beneath it sweeps
Thy currents' calmness, oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with its glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, 'chance, some floating water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.'

'Well might Bishop Heber,' I said, 'himself a poet and, therefore, presumably a judge of poetry, pronounce a glowing eulogium on the lines Lamia

has just quoted. And with what ease Byron passes from them to Velino's "roar of waters" at Terni! Yet more striking is the sudden transition, immediately afterwards, to Rome, saluting it as his country, the city of the soul, and the Niobe of nations. But, Lamia, recite for us again.' Instantly complying, she called on her unerring young memory for stanzas that never can be forgotten by those who know what is great poetry and revere it:

'O Rome, my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead Empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty nursery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, ye
Whose agonies are evils of a day.
A World is at our feet, as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations, there she stands,
Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe,
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago.
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now.
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers. Dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise with thy yellow waves and mantle her distress!'

'Here,' I said, when Lamia ceased, 'are no awkward inversions, no straining after effect, no striving to be original, but, on the contrary, continuous directness of appropriate utterance, manifesting an unsurpassed mastery over language and verse. Well might Ruskin declare that Byron had taught him how to write. Well might Goethe and Scott outdo themselves in enthusiasm over their great contemporary, who rode Pegasus as though horse and rider were one. Yet I remember a weekly guide of critical opinion affirming that Byron's poetry was only "the apotheosis of commonplace," and the editor of another weekly paper of yet wider repute declaring that, in his opinion, Scott, the author of the last three hundred lines in *Marmion*, and perhaps, when at his best, the most Homeric of all our poets, was "only a spirited versifier." That is what comes of what I think may be called a sybaritic, emasculated taste in poetry. But I believe a reaction is setting in against such lamentable judgments.'

'Do you think,' asked our Biographer, 'they do any harm, or that people in general are much influenced by them?'

'I am disposed,' I said, 'to think that in

periods of mental indolence or excessive receptivity they may seriously mislead for a time. But it is, of course, only for a time. Some foolish fellow may show one the wrong road, when one is exploring ; but one finds out the mistake in due course, and ends by hitting the right one again.'

'In assigning Raphael the place of primacy as a painter,' said Lamia, 'after so often gazing on his frescoes in the Vatican, and then associating them with his easel pictures in Florence and elsewhere, ought one not to allow that Leonardo da Vinci would have to be bracketed with him, had that insatiable experimentalist left as large and various a body of finished work ?'

'Perhaps so,' I answered. 'Volume and variety of execution, where the work itself is good, should never be lost sight of, whether in painting or poetry, in estimating the rank of poet or painter in the hierarchy of distinction. Genius of the highest order is essentially fertile, teeming with ideas, and yearning with the desire of bringing them to birth. Its progeny, too, are as multiform as they are numerous. Like the joyful mother of children in the Scriptures, it exults in the unceasing exertion of productive power.'

'Then,' said Veronica, 'Tintoretto, with whom

Lamia is but imperfectly acquainted, since she has not been to Venice——'

'When am I to be taken there?'

'Some day, I hope,' Veronica replied. 'But, as I was going to say, Tintoretto also must not be forgotten; for his genius has covered more wall-space, I should think, than any other painter.'

'Between the really great and the really great,' said our Biographer, 'are not comparisons, save for some illustrative purpose, more than unnecessary? Between those who have what are called certain qualities, and those who have every qualification of their art, equality should not be suggested. But the Great Masters do not compete with, they rather complement and complete, each other.'

A consentaneous silence fell on us, for twilight, suggestive of thought, and still more of feeling, was beginning to steal among the olive slopes, to darken the leaves of the freshly foliaged vines, and to turn yet more pallid the fantastic branches of the burgeoning fig-trees. We had reached the foot of the incline that leads to Perugia; and, that towering city being the bourne of our long day's travel, a pair of cream-coloured *bovi* were waiting, to help our tired team up the ascent at the leisurely pace of the drawers of the

plough. Deeper waxed the dusk, for the moon had not yet risen above the mountainous Umbrian horizon, and there was a never-ceasing silvery ululation—is it of sorrow or of rapture?—of the vesper nightingales. Perhaps they sing for joy and rapture both; for, as Wordsworth says, there is a certain mood when

> Pleasant thoughts
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

Then suddenly flitted a fire-fly among the olives, then another, and another, and many another still, and the full moon rolled slowly up on her golden tire above the Umbrian range, and, thus accompanied, we wound up the hill that leads to the once unruly but now peaceful Etruscan city.

There is always a certain tinge of sadness in backward-looking thought, and Veronica and I could remember that we once spent a delightful month there together, when along the city ramparts there still stood the ruins of the Fortress erected by Paul III., avowedly, as was legibly inscribed on it, to curb the turbulence of its citizens. Our quarters were in an Italian inn abutting on the Corso, and on the window-ledge of our sitting-room we used to eat our ices, sent in from a

neighbouring confectioner's, when of an afternoon a military band played just opposite, and the young bloods and sparkling-eyed damsels sauntered up and down, and, as Shakespeare puts it,

Entertained the time with thoughts of love.

That, no doubt, is a very agreeable form of entertainment; but the pity of it is that Italian damsels, for the most part, entertain the time with thoughts of nothing else; and the suspicion I have always had that Shakespeare visited Italy is strongly confirmed by his portrayal of the character and conduct of Juliet, not to say of Juliet's nurse. True it is that, in his day, Italians came to England in no small number; but they were Italian men, Papal Legates and their attendants, scholars of the Renaissance, architects, artists of all kinds, and the rest. But they did not bring their womenkind with them; and English maidens are, in certain respects, to Italian maidens as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine. I do not forget that a very slight foundation of real experience serves a great poet for the raising of a vast idealised superstructure. But some foundation there must be; and one has difficulty in believing that even the numerous translations into English of Italian

books in Shakespeare's time, of themselves enabled him to surmise with such accuracy the Italian temperament he so often portrays in his dramas. Romantic young folks in Italy—and they are all romantic in what the same authority calls 'the office and affairs of love'—will inflame each other with a passion that endures for months, aye, even for years, by merely gazing at each other, without any opportunity of exchanged speech ever occurring. Sometimes they will contrive to kneel next each other in cathedral or church, and exchange whispers at the most solemn moments of Mass or Benediction, and name a trysting-hour in the same edifice, where they may bring each other violets or carnations. The girl, no doubt, cannot go there alone; but, if her duenna be any one save her mother, she will have no difficulty in keeping tryst; for almost every Italian woman will help in other folks' amatory manœuvres with as much zeal as if they were her own. Dante became endlessly enamoured of Beatrice without ever having addressed her. And what says *Francesca da Rimini* in the greatest of all narrative passages in verse?

Amor che a nullo amato amar perdona.

I am not unaware that the interpretation of it

has given rise to controversy; but surely it signifies that they who are loved must perforce love in return. I daresay that was true enough about Shakespeare when he himself was the lover, for, as he says pointedly,

> She is a woman, therefore to be wooed,
> She is a woman, therefore to be won,

and affirms, further:

> . . . that man is no man
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

But experience must have shown him that English men and English women, not in themselves unattractive, often love in vain. What a debt we Northern folk owe to Italy! Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Byron, Shelley, drank deep of the Ausonian Helicon, but none of these as deeply of it as Shakespeare.

Of Perugia, too much has recently been written, I tell Lamia, for anything to be said of it here; and one can remember having oneself written a paper concerning it which George Henry Lewes, its then editor, published in the *Fortnightly Review;* and that must be a goodly time ago. Neither need anything be set down here regarding Assisi, though we spent a long day there with Lamia, for

it also is now well known to so many of one's countrymen. But I cannot help recalling that Assisi once seemed deserted of all save the spirit of poverty that animated Saint Francis and his brethren, and what I most vividly remember of its lonely aspect on the occasion of my first visit to it is accurately described in the following lines :—

> He saw a bent and withered dame advance
> Slow toward the shrine, her spindle in her hand,
> Singing, to mind her of the days gone by,
> A sweet love-ditty, low and plaintively.

There are some simple sights that remain imprinted as pictures in the mind ever after. That was one of them.

. . . . .

'Oh, how delightful!' exclaimed Lamia.

We had just come out of the Cathedral at Arezzo, where we had been gazing at the stained-glass that Michelangelo declared must have fallen from heaven, but which, lovely as it is, seems to me to be surpassed by that at Fairford, in our own dear Island. It was not the stained glass, however, or anything at Arezzo, that caused the above exclamation, but the reading aloud by Veronica of a letter just arrived from Florence, offering us the

free use for a week of a villa above Careggi, in the midst of the most beautiful garden and *podere* imaginable. We had not intended to pass more than a night in Florence, for to all of us hotels, especially in Italy, are a mar-pleasure. They seem to be a mixture of London, Cairo, and New York, in the heart of Tuscany.

