

From

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A Vernon Lee

Note book

~~with~~ unpublished, though  
offered to various publishers  
~~Preface~~ after her death in 1935  
by John Green, Literary  
Agent

~~Irene Cooper Hillis~~



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## A VERNON LEE NOTE-BOOK.

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CHAPTER.

Great pleasure of return to England. A grey day - I had  
left Paris on a fine steel cable, in the deep blue darkness  
- calm or storm? Crossing Channel, one storm advancing  
with a grey fog, and a haunting blackish sea. A few drops of  
rain fell at Dover. But suddenly things grew hard, became  
solid, white, green, bands of wood of uniform pale blue,  
never Charles's mullins filled by a wash of grey, as in third  
**PART I.**  
silvered surroundings of the beginning of the century. A few  
old farms, some with those rudimentary chimney stacks  
which, set at such odd like inverted flower pots, were ever  
the mark of England, and and by having a grotesque attraction  
for me.

There all the pleasure of people thoroughly acquainted,  
charitable and friendly, most willing to receive information  
or give help, with no trace of reserve or distrust. A good strong  
rolling sea, not perhaps with the absolute small steady of  
the German or the Irishman, but certainly not the same.



RETURN.

Great pleasure of return to England. A grey day - I had left Paris on a blue steel Seine, in the deep bluish darkness - smoke or storms? Crossing Channell, one seemed advancing into a grey fog, and a heaving blackish sea. A few drops of rain fell at Dover. But suddenly things from hard became tender, cliffs, grass, bands of wood of uniform faint tint, Dover Castle's outlines filled by a wash of grey, as in those coloured engravings of the beginning of the century. A few old farms, ~~even they~~ with those rudimentary chimney stacks which, set at each end like inverted flower pots, seem ever the pride of England, and end by having a grotesque attraction for one.

Above all the pleasure of people thoroughly competent, alacritous and friendly, most willing to bestow information or give help, with no hope of reward or thanks. A good, strong, smiling race; not perhaps with the absolute small probity of the Germans or the Italians' vague friendliness, but eminently

fit to live and be lived with.

July 19th, 1898.



FOLKESTONE.

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That inconceivable not so much tidiness as smugness of England. The streets, houses, asphalted lanes, garden palings and absurd trees, suggesting somehow the useless little tables and trays, the cushions and antimacassars one banishes on entering some lodging house. The air - among all this modern comfort - of its not expressing the soul of the people, of being - overfull shops, featureless or staring houses - some great blunder, the bungling of a people too shy of expression to say otherwise than what they do not mean.

Even the churches! No-one ever brought a heart contritum quasi cinis, or indeed a conscience otherwise than freshly laundered and starched, into a church (though old) like the one at Hythe; and the rows and rows of nameless skulls, the immense pile of blanched bones in the crypt there, look as if they were tidied and dusted every day by the housemaid or the presiding servant who takes your pennies.

26th July.

DIEPPE AND NEWHAVEN.

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The perfectly pure, nay, rather clean and peaceful impression of this English coast, all shelving inwards in delicate washes of russet and lilac and undefinable green and simplest lines, particularly after the odd concentrated squalor of continental, nay southern, picturesqueness of Dieppe, with its more than French pillastered and atticked and porticoed houses, all black and ruinous, its beautiful weather-worn black churches with gutters and gargoyles and flying buttresses, the inconceivable filth of its harbour. There is, as at Honfleur, as if to convince the traveller that the South joins on, a big fruit market with flower-pots set on the pavement, and its stench epitomising all Spain and Italy - a tragic, battered place, banged and bruised by the past as well as by the elements, instead of which this dear English country seems combed and brushed by them. And how one leaves behind the adventuresome, in a way tragic, element of foreign travelling,



even like that tragic clamber of farewell up steep carriage  
sides. Here all smooth, quiet, no partings conceivable.

A DEFACED COUNTRYSIDE.

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Between Sheffield and Leeds the sky, the brilliantest blue sky all sicklied over with smoke from almost invisible chimneys, from dim towns scarcely more than guessed at among the misty green uplands.

This morning in Leeds, lower or lowest, to see Ford's Churchhouse Club. Wide streets with houses, I can only say like rags; and not rags of disused brocade, like some in the South, but of cast-off sloopshop rags, long in the gutter. At one, what one might call the northern gate of Leeds, is a great open square, set with rusty black benches and fences, and a few stunted bushes; barely a little grass on the blackened earth; which place is cheerfully called Hyde Park Corner, only coloured hoardings flowering!

Coming through this main factory district, particularly round Sheffield, I am struck by the ruthlessness and barbarism of this industrialism, not merely the wholesale pollution of water and ground, the stunting of the trees and blackening



of the sky, but the litter, the heaps of refuse everywhere,  
the country dealt with as not the filthiest oriental town  
could be by the hurry and indifference of these <sup>industrialists.</sup> ~~beasts.~~

Adel - Leeds: August 2nd, 1899.

MERTON GARDENS.

How completely the twitter of birds (not their real song), and cawing and clucking have become to us the natural voice of leaves and trees, accompanying their movements, even the flickering of their shadows as word points gesture, so that, so far from looking for birds, we are surprised to see them - disbelieving in them as we disbelieve in the orchestra as the originator of the music accompanying a dramatic action.

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ST. JOHN'S GARDENS.

3/10/18 (about)  
Sweeping the grass is a very old cedar, growing tall like a pine, a few ragged branches at top, the others compressed, denuded, black, with only green on the extremities, in sort of fans or bands. The branches springing out black, elastic, like chandelier branches, with infinite strength of curve, holding up the black fans of most vivid green, itself interwoven with black. Such a strong, brave, beautiful old tree.

Oxford: June 23rd.



A COLLEGE TOWER.

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Yesterday, on top of the tower of New College, after having seen the Muniment Rooms therein. From the leads, a surprising view, in which all the streets of Oxford disappear, all its modern parts and, generally speaking, its houses; and it becomes what it is to the fancy and memory, merely old ivied walls, domes, towers, battlements and pinnacles of churches and colleges, roofs and open stonework and carving; orange, plum and strawberry, colours like a wonderful picture-book, embowered in great treetops and in the rolling green country.

Oxford: July 22nd, 1903.

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OLD FARMS.

The extreme beauty of English farm buildings, dignity, grandeur. The stacks and toolhouses on their prehistoric-looking stone pegs. For instance, the farm in the valley of the Race, under Headington, with the haunted pond. The green planted with willows of most romantic shade, and the well enclosed in a fine, carved, stone cupola, like some antique river-god's little temple. You open the door, and behold! Only the little pool of clear water.

Oxford: September 10th, 1904.

Flotillas again of river arums and polynesias of waterlily leaves like bronze rafts, their sides a little turned up, each well isolated, water between, here and there a white open cup, or tall bud aslant, and high-mast group of rushes. Under the untrimmed willows one has a sense of this being life, almost virgin vegetative life, these untilled, unsown, unreaped waterplants, living not to please man but themselves.

Coming down at sunset and dusk, M. punted us down and that dipping gondola movement, no visible rowing, added to the sense that here the other ones, as K. used to say, have it their own way. As dusk arose, they gradually asserted themselves, the banks growing vague, the river only faintly luminous, seeming to grow wider, convex, to swell above the land - only the rustle of a rat, the rattle of a corncrake or nightjar and distant owl cry - and far off, become one with the vague natural sounds, the rush of a train.

Coming down in the faint sunset, mere yellow streaks in



the grey, the river had seemed strewn with its long weeds - golden-green in the lucid water as with branches of bay and palm, for the triumph of some Sabrina. Notice the charm of the accelerated little rippling currents where the weeds are thick, shoals of midget-like fish rippling them with the eddying dance of the gnats above. Previous day a very different but pleasant impression on upper Thames, quantities of nice clean boys about. Had tea at inn at Godstow, the river visible over magnificent bushes of currents and crimson-gold roses. This is that delicate pleasure-seeking, yet natural side, so very English.

Train: 24th June.

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AUTUMN AT OXFORD. *107th. conf. (3. unit)*

*the (Chestnut?)*  
Bicycled yesterday once more to the old house at Water Eaton- crossing meadows - delightful sensation of flying across the wet, uneven grass. Lovely village of Wood Eaton, with big elms turning yellow - they overarch the little raised church-yard by the church with delicate plain Gothic doors - they overarch also a big yew, full of berries, under which are three or four short little green mounds. One only has an inscription, and that only "Parvula Dorothea" - the yew boughs sweep over it. Corot-ish green landscape of green-edged roads, brown hedges and thinned willows in the grey water. Returning by the Banbury Road, the beautiful colour, delicate, mysterious, of the ploughed fields at dusk. M. had picked a great round branch of ivy, like a bouquet, and rode with it triumphantly in her hand, the green leaves and pale green blossoms against her blue frock. In a muddy lane K. climbed over a fence to revive a half-spent fire of weeds under yellow horse-chestnuts. Out of it we raked things like plums, with purple iridescent

patina, which warmed one's hands deliciously: horse-chestnuts swept or dropped into the fire.

The afternoon before bicycled with K. alone to Iffley - a horse-chestnut, yellow, delicate, over churchyard door - a more brilliant yellow tree, I forget what, opposite that odd nightmare porch of bearded people putting out their tongues, who merge into vulture-beaked heads - and a very beautiful dark cedar. We noticed the fine cutting and jointing of the stones and the beautiful step arrangement of the base of the church wall.

We returned at dusk along the towing-path, the full river where the barges are, seeming to rise higher and higher as the light waned.

In the streets the electric light and the gas already made lilac and orange patterns. ~~We had greatly enjoyed it.~~

Oxford: October 12th.

to 1632



### THE DECOY.

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Yesterday evening, I was taken across the rolling country of high flat fields lying against the thick airless blue sky, to Boarstall, near Brill, already in Buckinghamshire, to see a famous Decoy - a word which represented nothing to me. First, along a sort of private road, a beautiful small castellated house, bridged and turreted, with a fine central window - of that lovely grey stone of this country: the gate house, all that remains of the ancient manor of Boarstall, destroyed under Cromwell, leading only to an enclosure of sere grass, and to ditches full of stagnant water, the former moat. Upstairs, in a fine boarded room, one found a faded portrait of a gentleman in Stuart dress - the old Welsh custodian says Charles I. having all the look of having been the sign of an inn.