Our last day's drive from Rome to Florence was from Arezzo, and the fire-flies were in the soft twilight air by thousands as we descended the hill that, on the Siena road, leads to the Gate that is known as the Porta Romana. The Florentines, too, were in the electrically-lighted streets in equal numbers, and the Duomo, and the Tower of Giotto, and the Palazzo Vecchio soared silently in the moonlight above the humming crowd. The old sense of magical enthralment took possession of us all, and Lamia's eyes gleamed and glittered with delight. Shortly,—for Florence, that occupies so large a place in history, in art, and in one's affections, covers but a comparatively small plot of ground,—we were among the fire-flies and the nightingales again, crawling past Careggi, where Lorenzo died, unshriven by Savonarola, and then winding up a smooth gravel drive, bordered by monthly roses and sweet-smelling irises in full

bloom, and heard once again the Tuscan welcome and Florentine aspirate from retainers so well known to us of old.

. . . . .

Villa ——, Careggi, Florence. Any one who reads this Diary has some acquaintance perhaps with 'Lamia's Winter-Quarters'; and though Florence, in less degree no doubt than 'Universal Rome,' is a theme that seems never to be exhausted and never to pall, Lamia advances no request that it should be struck twice for a stream that has already flowed so abundantly.

'But tell me,' she says, as we sit outside the Villa which once housed the neoplatonist, Marsilio Ficino, and gaze down on Florence, that must have looked in Medicean days pretty much as it looks now, 'of your first Winter in Florence, in the way you have recalled something of your first Winter in Rome. It followed the latter, within a twelvemonth, did it not?'

'Yes,' I said. 'When, a year before that again, I saw Florence for the first time, but remained for only ten days, naturally I resolved to form better acquaintance with it before much more water flowed under the Ponte Vecchio. I had never forgotten sitting on the *Sasso di Dante*, not

then yet, as now, let into the wall, and peeling fig after fig from a well-stored basket, while gazing at Giotto's Tower and Brunelleschi's Dome ; and the all-embracing walls, the rough stony ascent to San Miniato, and the outline of the Carrara hills, when the sun set beyond the Cascine, had equally retained their hold on my memory. But, in the brief interval, Florence had been selected as the Capital of Italy, in order, in vain as it turned out, to counteract the cry of 'Roma Capitale!' The contractors were already at work, pulling down the old walls, substituting for them *Viali* or Boulevards, and committing other enormities of a like sort. As everybody who knows Florence is aware, worse has happened since then ; but it would need much renovating Vandalism to destroy the beauty of the City of Dante ; and, of all the most famous towns of Italy, Florence has suffered least from merciless restoration. In the winter I speak of, little of the kind had yet been done ; and, as I could not well live in a villa all by myself, I had to be satisfied with renting a bachelor apartment at No. 14, *Lung' Arno Acciaioli*, and dining every day at the *Club de' Nobili*, as it was called, in the adjacent *Via Tornabuoni*.

I had brought but one letter of introduction

with me, but in the Florence of those days one soon knew everybody, if it were one's desire to do so. It was for a maiden lady whose name was then a household word in Florence, and, as that of an English authoress both in prose and verse, was not unknown in England likewise. But it is an oblivious world, this we live in; which caused Tennyson once to say that, in the course of time, all that would survive of him would be an entry in some biographical encyclopædia to this effect: 'Tennyson (Alfred), a poet of the nineteenth century, who invented a new metre.' I think one may safely say that will prove, centuries hence, an unfulfilled prediction. But when I name Isa Blagden, most persons will ask, Who was Isa Blagden? Externally she was not, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, exceptionally favoured; but she had a beautiful soul, a quickly vibrating and richly stored mind, and an attaching personality,—one, in short, whom to know was to love.

Quick sympathy, especially when allied with exceptional intelligence, often confers on its possessor a kind of second sight; and one example of this in Isa Blagden comes, as the phrase is, very close home to me. Once when I had walked up to the Villa Giglione, and found her occupied in

writing a note that had to be taken at once to Florence, I opened a small book of photographic portraits lying on the table, and when she was free to attend to me, asked, 'Who is that?'

'The person you ought to make your companion for life, if you can,' she answered.

I did not know she meant seriously what she had said, and, to tell the truth, I gave it no further thought. But when, some months later, I took leave of her before returning to England she handed me a note and said:

'This will afford you the opportunity of making the acquaintance of the original of the photograph that, on your seeing it, betrayed you into an unusual exhibition of curiosity.'

Not sharing her second sight, I put the note in my pocket-book, and there it remained, scarce remembered, for some time. But, one day in London, seeing I could not catch the train by which I had intended to return to the country, and, finding myself in the neighbourhood of the address on Isa's note, I presented it.

['May I ask,' I said to the Poet, on reading the preceding reminiscence, 'if the photograph was of some one who has just driven into Florence on a corporal work of mercy, viz., to bring out

certain fancy bread from the English baker to which you are much addicted?'

'Your talent for guessing, Lamia,' he answered, 'is almost equal to dear Isa's.'—*Lamia.*]

I can remember no gradual growth of friendship with Thomas Adolphus Trollope, the author of the well-known *History of the Commonwealth of Florence.* Though he was my senior by a quarter of a century, we seemed to be close friends from the very moment we first grasped each other's hands. Unlike his brother Anthony, who, though likewise a delightful companion, and brimming over with active intelligence, was in no accurate sense of the word intellectual, and as unhelpful and impatient an arguer as I ever met, Thomas Adolphus Trollope rejoiced in threshing out afresh the old metaphysical and theological problems, handling them with a rare dialectical skill; and many a duologue had we on those unendingly interesting themes. But such were far from being our only joint diversion. He was known to all the English residents in Florence as 'dear old Tom Trollope,' not because of his age, for he was then but little past the meridian of life, but of the affection he inspired, and most of all in the younger and more attractive members of that

community; and many a delightful evening did we sally forth together to pass among folk of very moderate means, but fair looks, merry ways, and congenial hospitality. I had not known him long before he took me one evening to one of the most agreeable houses I ever visited, that of Franz Pulzsky, the Hungarian patriot and scholar, whom the events of 1848–9 had driven into exile. His wife, the daughter of a Viennese banker, was as charming a hostess as he was a genial host; and, assisted by her young children, she entertained the most heterogeneous body of guests I ever saw gathered together, all equally at home in his spacious Italian Villa on the Southern side of the Arno.

On the occasion of my first evening there, not very long after my arrival, he quitted for a moment his valuable collection of coins he was showing to some other guests, and, coming over to where I was, said in the stentorian tones he seemed incapable of modifying:

'Ha! there you are. I see you have already made the acquaintance of this beautiful lady. But she must surrender you for a little, for I want to make you acquainted with her husband.'

Petitioning to be allowed to return, I rose, and

soon found myself in the presence of the famous Nihilist, Bakounin, a huge mountain of a man who was sipping a tumbler of tea made in Russian fashion, and propounding to a circle of attentive listeners the most destructive of social doctrines in the most cheerful manner imaginable. The little group around him made way for us.

'Here, Bakounin, I want to make known to you an English Conservative who will listen to your revolutionary theories with amicable toleration, but whom you must not detain too long, for he has only just made the acquaintance of your wife, to whom I have no doubt he is longing to return.'

Such were the easy ways of that varied and polyglot society, where musicians, painters, patriotic versifiers, political fugitives with a price placed on their heads, erudite professors, and fair gracious women, gave one abundant choice of social diversion. Of Bakounin and his wife, a Polish lady some years younger than her eloquent husband, and endowed with the proverbial attractiveness of her race, I saw much during that Florentine winter and spring, cultivating with them an acquaintance singularly agreeable since so fresh and original. But in the course of it an incident equally unique,

but less pleasant, and in sooth most absurd, arose out of the over-hasty temper of two young people, of whom I am sorry to say I was one. There was a promising Italian violinist, whose name I do not remember, whom certain musical enthusiasts wished to buy off from the *leva*, Anglicè the Conscription, in order that he might pursue uninterruptedly his professional career. For this purpose a series of *Tableaux Vivans* were to be given in the *Sala Dante*, and some of the most attractive persons in Florence were pressed into the service. I really do not know why, but I was named Honorary Secretary, having no duties to discharge, save to occupy, to cite a famous historic phrase, a position of absolute freedom and no responsibility, which entitled me to be present at the rehearsals of the projected performance. Madame Bakounin had to represent Lucrezia Buti in a *Tableau* in which a Polish artist, a cousin of hers, was to be Frà Lippo Lippi. At one of the rehearsals I offered to escort her home. It was a drive of only some five or six minutes, but, as it was a wet evening, I thought the same conveyance would serve for both. I cannot help smiling as I recall what ensued. On reaching the foot of the steps of the Sala, Frà Lippo Lippi was at our side,

and a difference of opinion arose between us as to whose was the carriage that had been hailed. He failed somewhat in courtesy, and being then, like him, in my hot youth, I am afraid I had not my temper duly in hand. The result was that, after Continental fashion, he said, '*Vous me renderez raison*,' the English of which is, 'You will give me satisfaction.' I as promptly replied, 'I shall be found to-morrow between three and four at the Club de' Nobili,' and carried off the Nun from the exasperated Friar. Early on the morrow I acquainted Pulzsky with what had occurred, and gave him to understand that, annoying as it was, I should, of course, as the phrase is, stick to my guns. I went to the club in the afternoon at three o'clock and remained there till four, but no one asked for me. Oddly enough, Bakounin was to spend the evening with me in my little apartment on the Arno, and he, ignorant then and always, I daresay, of the ridiculous incident, consigned to perdition governments and society in the most genial and entertaining manner. I went to the Pergola theatre the following evening, and, on the point of leaving after the fall of the curtain, I was accosted by Frà Lippo Lippi, now clothed like an ordinary citizen and in his right mind. He held out his hand,

saying, 'Am I right in believing you had no wish to insult me the other evening?' I answered, 'Certainly; and let us forget all about it'; which we both did, and I walked homeward exhilarated, I will confess, by the reflection that I had escaped what one's own countrymen, without farther inquiry, would have regarded as little to one's credit. I asked no questions, but do not doubt that Madame Bakounin had intimated her disapproval of a proceeding into which Florence, then as now justly charged with having a double dose of the *mauvaise langue*, might without the faintest foundation have dragged her own irreproachable name. After Sadowa and the introduction into Austro-Hungary of the Déak Constitution, Pulzsky was free to return to Buda-Pesth. Within three months of doing so he lost his wife and eldest daughter, victims to the malady that was then prevailing there. Many years later, when I visited him in the Hungarian capital on returning from an excursion to Greece, Constantinople, and Roumania, he narrated to me how he had met Bakounin in the streets of Geneva, how the famous Nihilist had said to him that, despairing of the success of all projects for the amelioration of Society and Mankind, he was starving himself to

death, which he calculated would occur in about three days' time.

'What was Lucrezia Buti like?' asks Lamia. Falling in with her manifestly mischievous humour, I answer :

'Her complexion was, shall I say, white as the summit of Etna tinged with the rosy-pink of sunrise, and her eyes were blue as the scillas that peer through the snow in Spring over Siberian steppes.'

'Just so,' said Lamia in her most audacious manner. 'I quite understand. Still, I cannot help regretting, for the interest of the Diary, that Frà Lippo Lippi's challenge had so lame a conclusion.'

My sojourn in Florence did not end till there had taken place, in the middle of May, the celebration of the six hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dante, when not only the palaces and bridges, but the outlying Villas for miles round the city, were illuminated with oil-fed lamps and cressets, when the Piazza of the Uffizi was covered in and its pavement boarded over for a Peasants' Ball, and when at the Pagliano Theatre were represented the most picturesque scenes from the *Divina Commedia;* Ristori, Salvini, and Rossi reciting the corresponding passages in the poem.

When the oil-lamps had, like the stars, vanished with the next day's dawn, I started homeward, having, as far as Paris, Madame Ristori, her husband, and their two young children, for my travelling companions.

'But, Lamia, how inadequate seems mere prose, when writing of Florence, indeed of any spot in Tuscany, in its season, as is this, of supreme beauty and enchantment.'

'Then why confine yourself to it,' she replies, 'when escape from it is so easy?

The wild bees hum in golden bay,
  The green frog chirps on fig-tree bole,
And see! down daisy-whitened way
  Come the slow steers and swaying pole.

Curtained, I close my lids and dream
  Of Beauty, seen not but surmised,
And, lulled by love-bird's singing, seem
  Immortally imparadised.

When from the brief sweet swoon I wake,
  And gaze past slopes of grape and grain,
Where Arno, like some shimmering lake,
  Silvers the far-off seaward plain,

A something more than mortal steals
  Over the deepening twilight air,
And, messenger of nightfall, peals
  From belfried peak a call to prayer.

And now the last response is said,
  And, in the hallowed hush, there is
Only a starry dome o'erhead,
  Propped by columnar cypresses.'

VII

The Garden that I Love, Mayday, 190–.

'*Domum, domum, dulce domum!*' exclaimed Lamia as we drove up the lime-tree avenue, in its new suit of fresh green foliage, that leads to the garden that we love.

'Yes,' said Veronica; 'Home! Home! Sweet, sweet home! I will not say that, like Julia in the Forest of Arden, when we were amid the ruins of the Palatine, or the vineyards of Tuscany, I ever felt disposed to exclaim, "When I was at home, I was in a better place." But at least I can truthfully echo, as I trust we all can concerning our home, that touching couplet of Goldsmith,

> Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
> My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee!

How delightful it all looks!'

Our Biographer assumed, not without cause, the particular look of serene satisfaction he wears when panegyrics are passed anew on what is mainly the work of his hands. But I observed that Veronica was less eager to survey the garden than to pass within the house, no doubt to assure herself that no sacrilegious hand had, in her absence, carried off any of her Urns, and that all her prized 'things' had been as piously cared for as when she herself is their custodian; and though one Urn, occupying the place of honour on a snow-white tablecloth, and surrounded by its due array of five o'clock concomitants, shone conspicuously in the Oak Parlour, the name she has given to the spot where we so often gather together under the old Wealden Monarch, she did not join us there for some little time.

'Is it ungrateful,' asked Lamia, as the rest of us complacently settled ourselves in that inviting place, 'to feel so much pleased at finding oneself here once more, all but forgetful of the beauty we have been delighting in elsewhere? I ask the question because I once heard a true lover of Italy reproach with ingratitude the writer of a sonnet I found myself repeating, as we whitened our track this afternoon through mid channel.

Now upon English soil I soon shall stand,
Homeward from climes that Fancy deems more fair;
And well I know that there will greet me there
No soft foam fawning upon smiling strand,
No scent of orange-groves, no zephyrs bland,
But Amazonian March with breast half bare,
And sleety arrows whistling through the air,
Will be my welcome from that burly land.
Yet he who boasts his birthplace yonder lies,
Owns in his heart a mood akin to scorn
For sensuous slopes that bask 'neath Southern skies,
Teeming with wine and prodigal of corn,
And, gazing through the mist with misty eyes,
Blesses the brave bleak land where he was born.

The person who reproached you with ingratitude ended by asking, what better could be expected from so incorrigible an Englishman?'

'This last reproach,' said our Biographer good-naturedly, 'can well be borne, I think, by any one who has the good fortune to be an Englishman, and shows himself by timely, unaggressive patriotism, more or less worthy to be such.'

Those of us who strive to rid themselves of all feeling of self-complacency will never, I suspect, quite succeed in doing so; and though we were conscious that this almost universal foible entered to a certain extent into finding our Northern

garden a worthy competitor of any we had left behind, I do believe we did not deviate far from the truth in affirming that it outflowered them all, even at this early season of the year. Veronica, who had now joined us, and who is least given to over-appraising anything belonging to us, unless it be the latest of her own bargains, some of which, I need hardly say, are slowly following us from Italy, graciously encourages us by extolling the aspect of everything, but asks Lamia if she does not miss the mountains, the olive-slopes, the recurring smiles, and never-failing salutations, of the sociable Tuscan *contadini*.

'The smiles and the salutations, perhaps,' answers Lamia; 'but for mountain ranges, blossom of peach, almond, and judas tree, spacious views, and heavenward-pointing cypress groves, there is ample compensation here. The contented kine in the deepening meadows, the lambs skipping and scampering in pasture and orchard, the choric chant of the jubilant throstles, so different from the somewhat harsh notifications of the hoopoe, who used to strike me as resembling a cuckoo with a cough, may fairly be set off against the purple anemones in the Tuscan corn, and the unchanged Virgilian plough. And as for wild-

flowers, surely as we drove home we saw a wealth of primroses, wind-flowers, and bluebells, matched in no climate but our own.'

'Comparisons apart,' I said, 'who can have failed to observe that those who most exult in the gloomy glory of the pine-woods of Lavernia are the most keenly alive to the repose of a Kentish garden, and that a sympathetic insight into the tender associations of Assisi and the scholarly traditions of Monte Cassino does not disqualify for a loving attachment to the dignified modesty of an English village church? In the enjoyment of the simpler and more natural pleasures, one meets with no contradiction, no after-taste of displeasure, but in contrast perfect uniformity, in change unchanged satisfaction. Even as it is, though, as one has indicated elsewhere, our best virtues and our worthiest aims are the main causes of the Human Tragedy, life is a boon to be thankful for, and would be yet better worth living, if everybody did but know what is not worth having at any price.'