The decoy is near here and belongs to this same property: a keeper's house, with puppies about; a little blackish wood, very close set, in the midst of burnt up fields; and in the

wood, a series of wattled screens or large hurdles, not unlike the straw ones we make <sup>in 1864</sup> for lemon houses, with glimpses between of wired-over canals; and then, quite unexpected, a big pond, almost a lake, overhung by big dark trees and thick bushes, black and half covered with blackish lily leaves. A whirr above and three wild duck pass; the tamed wild tuck who decoy the travelling ones into this lake and up into those water traps, to have their necks wrung, after vainly beating wings against wire roof and wattled walls, among those closed canals. A heron also rises and slowly disappears high among the trees. We come out from this black little wood and lake, the sun has just set, a wonderful broken filmy sky, above the dry pale fields. An ill-omened sort of place, this pond and wood, with its horrid deception to the poor travelling birds; a place, one might fancy, where poetic justice would circumvent some human being, some member of the possessing family decoyed also, driven up to die in the black water among those wicked screens.

Headington: July 19th, 1899.

RYCOT NEAR THAME.

A strange deserted stump of a house, in a great field, a large sedgy piece of water and a great black éploré cedar marking the place of the former gardens; only two small farm houses remaining and an octagonal tower, but built in beautiful red and black brick diapered, in Henry VIII style. Behind them, in the orchard of neglected apple trees and coarse grass, a colossal plane tree, by far the biggest I have ever seen, with giant branches sweeping the ground the luxurious foliage - some remnant, who knows? of that garden? But the strangest is the church - a rather beautiful little Gothic church of grey stone, enclosed in hurdles and standing locked and deserted, among the thick weeds and nettles, the great beeches and a huge yew, branching over it, touching its windows and half hiding the pinnacles and the great wolves of gargoyles. The Earls of Abingdon are buried there, such tombstones as remain among the nettles so effaced that you can't



even decide which side was inscribed. Climbing on the windows and holding to the bars, only darkness could be seen, and a great roofed pew and a bust in a toga. But through the windows of green glass, one saw the branches striking the windows, of the opposite side. The whole church was quite invisible from three sides, only the steeple showing on the fourth. And oddly, behind all this, and not a hundred yards off, a railway line! Such things are possible only in England surely.

Headington: July 26th, 1899.

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RYCOT, OXFORDSHIRE.

The evening before last, with M. to Rycot, where I had been taken some years ago. This time she had got the key from Lord Abingdon's agent; and, after creeping under the sweeping branches, picking our way among the nettles and brambles, we got into the chapel which stands, a small stone Gothic church, isolated in the fields, once the park of that great place.

The Chapel is entirely disused, the rain evidently coming in through green-blue vault, and all damp and dusty. Such a beautiful place! With two most exquisite carved Elizabethan pews, one like a little pavilion, with double row of delicate pillarets, the other like part of a ship with a staircase and upper deck. Both elaborately and delicately patterned over with blue and picked out with faded gold; and all broken and dingy.

Through the dusty windows the beech branches push against

the panes. In the fields, on a great empty grass terrace,  
cleared among big trees, once stood the great house, destroyed,  
its remains carted off to build a new one, some sixty or  
seventy years ago: and in front of it is a great fishpond.  
An old, old cedar tells of the former splendour. A Hampton  
Courtish gate tower, and the former stables, battlemented and  
step-gabled, are all that remains, turned into a farm with  
neat croquet lawn. The ghost in the ghostly place would be  
the house, the vanished, violated, murdered house, reappearing  
to haunt its empty terraces.

September 1st - 10th, 1904.

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FAREWELL TO OXFORD.

Leaving Oxford in already softened autumn weather, misty, veiled, trees thinned and yellow, willows beginning to stand out from the green watery meadows. The little street, with its crowded houses washed pink, strewn, under Merton wall, with sodden yellow lime leaves. A constant chime from Magdalen belfry - something already foretelling winter and Christmas. With this impression - the sweetest and most poignant I have had of it - I am content to leave England, feeling how much of my heart and life I leave in it.

Train: 15th October, 1896.

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BOX HILL.

The great beauty of Box Hill under a rainy sky - the livid grass with the chalk showing through and in scars - the deep dead-white pits and gashes edged with black box and yew. Goblin and wind-warped juniper bushes. The big isolated yews, even some in the reaped cornfields.

August 18th.

Wotton-on-Thames, August 18th, 1901.

RIVERSIDE TOWNS.

Chertsey delighted me - the little stream with its willows and emerald-green (I mean paint so called) grass, and the scattered cottages and little high street of discreet well-to-do houses, red-brick or roughcast, each with its magnolia or roses, mysterious shining windows, its boy-box architecture appealing to the fancy and heart if not to the eye. These little 18th century English towns - Malmesbury, Lymington - telling of retired lawyers or skippers (so at least the bow windows, the kind of line-of-Battleship front seems to say) have a great attraction for me, even if their mystic hero is perhaps more Johnny Gilpin than anyone else.

Walton-on-Thames; August 12th, 1901.

ON THE THAMES.

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Delicious and very English morning; it was foggy on the common, making one's heart heavy with the thought of London. But here in the trough of the river a little breeze has swept a narrow ribbon of pale sunshine, just enough for the shiny green water (tide running in, accounting perhaps for this breeze on the drowsiest of days) and the sere grass towing-path, the lawns of the banks, but massing the mists against an invisible Richmond Hill, and hanging them thinly on the yellowing limes behind which, faint, half-hidden, rise the reddish walls and terraces and pines of Ham House, asleep and one might say, far off in dreams. There seems something appropriate to this holiday river and to these stately houses, that, being English, they should be walled, screened in by mists, made private and appropriated, cut off from that terrible grimy and grim workaday world of London so close by.

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A MANOR HOUSE ABOVE MARLOW.

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They show us the collection of harpsichords; a beautiful one with flowers on the inside, under the strings - Date 1634, Joannes Rudrers Antwerpii me fecit - and a motto (I can't recollect) that the work shows the man. One of our hostesses plays on it a thing by Corelli, lovely tone, with registers, two keyboards. Curious ghostly impression again, tho' these were visitors, ladies in the absurd modern long overcoats made to display the sinuosities of their figure - a funny return to the indecorum of those pudding-faced Charles II belles who line the long hall upstairs, facing their grave taciturn cavaliers. We saw the room where the ghosts play whist, and the staircase where a lady is hauled along by her hair. But the chief impression, as before, was of the poor purblind, half-deaf owner, solacing his sadness at a pianola.

As we came out, he walking blear in front, the sky, very lovely with sunset rose and mauve, had got stormy, and the



yellow leaves sailed down in the lime avenue. What must this place become, owner, pianola and all, when the trees are bare, the fogs rise from the river and the jagged pines alone remain visible.

This morning - first of Autumn! - wandered in the lime avenues round the great old House. Cold sea wind, and a great movement of clouds across the pale blue, wet blue sky. Leaves rustling down in the blustering wind, and trees sighing. Flights of birds rising from the turnip fields and hedg<sup>e</sup>rows, whirling in the wind. Suddenly a field by the river veiled over, and a deluge of rain. But this autumn weather brings the charm of England home to me, its old world penetrative qualities. That great house, half veiled by the rustling trees, by the river - with that poor man, noble surely in his way, half-blind, groping, surrounded as it were by voiceless ghosts, and having Dolmetsch to play old music to him on the ~~Hydra~~ harpsichord and the viola da gamba. The gallant ancestors in buff and armour and lace - and that very

beautiful tall Gainsborough lady, hanging in the great hall,  
the same who docketed her own miniature when she was ninety  
years of age - all these ghosts in the old house, so much less  
ghosts than the living occupant.

Ham: 26th August.

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Dear Eliza: July 18th, 1800.

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IN SUSSEX.

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Perfectly pure evening; the long ridge of downs sloping lower and lower, washes of pale tints, a piece of sea marsh, once a great ~~festuary~~, bright green with bog and sedge, running down the wide valley - a town, chimneys and masts at the entrance, Newhaven? - hiding the sea. Here and there in the low folds of the downs little round tufts of trees, and old brown farms and steadings, half-hidden villages and churches among them. I am seated on the rough grass of the graves outside a gaunt little old chapel - a mariners' chapel, one might think; sunlight straining thro' the poppies, larks singing, a mowing machine whirring.

Near Glynde: July 23rd, 1900.

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THE SALT MARSH OF RYE.

We have been walking this evening after sunset in the marshy valley behind this house. Once an arm of the sea, now an arm of marshy pasture-land which runs in between the softly undulating downs to the hamlet of Small Hythe near Tenterden, where, high among the hills and on the brink of what was once the sea, crumbles a Gothic chapel, built for mariners and in whose graveyard, many miles inland, lie the bodies of shipwrecked men. The valley is bounded by sloping fields with ~~barley~~ corn, half standing, half gathered into stacks.

The valley is like a widened river, tufted with rushes and full of many kinds of aquatic plants, the pink willow herb, and yellow John's wort, and delicate white mallow, growing among high feathered rushes and seeding bullrushes, are met by the sweep of grey willows, all around quantities of sheep grazing. It was after sunset, and the sky in the west, all except some wind-spun crimson filaments, was growing smoke grey; a scarce

perceptible greyness was also coming over the ground; the greenness of the willows was turning into grey, the brownness of the short, sere grass into palest dun; the sheep at a distance, the pale mallows in the ditches, turning into mere dabs of white upon this grey made up of green and brown and yellow. And, closing in the valley, the little town of Rye huddled, a map of roofs with scarce projecting belfry, upon its cliff, its brilliant brick-red gradually fading into the vagueness of the sky behind, on which merged, veiled by a filament of faintest blue clouds, the huge, rayless, harvest moon, a ball of deepest orange, fiery itself, but giving out no light.