How continuously the men must have worked during our absence, for the garden to look as it does! It matters not whether we are here or away; they dig, weed, sow, stake, train, the

daylight hours through when the weather will let them ; and, when it snows, rains, or freezes hard, they wheel manure on to the ground, pot or prick off in the garden-shed, saw oak firewood for Spring and Autumn evenings, and attend to other innumerable things that would seem trivial to the ignorant observer, but are all important to the comfort and amenity of home. Hence they always look contented. Why should any one be otherwise who works strenuously, is properly paid for it, and has a doing wife and healthily growing children to support ? We are repeatedly told that peasant folk crowd into the big cities because country life is so dull. Who ever found the country dull that has ample but not excessive work to do in garden or field ? One cannot be dull while one is having a friendly wrestling bout with Nature, and showing her one is her master ; and at the close of a long day's use of eyes, hands, and thews, he feels that, like Longfellow's Village Blacksmith, he has earned a night's repose. What wants he with Penny Gaffs, garish street lamps, and the perpetually swinging folding-doors of the Gin Palace ? If anything be as much amiss with the present generation as some persons assert, it is only because there is a growing insurrection against

work, and a barbarian belief that there are forms of work which are degrading. They need to be reminded that

> There is no office in this needful world,
> But dignifies the doer if done well.

When we were in Italy this Spring, an English woman who is well known in the world of letters, and has an active, but hitherto rather fidgety and over-analysing mind, struck me, while retaining her many gifts, as having got rid more or less of the defect I have indicated ; and, as I have known her for many years and am somewhat older than she is, I told her so. She replied that what I had said was perfectly true and that she had brought about the happy change by working every day in her garden, instead of perpetually thinking, arguing, and writing. It is only among an Oriental race the idea could have arisen that work has been imposed on us as a curse. The persons one really pities are not the workers, nor even the drudges, but Byron's dissatisfied drones :

> Vain lords of luxury and ease,
> Whom slumber soothes not, pleasure cannot please.

May 6.—I am reminded, by all I see around me, that one has not got English blood in one's

veins for nothing. I came across a passage the other day in Italy, in the *De Nobilitate* of Poggio —the 'learned Poggius' of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*—which shows how persistent are national characteristics. Poggio did this country the honour of paying it a visit, staying with the then Bishop of Winchester; and in his *De Nobilitate*, he thus writes: '*Nobiles Angli in civitatibus morari ignominiæ loco putant, rura sylvis ac pascuis seclusa ament, vendentes lanam et armentorum fœtus; neque turpe existimant admisceri questui rusticano*'; which Lamia renders thus in our tongue: 'English gentlemen think it unworthy of them to dwell too long in cities, preferring to lead a rural existence amid woods and pastures. They devote themselves to agriculture, producing and selling wool and young stock, nor do they think it is beneath them to take their share in agricultural business generally.' So may it ever be!

May 10.—A touching incident has just happened to Veronica, of which we were all witness. When our home was being slightly enlarged, we lodged in the cottage of a retired housekeeper, that stands on a neighbouring common. She was an excellent plain cook, and she and her niece, who lived with her, made us

most comfortable in every way, and so we became great friends with both of them. Like many another person in her position of life she can 'call cousins,' however distantly, with a family of old standing and high repute in the county, and show heirlooms that testify to the fact. The most precious of these has always been a silver teapot of early Georgian date, that, she often reminded us, held twelve cups. On this piece of antiquity Veronica long cast covetous eyes, and strove to persuade its owner to part with it for an adequate sum, until she discovered that the old lady had an invincible repugnance to doing so.

'No,' she used to say with good-humoured firmness, 'it must go to Kitty' (her niece) 'when I am called away, and so remain in the family, at any rate, for her life.'

But Death the desolator knocked at the door of the cottage while we were in Italy, and claimed the niece first. One of our first sad duties, after our return, was to walk over and see the now lonely old lady. After repeated condolences that I need not set down, but that were received by her with much plaintive simplicity, I noticed that she began to hesitate and, so to speak, fumble in her speech, as though searching for words suitable

to what she wanted to say. At last her thought found utterance: 'Well, now, about the teapot that you have always desired to possess. I want to put a nice-looking stone cross at the head of Kitty's grave, and I thought, if you still would like to have the teapot, I could have a really handsome cross carved and set there, with what you thought the teapot is worth, and it would thus in a sense still be hers, as I always intended it should be.'

Veronica's eyes brimmed with tears, and I think Lamia's did not remain wholly dry; and I silently wished one could have told this pathetic story to Wordsworth, who would have made one of his lovely human and simple poems of it, after the manner of *We Are Seven*. Is it necessary to add that Veronica at once assented to the suggestion, naming, I need scarcely say, an outside figure for the transfer? The old lady at once went upstairs for the teapot, brought it down, carefully wrapped up in the warmest of green baize, unswathed and fondled and fingered it as though it had been a living thing of her own flesh and blood.

'Well, there it is, ma'am, and I am right glad you should have it, for it will have a good home,

and, as I say, when I have put up the cross, it will still be hers, as I always intended it should be.'

So now it will keep company with the battalion of Urns, and be enshrined in the glass-fronted cupboard in the dining-room that contains so many other portions and parcels of the gracious Past; and its late possessor, who, as she would say, has 'in a sense' not quite ceased to be its possessor still, can come and look at it when she will, and satisfy herself that its home is really a good one, and that it will be treated with all the respect due to an heirloom of a county family. Judging from experience, I fancy it will rarely be used, but, when it is, that it will be extolled for its virtue of holding twelve cups.

I have often observed that kindly folk of the humbler sort, when they say something more than usually pathetic, repeat it several times without in the least lessening its touching effect. Is it because of their limited vocabulary, or that, as Disraeli once observed great orators do, they 'prepare their impromptus,' not, like great orators, in order to produce an effect, but that, having sought for words to express deep emotion, and at last found them, and having no others at their

disposal, they reiterate these, with equal sincerity and feeling each time? Be this as it may, I shall always remember the incident I have here set down as another illustration of the truth of the quatrain of Burns, ending:

> That's the true pathos and sublime
> Of human life.

[I have suggested the writing of a poem on the above incident. But the Poet urged two objections. One was that he preferred to leave it to Wordsworth, which I told him was an instance of perverted chronology almost as bad as that of the Transatlantic visitor who, on seeing last summer in his study a photograph of the portrait of Savonarola, attributed, but mistakenly, to Frà Bartolommeo, observed, 'Giotto, of course,' an observation that rather tried even Veronica's well-bred gravity. His second objection was, that, speaking for himself, he never turned into verse what he had already set down in prose, and much doubted if he could do so, since one of the advantages of Poetry over the other Arts is, that the thought and the expression came together. In the other Arts expression has to be groped for, whereas in Poetry it comes of itself,

sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly, but always of itself. He went on to point out that certain modern writers of verse had followed a different method, and illustrated what he meant by quotations, which he will not allow me to reproduce, but which he declared are not poetry, though some of them contain a considerable body of thought. They lack the true accent of Poetry, and sound like the conversation of a man who thinks in one language and translates it into another; Poetry, though using the same words as prose, being a distinct and separate language, a specific tongue which is among the gifts of the Spirit. We often talk on this subject, and only yesterday he said, 'We live in an age of confusion of thought about most things, and about the Arts chiefly; such terms as "prose poems," "word painting," "a symphony in yellow," "tone poets," and the like, testifying to the habit of trying to be emphatic at the expense of accuracy. We want a new *Laocöon.* But where is the Lessing?' *Lamia.*]

May 15.—We feel, every day, more and more happy in our native land, and find it just as true as ever that, having sometimes spent May in other and more Southern latitudes,

. . . None of these, nor all, can match,
At least for him who loves to watch
The wild flowers come, hear wild birds sing,
The rapture of an English Spring.
With us it loiters more than where
It comes, it goes, half unaware ;
Makes Winter short, makes Summer long,
In Autumn half renews its song,
Nor even then doth hence depart,
But hybernates within my heart.

On the slopes of Careggi, Fiesole, or Bellosguardo, it is never quite winter, because of the olives that show ample foliage through December, January, and February. Such change as does take place there after the March Equinox is much more sudden. Spring in the British Isles is more springlike, more hesitating, more capricious, in a word more of the budding coquette, and, if it surprises less, attracts because it tantalises more. The contrast between the two is pretty much the same as between the man and the woman as indicated in a certain drama :

Love's way with us and you is different.
You mind me of the swallow that is here
To-day, and all at once, that yesterday
Was nowhere to be seen, so swift he comes ;

While we are like the lilac-tips, and bud
For a provoking season ere we break.
We dream, not even knowing that we dream,
Up to the very moment that we wake.

May 20.—We have just had a visit from a man of letters we had not seen before, though his name has long been known to us. One rather dreads visits from a 'distinguished author,' lest he should be one of those who imagine the sun rises and sets for printed matter generally, and for their own writings in particular, have an insatiable appetite for praise, lukewarm literary sympathies, keen literary antipathies, and a limited knowledge of the world. Our visitor of yesterday showed himself agreeably free from these foibles. It was some time yesterday before any one not cognisant of his name could have suspected he had ever written a line. He had scarcely exchanged greetings with us before he delighted our Biographer by keen curiosity about the Garden, enchanted Veronica by manifestly sincere interest in her household gods, her furniture, her engravings, her urns, and what Lamia, in moments of sardonic frivolity, calls 'pots and pans generally.' By Lamia he was at once attracted, as who would not be; and, after he had departed, she averred

he was the most agreeable person she had seen for a long time. He entered with quick zest into all her humours, capped her paradoxes, and said to me, *sotto voce*, that he now comprehended the infatuation we all felt for her, an observation I did not forget to repeat to our Biographer, who, I sometimes suspect, wishes no one was infatuated about her save himself.

This absorption in persons and things outside of self was all the more striking, seeing that a Tragic Drama of his has recently been produced at one of the best-known London theatres, and is still being played there, though I doubt if it will remain 'on the boards' much longer. We have all read it, but none of us seen it acted. It fell to Veronica to introduce the subject, which she did with much skill; and as this was received by the writer with perfect simplicity and not the slightest embarrassment, I, with perhaps less tact than Veronica, asked if he had never been warned against committing the fortunes of such a composition to the judgment of a modern London theatrical audience. 'Such admonitions as you refer to,' he replied, 'had more than once reached me; and I will own that they had, insensibly, so far influenced me that I had no intention, at first,

of submitting the work for scenic representation. It was only when strongly urged by several persons, supposed to be experts in such a matter, that I thought it right, if I may say so, to let it be produced by any responsible Manager who wished to do so. The first who was offered the opportunity at once embraced it, which, it seems to me, was much to his credit, since he is an Actor-Manager, and yet there is in it no part suited to his special histrionic powers. I attended the rehearsals at first with much enjoyment, for both actors and actresses threw themselves into their work with a fascinating earnestness. But I soon came to perceive that the conception of the dramatic art on the stage side of the footlights is by no means the same, if I may say so, as one's own ; not so much, I think, that the abstract conception of the two greatly differs, as that, where tragedy in verse is concerned, our actors and actresses, but little practised in such compositions, have a distrust of their own powers, and, still more, a confident belief, only too well founded, in the aversion of contemporary London audiences for dramas of that kind. Their main desire, it soon became apparent, was that the piece should be successful. They rather reminded me of Ministers

in charge of a Bill in Parliament, who say to their followers, "Do you wish the Bill to pass? If you do, you must perforce accept this amendment, and that compromise," till the Measure is amended and compromised almost beyond recognition by the original draftsman, and the result in my own case was that the piece was mutilated and compressed, sometimes to its advantage, but, in the general result, I think, seriously to its detriment, from a strictly dramatic point of view, in order that it might be so far tolerated as not to cause financial loss to the theatre; a consideration, after all, one was bound to allow for. Forgive this long disquisition. But you asked me a question I have tried to answer with perfect frankness. Now may we go into the garden once more?'

Forth we all went, and I noticed that he seemed much more keenly interested in it than in the conversation in which he had been the chief talker, but more from courtesy than from any egotistical impulse. Our Biographer, who is mainly responsible for the Garden, and indeed should in fairness be recognised as its creator, showed himself thoroughly in his element; for, though he has many visitors who exclaim, 'How

beautiful!' 'I never saw, etc.,' 'How *do* you get the things to grow and flower as you do?' the conventional expressions of kindly but ignorant wonder, he less frequently has others whose commendation, being the commendation of understanding, alone confers much satisfaction. Our guest, without being an expert in gardening, showed plainly enough that his expressions of admiration were justified by his familiarity with what he admired; and Veronica said afterwards that he proved he had an eye for colour by the pleasure he took in the combination of *Gypsophilum paniculatum* with *Eryngium amethystinum*. But his observations seemed more addressed to Lamia than to any one else; and, shortly, by a sort of tacit consent, to which even our Biographer, however reluctantly, had to succumb, Lamia became his only guide, and the rest of us retired into the background.

'It is because he finds her so singularly sympathetic,' I suggested.

'And perhaps,' added Veronica, 'because she is charming to look on.'

[I daresay I ought to strike out the last few absurd lines and insert some of those asterisks I warned the reader my editorial discretion would

compel me ever and anon to insert. But I feel I ought not to suppress this evidence of Veronica's characteristic generosity of appreciation. It is quite true I lured our guest from the Garden and its infatuated votaries to the Orchard, thinking it only fair the apple-trees should have a chance, in turn, of being appreciated, and I confess that, like Coriolanus, 'Alone, I did it!' But I do not propose to render any account of the dialogue that took place there, except that it ended by my companion saying, 'And now may I eat this delicious-looking apple?' But a casual observation that I have the faculty of 'making a fellow shockingly communicative,' was the nearest approach to any recognition of my powers of sympathy; and there was not the most distant allusion to my 'charms and attractions.' So there, Veronica!—*Lamia.*]

When our guest had liberated himself from Lamia's captivating meshes [See how I am maligned, even by the Poet!—*Lamia*] and rejoined us, I asked if he saw any prospect of amelioration in the British Theatre.

'How can one,' he answered, 'seeing that the audiences, who are practically the arbiters of what is produced at it, are getting more rather than

less debased in their taste and preferences. The consequence is that Tragedy allied with Literature is tolerated only when presented spectacularly rather than dramatically and the poetic element is compressed to a minimum, and prose plays conceived as comedies are acted as farces.'

'I fear,' I said, 'that is only too true. When Shakespeare wrote his Tragedies for the Stage, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Richard II.* and *Richard III.*, and with them drew large audiences, England had scarcely yet emerged from the period of fiercely-fighting, murdered and murdering, Princes, and the clash of combatant ambitions that were to be satisfied only by continual bloodshed. The Wars of the Roses were still well remembered; the Monarch who had divorced and decapitated more wives than men usually marry, had not long been in his grave; the Sovereign under whose Sceptre Shakespeare chiefly wrote was the daughter of a woman her Father had sent to the scaffold; she in turn imprisoned for many years, and finally beheaded, a Queen whose son succeeded her on the Throne, and who, as far as one can judge, had in the dead of night blown to death her own husband, the husband having instigated men as jealous as himself to slay her

supposed lover before her very eyes. Well might Richard II. say :

> Let us sit upon the floor
> And tell sad stories of the death of Kings,

which Shakespeare himself did on the floor of the theatre in Blackfriars. Once, when travelling in a stage coach, the only other occupant of which was an old woman going to market with her eggs, Shelley, not much interested in her local gossip, suddenly recited the above lines, and she not unnaturally began to fear her travelling companion was an escaped lunatic. The young women and young men (with a few honourable exceptions) who compose our theatrical audiences of to-day are uncommonly like that old woman, and regard, with much the same eyes as she regarded Shelley, any one who

> Tells sad stories of the death of Kings

on the stage. Stories to-day of the life and death of Kings are anything rather than tragic, except when some cosmopolitan Nihilist treats them, but as he also sometimes treats those rather undramatic personages, Presidents of Republics, as vermin to be got rid of. Kings for the most part nowadays die in their beds, and stories concerning them,

till they do, are either scandalous or humorous. Accordingly, if you invite people to the theatre and show them Kings fighting for dear life, dying with harness on their back, wandering on blasted heaths, or exclaiming

> Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
> I never gave you kingdoms, called you children,

they naturally say, "We do not know any such Kings as these. You will be asking us next to be interested in the House of Atreus. Tell us, not about Kings and Queens and battles long ago, but about people more like ourselves, or whom we should like to resemble,—South African millionaires, prosperous married stockbrokers with a private seraglio, and the complications that follow, impoverished peers wanting to marry heiresses, heiresses in love with charming young fellows who have not a penny with which to bless themselves, and such-like personages. Tragedy, aggravated by verse, is what thoroughly up-to-date people call 'a back number.' Plain prose is good enough for us when concerned with something that happened or might have happened yesterday, and about which we can feel that it might have happened to ourselves." Such is their

perfectly natural attitude, they being they, and the times being such as they are. They wish, when in the theatre, if they consent to be serious at all, to be able to say to themselves,

> It had been so with us, had we been there!

They have not imagination enough to put themselves in the position of the Father of Regan and Goneril, or the wife of Othello. If *Twelfth Night*, most sumptuously mounted, be offered them, they just tolerate, because curtailed, the exquisite lines—

> If music be the food of love, play on!
>
> . . . . .
>
> That strain again! it had a dying fall:
> O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour!