Rye, Sussex: August 12th.

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MIST ON THE MARSH.

This evening towards six, a dense white mist came suddenly up from the sea. An hour before I had been in the town, looking down from one of its precipitous red-brick streets on to the vast extent of salt marsh below - a wide tract of sere grass, scarcely distinguishable, in its palest russet yellow, from the far-off strip of sands - and out to the broad river, the shiny wet sandbanks, the black sheds and chimneys and stranded boats of the harbour, to where the shipping stood out distant and pale against the thick, smoke-like white cloud overhanging the sea, and which soon spread itself over the land.

The white fog came up, hiding and turning Rye, which a few minutes before had been a map of huddled bright red roofs in the sunshine, into a vague grey cloud city, the wings of the windmill and the rigging of the ships at its foot looking spectral, dimly reflected in the canal. And we walked towards the sea into the fog. The Marsh was covered with mist, which



hid not it, but all its boundaries, wiping away hills and town, and making it extend interminable on all sides; a tract of thin grass, gathered into billows and low ridges like the sand-dunes which it once was, like the sand-dunes beyond, which shall one day become a part of it.

Pale, sere grass, for miles and miles, flat, not like the solid earth, but like the surface of a calm sea. Dykes and ditches full of browned and seeding sedge and bullrush, whence arises, with sharp clatter of wings, a flight of marsh fowl; brown sea-grass, knotted into lumps under-foot and tufted with sparse rushes, where hundreds of sheep nibble eagerly, stopping short to bleat, as if in terror of the thickening fog, which turns the early evening into a premature twilight, bleaching the colour out of everything, or rather reducing everything to a vague brownish grey. In the midst of this, made larger and dimmer and more distant by the mist, the round agglomerated grey towers, squat and round, like some huge tomb, of Camber Castle; and all round, the red-dabbed sheep wander-

ing about disconsolate on dyke and knoll, and the rooks, after circling in the grey air like a swarm of midges, alighting on the low ridges, perching in rows upon the lines of old fences, congregating in files upon the brown ridges, as if listening to one seated motionless upon a solitary, projecting, cairn-like stone; and then suddenly rising up with a flutter and descending slowly one by one - black spots on the sere - to collect once more, in front of the circular towers, tomb-like, grey, spectral, of the castle which alone remains of the sea-effaced town of Winchelsea. Grey skies arching mistily all round to meet the pale brown monotony of the marsh; and all around, the sharper or fainter, anxious bleating of the sheep; the caw over-head of rooks answering rooks.

Rye; August 20th.

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ON THE DOWNS, NEAR LEWES.

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As contrast with yesterday's southern, at least South-English, impression of this place, of its reddish cottages, with tile roofs as organic and living in shape as the flowers in their little gardens; of the big reddish trees, the sere fields and general tender dovelike colours of downs and valleys; as contrast, to-day, a very northern impression.

I walked up the big down behind this house after a rainy morning. Walked into a gradually thickening sea fog, till, at the top, all valleys, all other countries had disappeared, and I walked along the flat ridge as if its brownish turf - delicately powdered with lilac scabius - were all there was of the world. On the way up I had found two shepherds, sheltering their dogs under the hedge above a great white chalk-pit; and at a given moment I came, with surprised delight, upon their flock seemingly distant white against the white wet sky; all else blotted out; as later, coming down, I found one



of the shepherds leaning upon his staff, his dog by him, looking out from the delicate pasture-land into nothingness. I got to the lip of the British Camp, where I remember having had a great view of hills, valleys and sea a month ago. Except the brownish green grass, with the wreaths of mist driving across it, nothing! Save at one moment, below, but seeming to rise, go uphill and end high above, the white line of river, making away in the white mist. And then suddenly the more solid whiteness of the smoke of two trains, unable to rise in that damp air, making their way in long strings of puffs, going to meet each other, and meeting, and parting again, a fleecy line in the unseen valley. The wind from the sea sang very gently in one's hair, and the mist, perfectly pure and wet, wrapped one.

Towards sunset it has lifted, and a concentrated light made the hillsides flame pale orange and rose; and the big chalk scars flared.

Glynde: September 1st, 1900.

THE SHORE.

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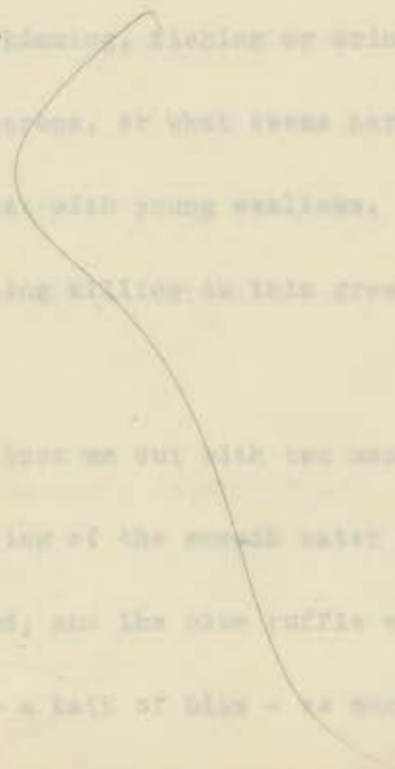
I.

A morning of incomparable beauty, a radiance such as even the South cannot surpass. Under the pale-blue misty sky lie the shallow pale-blue marsh waters, divided from it only by the rosy brown bars of dykes and shingle banks: long ridges of Downs, cuddling asleep between; Hurst Castle with its low buildings and lighthouse, dim lilac, shimmering, seeming a piece of Venice thrown into this enchantment. Sails passing in the distance. The only reality the young swallows skimming over the shallow ponds, and the starlings starting in circular flights out of the hedges. A prelude only, this.

Climbing up the break-water of rosy, flinty shingle, the sunlight tremulously steaming upon its side, I felt my breath caught and my heart jump at what lies beyond, the incomparable azure radiance. The tide is in, so full, so smooth, barely breaking in minute, glassy curl upon the shore's lip, that you cannot conceive it ever going, a pure and perfect Mediterra-

nean. A Mediterranean all veined and ribbed with its own  
azure heavings - blue on blue, divine lilac on lilac; rose on  
rose, to where a purest blue band limits the pale rose mist  
of the sky, and where the Isle of Wight, the great Needle  
Rocks, lie lilac, bodiless. No sparkle save where the water,  
white, breaks with silky sound, a mere shining expanse of uni-  
form blue light, of misty blue fire.

Keyhaven: September 6th, 1900.





II.

Same weather, same hour, but more hazy and if possible, calmer; the sea not even breaking on the yellow shingles, but lying quiet, barely heaving, white, crystalline, turning into faint blue; and faint blue disappearing into mists beyond; the miracle of radiance turning into a mystery.

At a given moment I seem to notice a louder sea murmur, a very slight frill of foam, and the clear water seems to heave visibly backwards on to its blueness, retreating; retreating into its mystery. Swallows skimming, fishing or drinking in the lagoon beyond the bank, herons, or what seems herons; and the telegraph wires thickly set with young swallows. The soft thud of distant guns: practising killing in this great blue sunny peace!

Yesterday afternoon, V. took me out with two men in the sailing boat - the blue curdling of the smooth water seemingly above us where the boat tipped; and the blue ruffle where the breeze and cross-tides were - a bath of blue - as much blue as one's soul seems to have been eternally thirsting for.

Keyhaven: 7th September, 1900.

III.

Weather changing, alas, changed. Tide in, under a heavy grey, windy sky with gleams. The sea a moving broken mass of cold sullen greyish green, beginning to be tipped with white; the mysterious blue Isle of Wight and Needle Rocks turned tangible grey, almost. The lagoon full, rippled, of sad impure colour. Only a few swallows behind the dyke.

All along the lagoon, whose shallow waters have nearly covered the path under the wind's ruffling, the rough fields are separated by irregular hedges. Hedges of thorn and wild-rose sheared and pressed by the sea winds into inextricable tangles like birds' nests, and from which, reminding one of some of Burne Jones' best drawings, nestfulls of birds do actually flutter and rise.

Keyhaven: September 9th, 1900.

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AN ANNOTATED JOURNAL.  
A SUSSEX FARM.

Mr. N. - a very rich farmer, type of John Bull, but dignified and restrained - took us over his farm. The immense ricks, great manure yards between the steadings, the styes - perfectly clean and full of fresh straw; little black sucking-pigs with majestic black mother. The great carts under sheds, great plenty and comfort, and yet real work. If but a few refinements could be added, a perfect life.

Altogether at Keyhaven and its simple, economic, exquisite house (no money making, but no wasting either) with this agricultural life on one side and the life of fishermen and seafarers on the other, a delightful sense of being near realities.

Keyhaven: September 13th, 1900.



AN ABANDONED CHURCHYARD.

This little graveyard is the only trace of a village of which N., the Farmer, tells me, and of which all trace has disappeared with the sea-undermined cliff gradually slipping away on which it stood. Of once living Hordle only these few tombs remain. The church itself gone, abandoned no doubt with the washed-away village, and perhaps taken to pieces, quarried away, leaving only a vague outline with one or two flat grave-stones in the grass. The sea winds, on the other hand, have singularly respected the beautiful early 18th century lettering of the graves and have, in many cases, merely embellished the fine grey upright stones with delicate latches of lichen. One stone also has a trail of ivy growing bacchic on it - "Sarcophage und Urnen bekränzte der Heide mit Leben", says Göthe - while on the lettering of another a tall dry cow-parsley imprinted a lovely pattern of shadow. But of the village of Hordle, nothing remains along that uninhabited cliff, rapidly slipping into the sea.

As we tried to make out the site of the churchyard's  
church, a hare ran across the grass.

Keyhaven: September 13th, 1900.

SUNSET.

At sunset we had been out for the second time in a boat, but this time at low tide, along the channels below the round island of sticky green weeds from among which ooze rivers of fresh water, which in the total absence of landmarks or comparisons, might seem tropical swamp-rivers. V. tells me that in spring, when the seaweed is shorter, these muddy islands, soft, round, swelling, look like the earth emerging from the primaeval chaos, as in Besnard's painting. And when the sun had set, a red ball, without effulgence or after-glow, only the faintest lilac on the livid water and the faintest orange in the sky, this mysterious watery place might have been the earth's beginning.

The previous evening, walked at low water along the dykes of the marsh. Sun setting, the marsh a marvellous russet, getting deeper and deeper. The empty pools turned metallic green, but of the consistence of moss; and when the moon rose, orange like another sun, above the long line of dykes and hedge, the



reflection of it broke into strange accordion-shaped ripples  
in the channels, orange, like a Chinese lantern.

What a wonderful life and diversity in this sea marsh!  
The contrast between this solemn, deep-coloured stagnation of  
almost alarming magnificence of greens and browns, at low  
water; and the high tide, the brimming over, wavering, broken,  
shining blue of the coming-in sea!

Train: September 13th, 1900.

CHRISTCHURCH, NEAR BOURNEMOUTH.

The great straggling church, cathedral like, among trees where a wide, swift, weedy river deltas into green delicious marshes by the sea: the great cliffs of the Isle of Wight opposite. A church chaotic, mysterious, begun seven or eight times with inscrutable indications - a beautiful Norman tower or circular buttress, lop-headed on one side, covered over with delicate fish-scale and rope pattern, fine Gothic windows, and the predominant perpendicular. Similarly with the inside: noble Caen-like round arched nave; triform (with hat-chet pattern making the delicate white of the stone sing out almost as a remnant of gilding or colour would do); intensely luminous Gothic aisles. A fine chancel; and such a lovely lady chapel! Its great bevelled white walls (all good perpendicular is merely wooden wainscoting and ceiling imitated in stone) are broken by big windows, the trees outside turning them a strange green; old Regimental colours aloft hanging against

them; and such a look of air, light, enchantment, a great cage for some gigantic Angeleïn Belverde or Joringel prince.

The tall tombstones, grey and rosy with lichen, stick up out of the grass outside at intervals, slanting variously like ghosts arising.

Most English and Englishly inappropriate, in this Norman nave a cenotaph - naked drowned man and all - to Shelley!

Odder still, in this little street of tea-rooms and bicycle shops, crowded (it being Saturday) with coaches and char-à-bancs from Lymington and Bournemouth, a shop selling the books printed by the little colony of Tolstoïans; his recent pamphlets, and photographs of their printing press, etc: such earnest Russian faces, so odd in this smug, yet picturesque English environment.

This church, for proportion and finish, is perhaps the finest I have ever seen in England, and it has such charming English surroundings.

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SYDENHAM MANOR HOUSE.

A shallow trout stream - the fish jumping in the grey weather - runs close round the back of this lovely old house, under a garden of tender grass and bright autumn flowers, full of the scent of cedar and the sound of woodpigeons from the opposite beechwoods. A clear little stream, but quite brown from the bogs of Dartmoor.

Along the side of the house a series of rickyards, full of great yellow stacks; the sweet smell of hay and damp, fresh straw.

My hosts possess among the curious heirlooms, the housses of two gala saddles, of Sheriff and wife of Elizabeth's days, red velvet, fringed and braided with silver shells, all absolutely unfrayed and untarnished and apparently unused.

Mr. T. goes to the diningroom window after breakfast with a handfull of maize and calls the pigeons. Two or three have already been sitting pressed against the little old-fashioned

panes, peering in with round eyes and little tufted heads.

The rest come, a big flock, from the stableyard, and press, a shuffling, cooing mass of white and pale brown and slate-grey feather, furling and unfurling, against the open lattice to take the grain from his hand: fluttering against the great round granite mullions, filling the framework of the big window with a shifting pattern of wings and tails. He throws the last handful into the yard, previous to closing, and they alight, a sort of pool of moving feathers, white like shreds of paper or bits of chalk.

1896.

HOUSES NEAR DARTMOOR.

Morwell Abbey - a farmhouse built out of a small Carthusian place: with Gothic mouldings and keystones, and windows of granite. Cottage garden and immense Spanish chestnuts on grass outside - in the gravel fragments of exquisite turquoise-green refuse from neighbouring copper mine. These copper mines, with their high chimneys, give a San Gimignano look to the dim outline of Cornish hills beyond the Tamar, over which rise, made of mist, the outlines of presiding Rough Tor and Brown Willy.

The other place is a little manor house once belonging to the Tremaynes, whose Isle-of-Man-like crest is on the James I porch. It has a hall - a Losely or Knole on a small scale - with carved minstrels' gallery, where the farm people have their dining table on spotless oilcloth. The beautiful, like a ripe fruit, farmer's wife, spotless, splendid, complains that her farm-servants must pass thro' that banqueting place to



get to their rooms. Such a delightful, fresh, beautiful, dignified woman. She keeps no maids, and she and her daughter milk as many as eighteen cows.

Veiled in mists, the Dartmoor hills stuck vaguely opposite to the highlying roads, like the Cornish ones between banks and hedges.

Sydenham: September 5th, 1896.

ON THE MOOR.

Yesterday on the big common - really a piece of moor - above this place, near a charming, flowery, thatched village called East Burleigh. The interesting lines of hill, nowhere so perfect as on heather ground. A little fine rain fell, and a veil of blackish mist came between us and even the nearest slopes, making the mixed grey of heather, purple and sere, and sere yellow gorse and black earth, into an even more mysterious fur colour. Here and there, always against the horizon, clumps of wild branched Scotch firs; and in the distance pale green slopes vested in rain, and dim silvery-white sea. Absolute remoteness and perfect silence, save for some larks and the whistling wind. Characteristically English, that at a stone's throw from this moor, among deep grass and high beeches, stands the very perfect little Elizabethan house, thatched but signorile, where Raleigh is said to have been born; a little further, the cottage gardens with running water and little brick bridges.

Exmouth: September 13th.

ELIZABETHAN CHIMNEY-PIECES.

At the Castle and at the Luttrell Arms inn some white Elizabethan pilaster (how made?) chimney-pieces - a sort of strap and button decoration, and figures of inconceivable rudeness, people in ruffs and trunkhose almost Polynesian. I have noticed this excessive rudeness of Elizabethan sculpture before, specially at Warwick. One has difficulty in conceiving that it is not done to be funny. The ornament makes one think of Heidelberg Castle hideousities, only infinitely worse.



LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL.

Taken to-day in the rain to Llandaff, I found a Cathedral, or part of a Cathedral (for most is restored) whose very existence I never suspected - something pleasant and very English (or I ought to say, I suppose, British) in thus going into one of a group of oldish houses round what looks like a village green, and having crossed the drawing room with tea ready, to discover from the lawn, and apparently rising out of its trees, a very large church, in fact a small Cathedral. And inside the Cathedral, an extremely fine early Rossetti altarpiece, and some dignified recumbent statues of knights and ladies, delicately carved in alabaster of the time of Edward IV and Henry VII.

Again yesterday at Llandaff, bicycling there alone, and seeing the fine Rossetti in the Cathedral. What a funny little ecclesiastical centre! A village of deanery and canons!

houses, precincts and nothing else, no-one on the roads save  
clergymen in those limp long black frock coats which are so  
infinitely negative - the negation of everything except Eng-  
land! What unfathomed dullness in such a place! Dullness  
learned and cultured too, no doubt! A certain smugness is  
so essentially English a characteristic, that it actually be-  
comes almost picturesque in one's eyes, once it is known and  
recognised.

TEWKESBURY ABBEY.

Bicycled to Tewkesbury yesterday, going and coming, having lost way, near twenty-five miles. Surprise and delight at coming on Tewkesbury - orange-red village town in meadows. Charming descent of hill on river and willows and big sparse trees, the immense round porch and great square pillared tower rising up: charming pinky creamy white of stone.

Norman part of church very impressive: immense pillars of single drums, quite unornamented round arches and squared capitals. Marvellously simple, rude, and in a way elephantine. This great stone barn - more than anything like a colossal Scotch stone steading - has received a sort of over-growth, as little connected with it as might be a roof and tangle of brambles and clematis, of luxuriant perpendicular carving - face, foof, rails, screens and no end of little carved cage-like chapels and cobweb canopies tucked away among the colossal elephant's legs of Norman pillars of the apse - things



all extremely slight, thin, a few exquisite; at any rate fantastic in that place. Little family chapels, the Knight or Lady (mainly Devereux and Beauchamps) lying in plate armour or hennin in sort of cage of spruce fir carving, just room for an altar and perhaps the cushion for one or two to kneel - already that marked appropriation, that "keeping themselves to themselves" even in the face of God and death, which is so characteristic of England.

In the Choir, such a cage canopy, and under it (something similar too in the Cathedral here) one of those terrible French Renaissance stripped corpses, even more villainous here, for the creature has a mouse gnawing all his vitals: the tomb of an Abbot of about 1530. I am surprised such depravity should have reached this burly family-pew England of the middle ages.

A sacristy door, nailed over with strips of iron, cut, 'tis said, out of the armour of those killed in the Battle of Tewkesbury. Beautiful stone, cream coloured, with passages of yellow and rose.

The little town, with carefully kept gardens, and a big mill, timber and brick houses, has a charming air of prosperous dignity. We lost our way in a lovely English country. Roads widening into green clearings with thin witch elms, meadows with willows and apple trees, high-lying village greens - and we were overtaken by a violent storm of rain and wind. It was dark long before we reached home. But as we came above Gloster, the moon rose above the cloud in the very pure sky against which slept a hill, and beneath, by a bend of big river, the town; a black map dotted with orange specks of light, and the big tower watching in the blue moonlight.

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Chesham: September 23rd, 1894.