And, did they happen to know these lines by heart, doubtless they would quickly add the end of the last one above quoted, "Enough! No more!" and beg the performers to hurry on to the scene where Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek get jovially drunk, sprawl alternately on the table and the floor, and fling empty bottles

at each other. Then their enthusiasm is thoroughly aroused, and they roar with sympathetic laughter.

'In France, people are not so far removed as we are from "sad stories of the death of Kings," and hence the theatrical situation is somewhat different, though the difference is gradually growing less and less. The French Revolution, with its Reign of Terror, is much nearer to them than to us is the struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster; and the Reign of the First and the Third Napoléon, each with its Tragic termination, the Franco-German War of 1870, and the sanguinary atrocities of the Commune, and of those who suppressed it, seem to have happened only yesterday. Lofty Tragedy, therefore, is still not quite so alien to modern French audiences as it is to English ones. Moreover, the French have literary and theatrical traditions of which they are genuinely proud, whereas our people do not dwell on such of these as they have, but are proud instead of their vast Empire, their vigorous young Colonies, their Commerce, their Liberty, their Free Press, their upright Statesmen, all most excellent things, but not the materials for artistic Tragedy. Even in France, moreover, and at the *Théâtre Français* itself, the old traditions have

great difficulty in maintaining themselves, and are being gradually thrust aside for "plain prose" and modern melodrama. *Facilis descensus Averni!* Easy is the descent to the lower regions of Literature and the Drama. *Sed revocare gradum! Hic labor, hoc opus est.* To retrace one's steps! That is difficult indeed. Probably it is impossible.'

June 15.—An amusing if rather painful incident has happened. The Apple Orchard last year was even exceptionally laden with fruit, though many of our neighbours lamented that theirs had suffered seriously from a severe frost in the preceding April. One morning in October we all noticed that the fruit seemed much less in quantity, and the boughs showed unmistakable signs of their having been rifled by hands which had performed their filching hurriedly. We were all very sorry, and Veronica and the gardeners exceedingly wroth about it; so that the robbery got bruited about, and shortly the local police called to say they were quite sure they knew who was the thief, an agricultural labourer who lived some five or six miles away, and drives about sometimes dealing in vegetables and fruit. Were we prepared to prosecute the offender on conclusive evidence forthcoming? Lamia observed that, after all, the

thief, whoever he was, had not taken all the apples, and that there were plenty left for our own consumption. Our Biographer said that fortunately it was no business of his; and I am afraid I hummed and hawed, and ended by suggesting that, if they would bring the culprit to me, I would give him, as they say, a good talking to, would ask the Rector of his parish to do the same, and then trust he would never do the like again. Veronica's sense of right and wrong was not to be evaded by these cowardly subterfuges, and, after rebuking us all round for our want of the commonest moral sense, she at once took possession of the case, expressed her resolve to get at the facts, and very soon laid before us evidence that was damning to the alleged culprit. Her next step was to point out that it was somebody's bounden duty to prosecute him; and it was obvious that the somebody was my reluctant self. The poor fellow, as Lamia and I, a couple of non-moral creatures that we are, speak of him in private intercourse, was committed to the County Gaol, to expiate his offence. Lamia declared she would eat none of the remaining apples, they seemed to taste so 'nasty,' and to have become apples of the Dead Sea, and that she would do her best to prevent

the Prosecutor also from having any. But at last she offered me one, rather shamefacedly; and, gathering another for herself, 'went for it' with a right good will, and, exclaiming, 'Oh, how good!' 'Oh, how juicy!' 'Oh, the best I ever ate!' set to work on another, and another still, imploring me to do the same.

[As it is most likely that the Diarist has made no further entry concerning what he calls 'a rather painful incident,' but has forgotten all about it now that the apple ban has long been removed, I will narrate the sequel, which did not occur till somewhat later. One morning while we were breakfasting, there appeared a respectable but downcast-looking woman at the front door, with five young children, three on one side, and two on the other. On my going to see what she wanted, she dropped a deferential curtsey, told one of the girls to hold herself up, another to put her bonnet straight, assisted the youngest boy to go through that homely operation known as 'blowing one's nose,' and, cuffing the eldest one, bade him stop kicking up the gravel. After these touching preliminaries, warranted to melt the iciest heart, she asked if she might see the Poet, though she did not speak of him in quite that contemptuous

manner, but according him a much more dignified title. I saw at a glance at the rustic family group who she was, and, hastening back to the breakfast-room, and finding them all still there, and Veronica carefully peeling a *Cox's Orange Pippin*, I blurted out straight :

'The wife of the poor man who annexed the apples, and whom you have so unmercifully incarcerated, has come, attended by five starving children, to see you. So, like the Roman People in *Julius Cæsar*,

> If you have tears, prepare to shed them now ! '

'And mind you are firm ! ' said Veronica, as the Poet rose rather slowly. 'Starving children, indeed ! I will engage to say they are as fat as dumplings.'

'Apple dumplings,' I suggested, 'and made with the appropriated apples.'

I turned out to be a prophetess in my own country ; for, after two or three more curtseys, and another look round to see that bonnets were straight, noses blown, and gravel was not being kicked up, she began her tale of woe by saying she was the wife of the honest, sober, hard-working man who had, why she could not understand, unless it were for 'a sort of lark,' carried off the

apples, and was now, and would be for some time longer, in prison. What followed can easily be surmised. She and her children, in consequence, were starving; and could a trifle be spared to save them from complete destitution, the selling of her furniture, and the pawning of the only gown she had in which to go to church of a Sunday? I regret to say the Poet was anything but 'firm'; and he is now contributing so much a week to repair the doing of what was described to him as his 'bounden duty.' Determined Virtue is a very costly article, and somebody must pay for it; and if men will have such inexorably moral wives as Veronica they must be prepared to defray the luxury. *I* should never add to the expenses of a household by such thoughtless conduct.—*Lamia.*]

June 18.—Were I asked what sort of surroundings best minister to the cultivation of Wisdom, I think I should answer, a beautiful yet unpretentious Garden, at one and the same time natural to look on, yet undemonstratively a work of art, of which the King of Bohemia might have said to Perdita:

> . . . This is an art
> Which does mend nature, . . . but
> The art itself is nature.

A garden, such a garden at least, promotes stationariness; and without a good deal of stationariness no good work can be done, and no wise deliberate conclusions be arrived at. When Wordsworth says:

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can,

perhaps he somewhat overstates what he intended to convey, which was, I fancy, that habitual, observant, and thoughtful companionship with woods, mountains, lakes, streams, and rustic lanes, can slowly instruct one in human nature far more surely and effectually than any number of books, or the perpetually mixing with one's fellow-creatures, which only impart partial and oftentimes prejudiced notions concerning it. Be this as it may, a garden teaches, or at least should teach, patience, reasonable content, philosophic resignation under small disappointments, renewed hope, though not of an exaggerated kind, the impossibility of attaining absolute perfection, the worthlessness of the more material forms of success, and the satiety produced by these; and the foregoing are surely important elements in Wisdom. If you

feel you cannot do without change, what is there more changeable than a garden, provided it be not what our Biographer once called a gardener's garden, but gives evidence of Mind, which an eminent Canon of the Church once delighted our Biographer by saying the garden that we love exhibits.

A garden not of the strictly formal kind is never the same, and never looks the same, for two days, or indeed two hours, together, offering one a succession of changes from dawn till dark. A shower changes it, so does the wind, as do all the unseen but never halting forces and influences of Nature under it, above it, and around it. It is almost as shifting in its effects as clouds themselves. I wander out of a morning into the Garden, not in search nor even in expectation of change, for we ourselves are much less changing than it is; but I find that, in the shrubberies, beds, and borders, nothing less resembles yesterday than to-day. Yesterday's roses have faded or are fading, and yesterday's poppies are shattered. But others have opened, and lilies are splendidly conspicuous that, twenty-four hours ago, were not to be seen. There is no such kaleidoscope as a beautiful garden, and it proffers you fresh beautiful

combinations every moment without your contributing to these results by any manipulation of your own. Dew, drouth, rain, sunshine, shade, to all of these it responds instantly. It is as volatile and mercurial as childhood itself; and, for one who dwells in it, it is indeed a nursery, with an endless number of children, all of whom have separate names and distinct characters of their own, and each of which one tends, gazes at, and watches. As people advance in life, if they have children, these have probably quitted the parent nest for explorations of their own, and nephews, nieces, and grandchildren cannot always be with one. A garden offers flowers instead, demanding almost as much love, and requiring almost as much care. In youth, the wander-years as Goethe calls them, we travel, enjoy, learn, acquire knowledge, and so lay the groundwork of future Wisdom. They are not Wisdom in themselves, but knowledge only; the foundations of Wisdom. Some people perhaps would say, 'I wasted all the morning in the garden.' Wasted! Assuredly not, if you looked, loitered, listened, and pondered, as serene, indulgent, loving Wisdom alone knows how to do. Would you have learnt anything so true or so valuable in the Park, the

Mall, the Gossip Club, the House of Commons, or the Law Courts? I doubt it.