TEWKESBURY.

Bicycled to Tewkesbury, and had beer on the bowling-green of the very pleasant Bell Inn dated end of 17th century, but probably older, for it is a three-gabled timber house, painted white with black beams. Charming old world little town, wooden and Queen Anne brick gathered round the fine Norman tower in the mere water-meadows with their screens of willows.

Tombs in the Abbey, in open-work stone chapels like cages, of Beauchamps and De Spencers, some who fought at Poitiers, another hanged and quartered by Isabella and Mortimer. The sun gets low on the yellow water-meadow, and on the bowling green, the brick houses, the red apples in the trees. The romance of this kind of England of Froissart and Chaucer goes to my brain, and I love England passionately just at the moment that after so much chafing I leave it.

Churchdown: September 23rd, 1898.



A VILLAGE CHURCH.

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The day before yesterday evening we walked up to Church-down Church. An East wind blight had veiled the whole sky, and still filmed the evening - but turning it into tenderest mystery. The steep green slopes with the little old church at the top seemed in a way, alone in the world, alone in their freedom and peacefulness. The little churchyard lies round the church on its sharp ridge, with a few fine German-looking escutcheoned graves, and a big yew: on the other side another knoll, bare and green, and the vague valley beyond, wrapped in mystery of dust and haze with the snaking lights of trains coming through. At the end of the churchyard, in this open green, bleak, windy place, a little forlorn cottage by a yew, a bright fire glowing. And as we returned<sup>e</sup> back that way, the crescent moon reflected itself yellow and green in the windows of the church seemingly lit up from within; and over one of the graves, in the moonlight, and looking like nuns, stooped

two women in sunbonnets. This is one of the places - the few English places, where one can not only breathe, but realize that there are breathing places, hills, elsewhere - a feeling M.'s brother expressed by exclaiming "Let us build three tabernacles". As we stood on the ridge in the gathering dusk, the white mists rising, the rising moon yellowing, and looked down on that hazy plain and vague lighted town far off, we heard, quite gently, and from a hidden cottage behind, a sound of cups and saucers. Very English, but not to my mind unpoetical.

Churchdown: September 24th, 1898.

A GLOUCESTERSHIRE VILLAGE.

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More and more grieved to leave: leaving the country, having left the friends alas, whom I shall not see for so very, very long, behind me, I feel that to-morrow, and not to-morrow week, will be the real departure from England.

In the orchards, with red branches of apples and pear boughs ready for Mantegna, little willows just begin to shed a yellow leaf. No trace of autumn yet, save in the morning crispness of the air. This village sums up all the charm of bygone England. The cottages are often shaped like miniature manor houses, thatched or tiled, with lovely little gardens of Japanese anemones and aster and tobacco flowers; one in the middle of the place has red standard rosebushes run almost wild, bearing on far spreading branches such red roses as one thinks exist only in Morris's poems or wallpapers. Above it all, on a sort of pyramid of pale green, the dear little church, looking in the distance like some place of natural



pilgrimage, of pardon because of the purity of the air and the remoteness of the spot. I bicycled alone this evening towards Birdlip, but had to stop short just at the foot of the Cotswolds, odd straight cut cliffs, shining white for miles, bare, with just a little green grass visible or a fringe of trees: bare hills, with the value they always have of making one feel the purity of the air. I passed many charming old cottages and farms, some with beams, mostly painted pale rose colour, some with their old horseman's steps; other with peacocks cut out of yews; not one without much dignity and grace of projecting windows.

Last night late (mere practising I afterwards heard) they rang for a long time all manner of chimes from Church-down Church. The sounds seemed to make one see, though invisible, those peaceful steep green slopes and the little church tucked like a sleeping bird, among the yews at the top, all in the moonlight; bringing thoughts of winter nights so different from any I shall ever know.

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AN IRISH SKY.

My hostess is quite right, different as the countries are there is something here - at all events within the charmed circle of this park - which is like Italy, or more correctly, like an Italian picture. This evening, after a night and forenoon of continuous rain, there has been a sunset of quite Italian luminousness and vastness of sky; which has left behind an after-glow of infinitely pure pale amber and greenish-blue sky with blue hillsides against it, which with the green grassy slopes of the park, and the great round dark trees sitting upon it - with the little glint of river at the bottom, might have been a background of Giorgione's or of an early Titian, the more so that clouds made above the line of forest a high pointed blue peak, an imitation Antelao. Venus has come out as gently and brilliantly, in as pure a sky, as I see it in spring from the Palmerino.

Abbey Leix: September 9th, 1898.

ON THE FORTH.

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I.

The weariness of the cross-country journey to Scotland! That grey, rainy hour hanging about Edinburgh station, up and down Prince's Street; then the endless twilight journey through rain-blotted landscapes to Larbert, and the miles and miles (as it seemed) of drive through dreary flat country, spectral collieries rising out of the dimness, and the yellow flare of works and of rows of factory cottages; an intolerable journey through black, wet vagueness, which seemed as if it could never be dispelled!

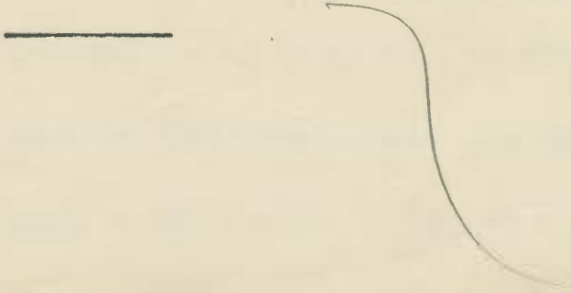
And then the delight of discovering next morning, all the enchanting details of this dear little laird's house, with its George II wainscotting and furniture; and as soon as one went out, the shining estuary with its sands and sedge, red villages beyond the waters; pale fields of delicate seeding grass, of palest oats which the reaping machine was making



into those beautiful Scotch stooks; and fields of dark bronze gathered beangrass - beautifully grouped steadings, each with its octagon mill like a baptistery, and here and there, a boat, a mast, stranded apparently in the fields. Then, towards evening, the veil of clouds thinning, hills appearing, clearer and clearer, almost Italian in shape ....

Oh the pleasure of seeing real hills again - not flat rolling country with valleys furrowed between, but real hills, conical, sweeping. To those accustomed to them, nothing is in a way more needful than hills to close the scene - hills perpendicular against a horizontal plain or valley, not hills which sink and swell under, so to speak, your feet like most of the English ones.

Neuck: September 6th, 1899.



## II.

I am grateful for the refreshment, the sense as of renovation through deep breathing, of this Forth country; its breadth, its delicate intimate pallor, its distant hills, water, its human, closely cultivated character; villages everywhere and farms and steadings, crops and people working in the fields. It makes me feel how much that black and solitary Northumberland really oppressed me; nay, that England of Oxford and Berkshire downs. I am glad also, beyond telling, to renew the love and gratitude which I felt those years ago for this dear wide Forth country.

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A SCOTTISH FARM.

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We had to clear out of the house, my friend and I, before the guests collecting for a hunt ball; and migrated for three days to an inland farm. Things, as I have said, look usually better in the memory than at the time; but those three days somehow possessed, ready made as it were, that simplicity of outline and harmonious lowness of relief which is the doing of time; a suffused, dim pleasureableness analogous to the gentle way in which the great reaped fields roll upwards (marked with corn stacks) and the round free masses, yellow hornbeam and coppery beech and bluish fir, lie nestled against the sun-permeated, low grey northern sky.

There is grave grandeur and serenity in those rain drenched, windswept, steaming, misty northern fields and skies, as there is a certain grandiose serenity in the long farm buildings of blackened stone or glaring whitewash, the massive octagon threshing sheds; vieing almost, in its utter differ-



ence, with the grandeur, the serenity, of the high blue vault, the great blue plains and hills, the delicate belfries of Italy.

The mist, imprisoning the sunshine, concentrating the view to a small area, makes you wander, as it were, in fairy-land; in wonderful peaceful valleys, over placid hill-sides where the villages appear to vanish suddenly, and the tree belts of beaten red and yellow gold rise out of nothingness and sink back into it as soon; an enchanted ground, made for you alone, conjured up, separated, inaccessible from the world at large like an individual mood, like valleys and hills in dreams.

We stood for a long while watching a team of big black horses mowing down the bean grass, beautiful plants which Ghiberti has put into bronze, and which ape the growth of the bay. A number of stalwart girls, blobs of dark skirts and lilac sunbonnets and white aprons, were tying up the swathes. And, as we stood on the brink of the bean-field, by a bubbling runnel, there arose and blackened the air an immense swarm of

cawing rooks, circling and settling black on the opposite field, a whirlwind of creatures eddying like the lovers in Dante. And then there swept across the wider sky a wedge-shaped flight of migratory birds, one moment here, the next one, gone.

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AN OLD HOUSE NEAR STIRLING.

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Very pleasant impression yesterday of bicycling from Stirling (whither we drove) to G. Charming small house partly genuine old (in the nucleus a pele tower) with pointed French-looking mansarde windows (with very rude figures and Latin inscriptions, 'Nosce teipsum' and under a Stag, 'Musis charisque Minervae', etc.) stone grey, plaster painted a quaint orange - part Strawberry Hill! - but altogether oddly French. A pleasant balustraded terraced garden; a very beautiful long walk of tall meeting limes called 'the Grove' - and all round the highland hills - those which reveal themselves, above the Forth, above the fields and dykes at sunset. Ben Leddi and Ben Lomond, Ben Vuorlich and down the Forth the long line of the Ochils.

These kind people - a dear old man - show me a beautiful M.S. (bound in morocco), an account of an ancestor of theirs of the Battle of Sheriffmuir (close by there) and of his sub-



sequent wanderings in France with his uncle Lord Panmure.

Half of the family had become, as usual, Jacobite, half Hanoverian.

Returning home, the beautiful Forth, now a narrow, deep, tideless river, dark and smooth, under big willows; the splendid castle-rock of Stirling, with its long tail of iron-stained rock; the old part of Stirling itself, steep, steep streets, between very high houses, widening into squares with high step-gables and here and there a turret; a market cross, as usual turned into an armorial sundial; red roofs, quantities of people, ragged, noisy children, squalid shops, altogether, with its precipitousness, an oddly continental look. As we walked about, the first twilight came, a sort of visible crape of darkness between us and the houses; and driving home, the sky, which had been radiant with cirrus, wrapped itself in black cloud and mist. I have often noticed that in the North, towards evening and in bad weather, the clouds get actually black, and the black in all objects seems to come out, trees,

walls and these stone houses and slate roofs.

A SILTED-UP FISHING VILLAGE.

I am delighted with certain very Scotch details, the great free-growing willows in the fields; the fantastic outline of the reaping machine with its whirling stay and big horses; the beanstraw being cut and stacked; the flight of rooks among the stacked oats (the ground already a tender green, or a pale silvery yellow, below them); the sea gulls flying above the wet sands, the peewits strutting on the grass. These little villages, even the squalid absentee village of A., are very picturesque; red-roofed cottages, washed white or rose, often with ships or dates in ill-carved garlands over the doors - nearly all between 1700 and 1730 - when A. may still have been on the Forth, now retreated half-a-mile with its dyke and sedge and sea lavender; A. with a feckless fisher-looking population and old boats pulled up in its streets - Kincardine and Culross are more flourishing, have the same carvings and dates, and the steep gables even higher and more German. In-



deed the little square of Culross, on the water, like the scene of a play, seems to tell, in its houses, that France was important in the 16th century, and Germany or Holland in the 18th.

What inspiration Stevenson must have drawn from all these tiny ports, with their timberyards and docks; from the ships slowly sailing between the fields, up, towards the mountains.

Train: September 8th, 1899.

IN EAST FIFE.

The first autumn morning - cloudless, for the little wreaths are, alas, Dundee smoke - yet the sky lies low and close upon the low round hills, or rather they look as if they and their whole world had been raised up to close under the sky (I notice this in Fife in all weather), the fields and grass luminous washes of exquisite green and snow-colour and violet ploughed<sup>h</sup> earth, the farms with their rows of strawstacks like shadows - the foreground all a-glitter with straw and stocks, swallows dipping in the shallow, brown burn, rocks and sea gulls dotting black and white. One thing which catches one's heart in Scotland is that it is still agriculture, peasants about, farms and stocks everywhere. Some hawks were circling in the sunshine: their wings outlined with a halo of light.

We went yesterday by steep roads across cornfields to see the ruins of the royal Abbey of Balmerino on the Tay. It

has served as a quarry, and of the Abbey and little seaport, there remain only two or three fine arches, with roses growing round them, and a lot of those solid grey Scotch barns, monumental in themselves; and, under a colossal chestnut-tree, in the former Abbey's cemetery, two mutilated stumps of statues, one said to be William the Lion. In this part of Scotland particularly, one gets a great impression of the destructiveness of the Puritans. And oddly enough, the next house (in a country where they are far between) to the one I am in is Rathillet, the house of Haxton, one of the assassins of Archbishop Sharp.

There are a good many little old castles in East Fife, places with their turrets and pepperpots, reminding one very much of French Chateaux, but with an added - I should call it a Walter Scott - romanticness of eighteenth century additions and kitchen gardens. They are not, in any sense, fortresses or private castles of warlike nobles, but merely dwelling-houses highly fortified, many rooms in towers, and



the lowest floor not inhabitable. What they tell of is not, I imagine, family feuds or civil wars, but rather raids of wild highlanders. Until the '45, the lowlands North of the Forth were probably never safe from such incursions: the Highlands came down to one on business of their own, to wit, cattle lifting, instead of one's going to the Highlands, as nowadays, for one's holidays! My host tells me, I suppose correctly, that Rob Roy actually held and inhabited the royal castle of Falkland, close by here, for several months.

Inside and out, with their irregular tucked away rooms and closets and spiral stairs and immensely deep embrasures, their towers and turrets and step-gables, these little Scottish castles are almost absurdly picturesque; but the farms and byres all round, the peaceful agricultural county, make them all right for one's feelings.

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A FORSAKEN KIRKYARD.

Yesterday went to see an old churchyard, alongside of S. castle, in a dripping, veiled afternoon, hushed and extinguished as a Scottish Sunday should be. Never could I have believed in such a place. The castle - half genuine French 15th century, half Strawberry-Hill Gothic, stands on a ridge overlooking the park; and, opening a rotten door, you find, alongside of it, close to its side windows, a ruined church, walls and steeple, and a churchyard most literally buried in weeds, nettles and ivy. The Gs., some forty years ago, bethought themselves to suppress church and churchyard so near their house, by building S. other ones, and since then the elements, the vegetation have had their way. But instead of being peaceful, this return to nature is unspeakably grisly. For on that hilltop and falling slope, the vegetation and the rain have displaced, uprooted the graves, heaved them on their side, blear, inscriptionless stones sticking up like stranded ves-

sels, have burst them open, tipped them over the hillside (one great armorial monument on the crumbling brink over the park) and begun scattering their contents - nameless - over the precipice. Walking in that up and down of slippery, mossy stones and vague soft holes, among the ivy and nettles and rank grass by the deserted, unroofed church, we saw, scarce distinguishable from the rotting bits of branch and the dead hemlock stalks, some human bones, soft yet brittle.

Inside the church, once Gothic, the ivy has formed a thick carpet over the tombstones; and, sweeping away a heap of dead leaves, I found, in a corner, a life-size recumbent figure, a lady with moonshaped 15th century cap and double braids, her hands crossed, and her dog, still recognisable through the mossy slime, under her feet!

And in the church's midst yawns the entrance to a burial vault!

But grisliest of all is that in such a place, among these opening, yawning tombs, thus shedding their contents, are



several colossal iron coffers, with rings for padlocks, made in the days of body-snatching! Less dreadful surely to go cleanly into a hospital dissecting-room than thus to moulder under gaping stones in snow and rain.

The amazing thing is that several of the castle windows - odd copies of charming French 15th century ones - and one in the bartizan'd turret, look quietly on all this! Nay, the window, visibly, of the butler's pantry, with beer jug on the window sill! It makes one understand Hamlet's Yorick scene - but ten times more grotesque and grisly; for think, before the living vegetation was allowed thus strangely to meddle with dead folk, the funerals were held and graves dug not ten yards under these windows! Surely surpassing all possible ghosts is the thought of the bustle of servants looking out on the churchyard, children's nurseries perhaps; one fancies the Maeterlinckian dialogue of sextons making graves and butlers cleaning their silver.

Neuck: September 4th, 1899.

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GLAMIS.

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They took me there yesterday. The view down the immense long avenue of grass, sloping between wide fields; at the end, below and growing larger and taller as one approaches, the great red-roan mass of the Castle, towered and turreted. The inside, for all the thickness of the walls, is unimpressive. Led round by the housekeeper, one accepted it all as one would accept a quarry, or stalactite cave or crypt, shown by the authorities. There is no romance about it, nothing diffuse or unexpected; and if any ghosts haunt these gaunt little bedrooms, furnished in Frith style, they would be ghosts and mysteries for Dickens or Wilkie Collins, lodged in the walls, not in our fancies. As often happens in England and Scotland, I had no sense of ages past, among these traces of a very commonplace, smug present.

That first approach remains the only imaginative thing about the place: the isolation, and with that peculiar lie of

land, the growing hugeness of the castle. There is, as you come steadily and straight down on it, a possibility of mirage, of vanishing clear away, about it. As Mme de N. said of a certain lady, it might suddenly turn into the town of Moscow. And the ghostliness perhaps hangs thereby.

Certainly it was as impossible to get any idea of why it should be haunted from the neighbours (who took me) as it is impossible to guess, from friends, why certain people have sinister fame: the thing evaporates in the face of the unsurprised familiarity, seeming not even to understand (or at least care) what you are talking of. Story? Mystery? Ghost? One ends by wondering how one ever got to think of such a thing; until returning home the name, perchance, is mentioned, and with it one feels a sudden lowering of temperature, and putting out of lights: Glamis!

Airlie: August 10th - 12th, 1904.

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THE LAST SUNDAY IN SCOTLAND.

My last Sunday at Kellie - with a Sunday restfulness about it - we walked down from lunching at a neighbour's alongside of the Law. The sun was covered, a grey misty day. The loveliness of these outspread, sloping fields, of half-ripe corn, green oats and that delicate grass, so green as to be pinky almost, with the lilac hay stacks dotting it; the hedges mapping it diagonally like a Japanese coloured engraving; and on these simple washes of delicate colour, the lines and clumps of blackest sycamores, thinned by the sea winds, clear in firm outlining of trunk and branches.

And beyond, with a tongue of pale links projecting on to it, the white sea. As we walked down, the sky grew suddenly violet with diffused storm, and great white toppling icebergs of clouds arose.

Down there in that clump of trees is the dear old castellated house, with the rooks flapping to their nests. And here

is the little orange-roofed village, here the long farm stead-  
ings, the old farm mills, circular-roofed, octagonal, like  
baptisteries.

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FAREWELL TO SCOTLAND.

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Deep regret at leaving Scotland, and almost sadness, much as at leaving France. Regret, of that same sort of serene and reasonable country, open, thinly wooded, and cornfields and steadings and fishing villages telling of leisurely and fruitful industry, of venerable, unchanging antiquity; a certain gentleness and alacrity in the cold air here, as in the ripening sun there: humane countries, France and Scotland, and speaking intensely to my desire of everyday sweetness and dignity.

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Where the railway turns inland after Leven, the sluggish stream which winds down from Falkland was covered with gulls, driven inland by the continual, rapidly passing squalls. They rose and whirred, white, innumerable, shaking their wings on the green grass.

On the sands, among those salmon nets I remember so well, were companies of curlews.

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### LAST IMPRESSIONS.