July 1.—Everybody knows where to find the exhortation, 'Let the ape and tiger die!' and in what sense it is there used. But how much of our supposed objectionable ancestry are we to forswear, and at what point may we cease to break with the parent Past? Was it not another author of our time that suggested the word 'Meliorism' as descriptive of the mission and march of man. Yet is it so easy a matter to decide what is better, and what worse, in the movement of Humanity through the ages? Lamia and I sometimes experience this difficulty when I take down my trout-rod and creel, and she the landing-net, and together we make our way to the stream at the bottom of the meadow that is an agreeable appendage of the garden that we love, or wander up the river for the couple of miles or so in which the amiability of a territorial neighbour of mine allows me to cast my line.

'There are worthy people in this world,' says Lamia, as we sally forth, 'and I think they are on the increase, who inveigh against all forms of sport, fishing included, denouncing them as survivals of the ape and the tiger, and a reproach

to the higher sensibility we are supposed to have reached in this superior age. Yet none of what they consider the more refined diversions have afforded me anything like as much pleasure as seeing your *Alder* or *Blue Dun* fall gently in front of a feeding fish, his quick acceptance of it as natural prey, your strike, his plunge down stream at the end of a taut long line, then his counter rush up current when he finds the downward one to be futile, his endeavours to "weed" you, your baffling of him, his final breaking of water, the gradual drawing of him towards the bank, and then the supreme moment when my co-operation as wielder of the net comes into play, and provender for Veronica's larder lies landed on the grass, in the shape of a pound and a half of beautifully speckled trout, in as prime condition as ever came to table.'

You might suppose, from Lamia's eloquent description of what, no doubt, happens ever and again, that her companion is a dry-fly fisherman of supreme craft and skill. My regard for truth compels me to repudiate that too flattering estimate, much as I should like to think it true. But it is not. If I go a-fishing, it is for many reasons besides catching trout, and though I should

be sorry to think there does not course in one's blood something of the same instinct for all forms of sport that animates the noble savage running wild in woods, a certain detachment of mind from the business actually in hand has always handicapped me, as I well know, on moor, in turnip-field, by covert side, and along the banks of grayling-haunted water. There is the crimson glow of the heather, and the hum of the wild-bee in its honeyed blossoms, there is the soft shadow of the cloud on the stern mountain side, the musical monologue of the wandering holiday-making beck and burn, the unseen other side of things, that in the spacious air engages the mind's eye, much to the detriment of the material gaze, which in the keen sportsman is never for one moment diverted by meditative introspection or untimely rumination of a verse. I think one has enjoyed oneself, in one's time, as much even as more concentrated comrades, when flushing grouse or marking-down blackcock. But the enjoyment was of a more mixed sort, and my contribution to the day's bag was always the lowest of all. Indeed, to please Lamia, I will make a confession and avow that a literary *péché de jeunesse*, as some at the time deemed it, a Satire on the London

Season, when London was nothing like as wanton and frivolous as it is now, was composed, for the most part, with my gun under my arm or on my shoulder, on a certain moor in Dumfriesshire that lies round the slopes of Queensberry. The same foible of divided attention interfered with one's ever being a mighty hunter; for was not the skylark singing up to Heaven, and was not the spindle tree in fruit in the otherwise bare coverts, where the hounds were working? The distractions that tempt the dilettante lover of occasional sport as he follows the windings of a trout stream are more numerous and more tempting still. By him the kingfisher is not resented as an incorrigible poacher, but seen and greeted as the unapprenticed enameller of the air. The curving and swerving of the water in sensitive obedience to wayward bank and shoal are looked at with sympathising eyes, and the rippling treble of the stream hearkened to with thoughtful ears; so that one has not unoften to confess that

> . . . a mottled trout,
> That motionless beneath an alder kept
> Its poise against the current, asudden scared,
> Flashed like a flying shadow through the stream,
> And was no more.

I fear I have put down, as fishermen say, many a good fish by thus forgetting that it was for the outwitting and catching of them I had come out. Not unfrequently Lamia seconds me only too willingly in this half-hearted sort of performance; but, occasionally, she rebukes my trifling, and keeps me to the matter in hand, all temptations of bud, bird, and butterfly notwithstanding, and then with better results. When nothing else will wean me from my indeterminate ways, she says, 'What will Veronica think of us if we go home with a basket as empty as it was when we started?' So stimulated, I begin to remember I have a split-cane rod in my hand, a trustworthy line, the finest and most tapering of casts, and a 'scorcher' that no trout with a sporting temperament would refuse. So keen is she on such occasions, that once, when I had hooked and was playing a close-on-three-pounder, who was bent on baffling me by taking refuge under a tangled clump of water-cress, she plunged into the stream, dislodged him from his retreat, and then scrambled up the bank with glowing eyes and cheeks, and skirts dripping wet from knee downward. Even our splendid prize did not save her from a chiding when we reached home, which I need scarcely say I insisted

we must do forthwith ; and she has always declared that, whatever happened to the trout, she at least was boiled to a turn in the bathroom, and then put to bed like a naughty child. Even when we fail to catch anything but what must be put back, as not large enough to do us credit, we never go home quite empty-handed ; carrying clumps of marsh-marigold, yellow flags, the smaller reedmace, fresh watercress, or, if fortune particularly favours us, some plovers' eggs. Something uncommonly like trespassing, not to say poaching, has to be resorted to in order to achieve this last result ; but have I not more than once confessed that, when away from Veronica's stern conscientious gaze, Lamia and I have a tendency to resort to a state of nature, and to that more savage ancestry of which I spoke? The indulgence we crave for ourselves we extend to others, and invariably affect not to notice what young rustics are doing on a half-holiday, when we find them displaying a supernatural interest in the newly budded hedgerows, in defiance of certain notifications from the Board of Agriculture or the County Council, who are regarded, I make no doubt, by the unregenerated schoolboy as the true pests and vermin of the country side.

'Yes, indeed,' I say to Lamia. 'Once destroy the predatory instinct in English boys, and farewell, a long farewell, to England's greatness!'

'I see no sign of its diminution,' Lamia answers, 'or in English girls either. The sons of Nimrod and the daughters of Diana—am I scandalous in attributing a family to that chaste goddess?—still invigorate the Land you love so passionately. I verily believe that when you die, if you ever do, the word "England" will be found imprinted on your heart.'

'I would willingly think so,' I reply. 'My belief in the motto, *Imperium et Libertas*, is as old even as his who first proclaimed it to his countrymen, amid the gibes of too many of them, though it be now universally re-echoed. But I confess I wax impatient when I am told that England, the brain, heart, and soul of the Empire, is to be subordinated to, and hang on the favour of, oversea young Colonies whose vigour and attachment to the Motherland one heartily values and admires, but who owe their continued existence to her vigilant protection, and to the respect and awe she inspires in the Councils of the world. Yes! England! England! The very name ennobles and exalts its citizens in their legitimate

self-esteem. The Glories of England are the richest inheritance to which a community ever was born. I have always felt like that. I feel it still. Nor do I repent me of a single word I have ever uttered, or of a single line I have ever written, in honour of England's name, and in gratitude for her greatness.'

October 18.—Lamia has been asking me if I do not think the nobler form of ambition, called Love of Fame, is on the wane. I replied that it seems to me to be so, and it would be strange were it otherwise. What the vulgar regard as Fame, but is only Notoriety, has become so common, at a time when craving for novelty and ever fresh objects of curiosity is insatiable, that one can hardly understand self-respecting persons coveting that cheap honour. 'Call no man happy till he dies,' said the ancients: and one might with equal truth say, 'Call no man famous till he dies,' indeed not till some time after he is dead, especially in a generation when individuals who have been notorious during the later years of their life, are 'rushed' into Westminster Abbey almost before the lid has closed on their coffin. The world at large, that may, in sooth, be described as the audience of 'this vast and universal theatre,'

loves to see, in Byron's phrase, the gladiator die, 'butchered to make a Roman holiday'; and that I suppose is why it was grateful to him for what Matthew Arnold designates 'the pageant of his bleeding heart.' One does not like to cite other and smaller instances in days nearer to our own; but any one could name personages of our own time, whose notoriety, or what some would say whose fame, was considerably enhanced by disclosures concerning their domestic lives, that have excited the curious, but only give pain to more serious admirers of genius. I confess, for my part, that, far from valuing such fame as that, if one is to call it fame, I would rather be the village idiot.

'Then,' suggested Lamia, 'do you think what Milton calls "the last infirmity of noble minds" tends to grow weaker, and may gradually dwindle and die out?'