Some charming, last impressions of England, Keyhaven and its marsh and lagoon, of course; the jungle river in miniature; blackberries, hips and haws and sedge mimicking primeval forests; the reaping machines with their big horses in the wide, stocked fields; the old-fashioned house, surrounded by rustling illexes, within the view of green, green marsh bounded by the pale cliffs of Yarmouth; the little gardens of phlox and mallows; and that most charming church, shapely, pathetic, among the big trees and upright stones, with its chiming clock, its little tune preceding the hours and half-hours, which - from town or in old anteroom - is the very voice of this deep, peaceful old English country.

Even the hunting inn, at Burley<sup>y</sup> in the New Forest, where F.'s motor-car had broken down and I found E.'s Dibdin song, "Tom Bowling", in a bound volume on the piano. And most delightful of all, dear little Romsey, with Abbey surrounded by low brick houses and colossal trees, where we bought such

very British hunting gloves, shaped you would think with a  
chopper and sewn with a skewer, yet so long fingered and  
light wristed - at a dear old currier's.

Train: September 6th.  
Trouville - Paris.

ABROAD ONCE MORE.

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Last impression of England yesterday, oddly corresponding to the first on arriving last July - a mist over the country confines the visible to the smallest corners, all else remote, or utterly blotted out - only with violet and russet bands of ploughed land, and empty hop-garden, where the pulled-up poles stand like trophies of lances. On what little remains of pale grass and lifeless yellow stubble, the sheep are nibbling turnips - white blobs themselves. Hillsides of faintest slope, scarce hillsides at all, pale lilac, pale rose and yellow, all isolated in a narrow circle of light, the rest blotted out. An impression of tidiness, daintiness, colours delicate and uniform, earth barely ploughed or harrowed in faintest lines; a country, this great England, which looks so small and as if just taken out of tissue paper.

How strange the impression of the continent! How old, worn, everything looks, dignified, big, but a trifle shabby,



ill-kempt hedges and badly grown trees: but, even on a foggy day, what a wide sky, what immense folds of earth! And, little by little, through the fog, the sun, and a wide, wide expanse of sundried country.

Train: October 6th, 1898.  
Basel - Lucerne.

GOING TO GREECE.

I took a rapid pleasure in beginning this month of June  
and took the distant land of my friends to a more distant journey  
my little train from Florence to Vienna. After a morning,  
Monday night, a day of lay, dreary rain, there was a  
beginning in the Munich Valley. As we went up the

PART II. Flooded fields, it cleared up

GREECE.

clearly. The great blue sky appeared, dropping their  
shadows upon the earth; and the sun, from  
a host of black clouds, descended effulgent upon a  
world, which seemed void, and filled it with light and  
life. The fields turned to yellow fields, the same  
green to glowing spheres; the smoke and mist pulling a golden  
veil over the hills and towers of the little towns; the air  
filled with colour and splendour, warm blue and warm gold,  
glowing into the vivid, cold, rainy darkness.

It was as great a performance as any living scene in a

GOING TO GREECE.

I took a secret pleasure in beginning this month of travel into the distant land of my dreams by a cross-country journey in a slow train from Florence to Faenza. After a pouring, thundering night, a day of icy, drenching rain, there was a tragic sunset in the Mugello Valley. As we came upon the Sieve, rushing brimful between flooded fields, it cleared up suddenly. The great blue Apennines appeared, dropping their winding-sheet of vapours along their feet; and the sun, from under a roof of black clouds, descended effulgent upon a drenched, chill autumn world, and filled it with brief and lurid glory; the poplars turned to yellow flames, the sere vines to glowing embers; the smoke and mist putting a golden halo round the walls and towers of the little towns; the brief moments of colour and splendour, storm-blue and storm-gold, dying away into the livid, cold, rainy darkness.

It was so great a performance as some lyric chorus in a



tragedy that I asked myself, Why should one go to Greece, with such a mountain-stage, such elemental dramas but a few miles from home?

It was raining still at Faenza when the Brindisi express clanked in, and the whole night we travelled through wintry rain. With the first daylight I saw that we were in the South; flat fields of untied saffron vines, woods of great olives on deep-red soil, here and there a big glossy carob-tree, and all flush with a pale-blue sea under a hazy sunny sky. But what struck me with a sharper sense of change were the white cubes of the houses, few and far between, and the white domes of the cellars or tool-houses in the vineyards, looking for all the world like the tombs of Moslem saints outside Tangier. The little towns, which appeared every now and then against the sea, were also white - white with the whiteness of whitewash - the houses like squares of hardened lime.

At one place there was a sight which took my breath away; between the rapidly passing olive-trees and the sheds and

trucks of a station there came into sight a town, a whole hill-top, which looked snowed over, with patches and trails and holes of white. I pursued the vision from window to window, and even lost a lens of my opera-glass in trying to make it all out. Then the train ran into a deep cutting, and Ostuni - for that was the name on the station - was lost to sight. And I shall never know what Ostuni and Ostuni's hill-side are made of - snow or limestone or merely miraculous whitewash.

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I can't say how glad I am to have two whole days in this place, Brindisi, which everyone described as a God-forsaken hole. There was a rather fearful first impression, to be sure, of scirocco-sloppy streets full of trams and cinematographs, and an immense empty harbour in the rain. But after lunch, though depressed at heart, we set out in quest of a cape with trees on it on the other side of the water. We passed under a great coaler unloading, and walked along a wharf among

heaps of briquettes and asphalt and every possible black northern mess among the puddles. But at a corner out came an old fortress, donjoned and battlemented, with a Gothic church among prickly pears and almond-trees. And, passing through a valley of harbour refuse, we got into the open country.

I wish I could seize the charm of that country; of a south as unostentatious and as intimate as any bit of northern potato-field and apple-trees. We were on a pale road, cut out of whitish tufo; it ran through flat fields of yellow vines trailing, unpropped, on the ground, and was separated from them on either side by a hedge of aloes - armour-coloured aloes overgrown and scarred and dented like old troopers, and baby aloes, quite tiny and tender, about their upheaved stumps and, every now and then, making the bends of the road apparent, a great aloes lance and chandelier of flowers against the sky.

It had rained all morning after that brilliant beginning we had seen from the train, and there was a loose, pale scirocco sky. We walked between those aloes hedges to where a



bridge spanned what we took for a river. But, behold! instead of water or shingle, there was a long sunk green place, a Hesperides' garden of glossy orange-trees covered with pale yellow and still green fruit. I cannot say how enchanting that place was. We sat ever so long on the bridge, and looked sometimes down into the orange grove and sometimes across the harbour to the castle and the town, grey and white under the luminous grey southern sky. Tearing ourselves away from that enchantment, we were presently met by another castle, a white-and-pinkish mother-of-pearl fort, which rose gradually above the brown and gold of the vineyards; and, as we went further and further towards it, surrounded itself with an ever wider strip of pale sea, a whole bay at length, one of the many inlets of this wonderful coast. We came back another way, through a villa garden, with great cypress and myrtle hedges among the vines; then along the shore, strewn with dry vareec, and across a little swampy ground, flush with the sea, and full of sprouting euphorbus and the first shoots of asphodels.

Hard by was a deserted dockyard, with its bowling-ground under some wind-warped silver poppies; boats in all stages of decay and repair, pulled up in the grass - a place quite unaccountably sweet and classic. Long before we got home the electric lights shone over the harbour.

This walk will remain, I know, as one of my dearest recollections, whatever impressions this journey to Greece may hold in store for me. It has satisfied my longings for the South; but the South without any of its take-your-breath-away quality, the South infinitely reserved and tender in its flat lines under the rainy sky.

Is this, perhaps, the beginning of Greece? Or is it - who can tell? - destined to remain in my mind as sweeter and more beloved? And does not all this partake, as the tuning of the orchestra did in my childhood, of the incomparable magic of pent-up expectation?

I am writing by the open window at midnight, the warm wet wind blowing in from the sea. And I keep looking up to

watch for a steamer's light turning into the harbour; the lights of the ship which, after so many years of wishing and delaying, is to carry me at last to Greece.

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PATRAS.

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Just back from our first walk in Greece, incomparably right in this warm, brooding autumn weather. We drove to a Monastery a mile or so off. A place showing grandly from afar white houses and white church among olives and big cypresses, and when you get there pathetically humble. Round the little church (which is full of pictures like bad, and I suppose modern Duccio da Siena) an untidy farmyard; and instead of cloisters, poor wooden balconies painted a coarse blue against the whitewash of the little low houses; in a corner a rill of water out of a bit of Byzantine carving and into a battered block tin pail by way of trough. Nothing swept or garnished! A few very shabby Popes were standing about; and some women doing vague charring.

Outside, with another little fountain gushing from out of a Byzantine capital, a sort of terrace with tables and chairs and evident rustic restaurants under exquisite planes. Those

Greek plane-trees! Ours, even in Italy, can give no idea of their knotted limbs and satin bark and shock of tawny leafage. The whole place was delicious with the Japanese medlars in the monastery garden, so that one wondered on leaving whether the fragrance can really carry far or whether one has it in one's nostrils. The monastery is on the lowest slopes, dun with long sere grass and wild balm and thyme burnt to tinder (only the lilac flowers remaining) from which a whiff comes - ever and anon.

A flat piece of seaboard of yellow vines, orange gardens, cypresses, with farms and churches, great fig trees and immense tall reeds - something marvellously luxuriant like the country round Malaga but with the lovely marble running down into its torrent-beds and rubble runs - the plain encroaching on them with tawny vineyards among that delicate cinnamon colour of the faded grass and herbs - hills with the shape of mountains, cragged and peaked and portalled - and in front the lake-like

sea, closed in by distant Cephalonian and the rocks of Missolonghi.

We walked about among the olives and along some terrace walks cut out of the rock and the red earth above the monastery. These rocks are some kind of conglomerate or moraine, and when the path is cut the pebbles fall out of the soft earth and lie about - round, glacier-rolled pebbles of exquisite red and rose-coloured and bright green marble - the self-same, only more polished and rounder even, that we picked up, fragments of some Roman marble yard, on the shore at Palo.