'Who can say?' I answered. 'It is not improbable. But is it not the fact that ambition, love of fame, yearning for glory, call it what you will, is the infirmity of youth rather than of age? In youth such a desire is excusable, since youth has not yet learnt the intrinsic value of things; nor perhaps should it be regarded in the young as

anything more than the outward expression of an inward sense of superior but as yet unrecognised capacity. But that it should endure beyond due recognition by others seems to me unreasonable, not to say rather unworthy. Surely it is more natural for a man who has been fairly successful to become somewhat insensible to praise and censure alike, and to reap gratification only from assurances which he can trust that he has by his writings, or by labours of any kind, given pleasure, and, most of all, lent mental or moral help, to others. For the rest, I think men to whom reverence is paid by the reverent, because of their declining years, or of their having done their best with their earlier days for the pleasure and benefit of others, should have as few infirmities as possible, and, among these, not worldly ambition only, but excessive clinging to life that has been perhaps almost too propitious to them.

Why love life more, when less of it be left,
And what is left be little but the lees,
And Time subsiding passions have bereft
Of taste for pleasure, and of power to please?
Is it not better, like the waning year,
Without lament resignedly to fade,
Since by enduring ordinance all things here
Are in their season shattered and decayed.

If you have shared in April's surging song,
And Summer can without reproach recall,
Crave not Autumnal harvest to prolong,
Nor chide at Winter that awaits us all ;
But, lightened of the load of earthly ties,
Pursue with homeward hope your journey to the skies.

We were sitting amid the waning glory of the Garden ; and the foregoing lines seemed to harmonise with, and were perhaps in some measure suggested by, discolouring leaf and drooping flower. There was scarcely any breath or movement in the air, as though the heart of Nature had almost ceased to beat ; but, ever and again, a branch overhead appeared to be shaken by some inward chill of its own, and then a faint shower of leaves came fluttering down, and lay quiet at our feet.

'When one thinks seriously of it,' I resumed, 'both a craving for notoriety, and the love of fame, unless the latter be excused on the plea advanced by Bacon, that "Fame is the wise man's means," are in themselves and at all times alike foolish and futile, and, as a last infirmity and active accompaniment of declining years, I cannot but think they are rather ignoble and displeasing. It may possibly interest you,' I went on, 'to hear

something concerning the genesis of the well-known line of Milton you have cited. That most erudite of our poets skilfully adapted to his purpose no little of the wisdom of the ancients ; and his description of Ambition as the last infirmity of noble minds is taken from a passage in Tacitus, wherein that great master of concise expression described the character of Helvidius : " Erant quibus appetentior famæ videretur," he says, " quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriæ novissima exuitur," which may be rendered, " There were those who thought him too eager for glory, forgetful that love of Fame is the desire the last to be relinquished even by the wise." '

'How interesting !' said Lamia, with her usual responsive sympathy. 'The parentage of Milton's line seems obvious.'

'I think so,' I said ; 'but Tacitus in turn seems to have been indebted for the observation to older sources again. You probably observed that I paraphrased rather than literally translated the word *exuitur*, *exuere* meaning to take or put off. Therein lies the evidence that Tacitus borrowed from the Greeks, as Milton in turn borrowed from him ; for Plato observes that the mind is wont to lay aside love of fame as a sort of last garment ;

Plato himself only giving currency to a favourite saying of the Stoics, that a craving for glory is ἔσχατος τῶν παθῶν χιτὼν, the last vesture or shred of the passions; and Simplicius comments on a passage in Epictetus by remarking that love of fame is spoken of as the last garment of all, because, when other affections have been laid aside, it still not infrequently clings to the mind. All of which, Lamia, you may expunge from the Diary, if you think, as I strongly suspect, that unclassical, not to say anti-classical, readers of to-day may be repelled by it, to your grave injury.'

'I think that for once,' she rejoined, 'you shall be indulged in one of *your* lingering infirmities. But, as regards love of fame being, or not being, the last infirmity of noble minds, and all you have cited in support of the allegation, I would observe that it is perhaps not difficult for even the moderately successful to belittle the pleasures of success. Only, if the belittling were carried too far, I might be tempted to meet it with what Veronica calls one of my paradoxes, and observe that there is nothing in this world so disappointing as failure, except success.'

'You are perfectly justified,' I replied, 'in resorting to so gentle a way of pleading the cause

of human nature. But there is no difficulty in demonstrating that Notoriety and Fame are not the same thing, the latter being permanent when once acquired, the former never being anything but passing, because adventitious. Notoriety accompanies the individual, while Fame attends the individual's work. The former is to delicate natures distasteful; and, as to the second, may we not ask with Gray, "Can Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?" Yes, call no man famous till he dies, when, though his fame may serve to stimulate others, it can be of no earthly value to the man himself.'

'You are in a very philosophic mood this afternoon,' said Lamia; 'almost as much so as when you wrote a sonnet that was composed, I believe, quite in early days.

Because I failed, shall I asperse the End
With scorn or doubt, my failure to excuse,
Against firm Truth my feeble falseness use,
Like that worst foe, a vain splenetic friend?
Deem you, self-amorous fool, the High will bend,
Because your utmost stature is too small?
If you be dwarf, some other is more tall:
The End is fixed; have faith; the means will mend.
Failures but pave a pathway to success;
Our force is many, so our aim be one:

The foremost drop; on those behind must press.
What boots my doing, so the deed be done?
Let my poor body lie below the breach:
I clomb and fell. Who stand on me will reach.

'Whenever written,' I said, 'whether in youth, in manhood, or in age, the spirit of that sonnet is sound. Of all subjects of interest to a man, the one least worth pursuing is Himself. That is why, if for no other reason, one should beg to be excused from being what is called "interviewed," and refrain from reading what is written about one or one's work in the public prints, since these only augment self-consciousness, with which nature has already endowed us all quite enough. Men should be interested in their work, not in its rewards, nor in themselves. That this is right doctrine I am quite sure, though there may be none who quite practise it; unless it be those of whom I believe I once observed, that many a man could succeed in getting himself accepted as what his contemporaries call great, did he not prefer to remain a gentleman, satisfied with the reflection, as Pope puts it, that

Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part; there, all the honour lies.'

'How true!' said Lamia, 'how wise! I suppose love of fame is a disease like another, one of the ills flesh is heir to. Happy they who have it not! Only yesterday I read, in a letter of Frederick the Great, an interesting passage, pertinent to what you have been saying, which I copied out, and—yes—here it is. Shall I read it?'

'Do, please.'

'"Il n'y a d'heureux dans le monde que les personnes qui ont eu assez de sagesse pour renoncer à toute ambition, ceux dont les noms sont inconnus de la malignité public, et ceux qui savent les lui dérober. La vie est si courte, qu'il ne faudrait vivre que pour soi, et non pour des ingrats qui ne vous tiennent aucun compte de vos peines, et qui critiquent aigrement vos actions. Vous trouverez ma lettre d'un gout bien stoïque, mais comptez que ce sont mes véritables sentimens. Quand on a vu longtemps de près les objets de la cupidité publique, le charme s'evanouit, et l'on ne tarde pas à se détromper de la valeur chimérique que leur attribue le vulgaire."'

'Have you observed,' I said, 'that whenever one wants to cite something wise and true, one has to go either to the ancients or to the eighteenth century for it? The succeeding one, the one from

which we have just emerged, was, I think, the most vainglorious of all the centuries, characteristically encouraging vainglory in others, and providing people with a number of "Masters" whose teaching is already being questioned, and an Olympus of Divinities that even the blindest now perceive to have been False Gods. All exaggeration, it has often been observed, is followed by reaction, the warm fit by the cold one; and people are now tending towards the other extreme, since suffering from the disillusion that attends excessive enthusiasm, and lament that there are no statesmen, no poets, no philosophers, no painters, left. No less than the individual, society has its seasons of pessimism; and it is passing through one at present. *On n'est jeune qu'une fois* is a concise but scarcely a true aphorism. For my part, I have been old several times, but somehow have always got more or less young again.'

'And so, my dear Poet,' said Lamia in her tender way, 'will it ever be with you. All your life you have been in love with beautiful things; with fair, noble women, with winsome children, hills, forests, streams, open commons, and secluded gardens; with poetry, painting, architecture, sculpture, Spring, Summer, Autumn, aye, and

even Winter; with sunlight, moonlight, starlight, all the glorious unbought endowments of Heaven. You will be in love with them to the last; and they who are in love, as you have so often told me, cannot be old. Even at the hour of parting and farewell, such may recite what you have called

AN EVENING PRAYER

I

When daylight dies, the throstle still
Sings on, and though deep dusk doth trill
  Some faint unfinished bars;
Then sudden drops into his nest,
As though he had forgot the rest,
  And sleeps beneath the stars.

II

And when the heavenly Harvester
To me shall say, "In days that were
  What you did sow, come now and reap,"
May I with some late-lingering strain
Be my own nurse to my own pain,
  And sing myself to sleep!'

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