What an impression of the precious material of which Greece is made! Why, these mountains must be of the stuff with which the walls of St. Mark's are encrusted!

I cannot say what an impression of tenderness, ripe sweetness in this country. No blazing riviera: rather the deliciousness of the fig which has ripened on the half-leafless tree, among the sunburnt, resinous leaves, than of such gorgeous things as oranges and lemons. The people looking very poor,



but not abject; a few peasants about, bearded like philosophers, with white cotton ballet-dancers' skirts and white gaiters, and popes with sugar-loaf hats. In a vineyard, as we passed, some little ceremony was going on - some people and priests and a smell of that same incense I know from the Greek church at Venice.

There seems to be much good water in these hills. We came on a little water-course, the visible water of which had been removed, probably for those two fountains near the monastery, but the invisible showed itself by the vegetation in the deep-cut bed - a plane tree, all sorts of reeds, and, growing so much more freely than with us, two big oleanders!

Patras: November 13th.

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JOURNEY TO OLYMPIA.

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The wonderfully lovely journey along the coast from Patras. The vineyards of Etruscan gold down to the water's edge, river-courses marking them with high reeds and orange and green plane-trees; great plumey cypresses everywhere by the farms. And the water quite shallow in places, showing the rock and seaweed in violet bands among the enamel blue and green. The sunset left a long coppery afterglow, turning the colours to metals, the mountains to jasper and amethyst.

At dusk we had left the shore and were travelling through what seemed wide, high-lying heather dotted with great, big oaks or cork trees, and belted with dark forests, an odd romantic contrast to that seaboard.

Olympia: November 15th.

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GREECE AT LAST.

Somewhere between Patras and Olympia the train stops suddenly in the middle of the fields. Darkness over everything, the new moon, in and out of fleecy clouds, shedding no light save on the heavens. The outline of a low hill, fringed with cypress; a railway gate barring a white road, which bends sharply along the round trunks and the thick plumes of some isolated cypresses. Shrilling of crickets. This is, wherever it is, the road into Gluck's Elysium.

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Dominating my impressions of Olympia, bringing them to focus, or rather bringing them home to my heart, is the sense of fulfilled expectation, which came last night with the shrilling of the crickets, the whiff of aromatic weeds, of wild balm dried in the sun. I could not see, only guess, outlines of low hills - here and there rounded tree-tops.

But I knew, by that sound, that scent, that this real



Greece was the one I have loved for years, recognising, I scarce know how, its every vestige in other places: the Greece I have loved in the stony torrent bed behind Nervi and in its pines overhanging the sea; in the ever-green hills and wide stubble valley where the Albegna runs swift and shallow through the empty Sienese Maremma; in the island valleys of Monte Argentario; above all, where the goats browse among the rocks above my house.

Yes: the Greece I have made up is the real one; or the grace and loveliness of the real one is that of the Greece of my fancy. I have known, by a sort of feeling quite different from any other, whenever, so to speak, I touched Greek ground: saying to myself, "This is Greece" - whenever my foot has crushed the wild balm, whenever my hand had broken the resinous twigs of the myrtle or lentisk; whenever, on a dusty road, the sheep coming from the mountain have brought with them the scent of sundried aromatic sweetness.

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Thousands of crickets sang me to sleep last night - my first night in Greece, in this clean, bare, utterly empty inn, set down in the middle of the wilds. And this morning I was waked by the bells of a flock of goats under my window. I opened my shutters on to a wide valley of low round hills, covered with sunburnt herbs and lentisk scrub, and big, round, bright-green maritime pines; patches of delicate yellow vineyard with half a dozen cabins of unbaked bricks, and in the distance a river winding in a wide, shallow valley: the Alpheius.

. . . . .

Yesterday afternoon, after our first visit to the excavations, the emotion of which (as will happen in such cases!) consisted entirely in trying to baffle and beat off a cicerone, we made straight across the fields for the river; fields which a scant stubble reveals for cornland, but barely ploughed, and looking for all the world like a great expanse of river mud, with a few patches of yellow vines, and here and there a big stumpy plane-tree, beginning to show orange, or some bushes

of oleander.

The river Alpheius winds in this shallow valley between the little low hills, dividing into shiny streams in its wide bed. We scrambled through the reeds and flowery scented Agnus Castus (at least, it looks like the Agnus Castus in the Padua Botanic Gardens) to a place where the river makes a bend, shortly after receiving its tributary Cladeus.

Some peasants were fording with their little horses; taking off their long, mediaeval-looking stockings on one side and putting them on again, beneath their pleated Benozzo Gozzoli tunics, on the other. Under the soft sandy bank the water rushed round, blue, clear, making a little laughing rapid beyond, with a fresh sea breeze up its course.

We stayed looking at it, so alive in this dead land. It, and not the heaped-up fragments of stonework among the grass, the steps and the great drums, sliding like those of a child's box of bricks, of Zeus Olympius, had drawn us into the valley.



At the bottom of one's heart, it is the river in a landscape one wants to see: the landscape's glance and voice.

The great gods have had their temples closed by Theodosius; a little Christian basilica, its apse and reticulated chancel-screen almost intact, has been built there in their very grove, to see that no furtive smoke of sacrifice should arise, to exorcise, no doubt, the demons Zeus, Hera, Hermes, Apollo, lest they should walk abroad, to Christ's manifest scorn. The temples, neglected, profaned, have yielded to the crevassing of waters and the shaking of earthquakes, and the gods and heroes, such as remained (others melted into brass vessels or cut up for ivory missal covers and gold-embossed reliquaries) have slid into the mud of the melting brickwork, been buried under the fallen gables, and have reappeared after fourteen or fifteen centuries, only to be set up in a museum and disputed over by archaeologists. Those gods are gone from this country; have lost all connexion with it. But the Alphei<sup>us</sup> is still a god, watering and overwhelming by turn the

poor crops and vineyards, slaking the thirst of the peasants and their goats and horses, shaping the valley as he throws himself now to the right, now to the left, till he lies down flat and wide (as one sees him from the hill) to be taken by the sea. Once a god, always a god, in this sense! And, drawing the eye and the heart of the wayfarer now, as he must have done before Pelop<sup>s</sup>'s four horses raced treacherous King OEnomaus's along that sandy level on his banks. Cladeus also, the little tributary friend, has remained: of the gods of the temple gable, only these two alive in the world. Cladeus is very small, but keen and charming like that thin-lipped, eager, marble image of him; cutting his way deep between the stubble fields, the plane-trees, and even the great green mountain pines, and every possible reed and herb and bramble taking shelter between his high narrow banks.

There had been a shower in the night, and constant threat of rain all day. The sun set as we walked back through those stubble fields, which resounded once with the hoofs of the

courses of Hieron, for they are the hippodrome; and the sky divided into black storm masses, and fresh blue and a triumphant procession of violet and rose and ash-coloured clouds and silver-white cumulus, such as Veronese paints; a great victory, more glorious than those which Pindar sang; and of the sort which is renewed for ever, even in the humblest and most forgotten spots of the earth. The two river gods, and the gods of rain and storm and sunshine, the humble divinities of the place, and the old Titans, once shelved by Zeus and his sons, these alone are immortal.

I wrote that though the other gods were gone, Alpheius had kept his power, more so than I thought. The boy who pumps the water was yesterday in bed with fever. The little maid - a pathetic half-Greek, half-German creature - tells me she has had it ever since she came to Olympia in September; and says: "It is the Alpheius sends it." And yesterday evening Alpheius sent me a touch of malaria. A god even nowadays



undoubtedly!

. . . . .

Seated on a bare shingly hill, among sparse olives and dry herbs and skeleton thistles. The Alpheius makes a bend here, and the whole depth of its pale blue water, not clear but not muddy, is lapping under the olive in front of me, and going off in a little rapid of sparkles. I am glad to sit in the hot sun, for the weather, which has been a mellow scirocco tasting of dried figs and rotting winelees, has changed in the night, and a dry, bitter north wind is blowing - blowing away the fever! The distant mountains (of Arcadia?) are quite clearly carved in blue and lilac. Opposite the river has left a great sand-bed, thinly greened over, with the steep sand-banks of a yellow vineyard encircling it like an amphitheatre, a sort of second hippodrome it might become in course of time. The peasants are picking the olives; their little mangy pack-horses browsing on these skeleton herbs and lentisk tufts.

Birds are chirping - one sees them everywhere. Lots of large magpies, like heavily barbed arrows, and cawing crows.

. . . . .

This morning walked among the big bushy pines, with silvery fallen needles, of Kronos's hill, and along the little Gladeus. As we stood on the wooden bridge leading to the excavations we saw something white coming slowly down between the high straight banks. It proved to be a horse, loose, or given a Sunday holiday. He was old, shaggy, with sunken-in flanks and a bony, bent head. He stepped gingerly along the stones and the sand and into the water, sniffing at the reeds and agnus castus and plane leaves, tasting now and then of the water, never heeding our calls; too broken and indifferent, apparently, even to eat or drink. He passed under the bridge and walked away towards where the brook joins the Alpheius. When I came home I opened the translation of Pindar at random, and fell upon a song in praise of a horse belonging to Hieron

of Syracuse: "Take from the peg the Dorian lute, if in any wise  
the glory of Pherenikos at Pisa hath swayed thy soul unto glad  
thoughts, when by the banks of Alpheius he ran, and gave his  
body ungoaded to the course" -

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### THE STATUES AT OLYMPIA.

The Hermes, the mangled remains of the gable figures, a few half-broken reliefs, a very fine bronze boxer's head, with hair like a garland of oak leaves, and some rooms-full of architectural fragments, of clay votive offerings, of all manner of broken lumber, large and small: that is all the sand of Alpheius, the mud of the Cladeus, the whole immense excavation, have given us back of the army of statues, ivory and gold, bronze and marble and infinitely venerable carved and stained wood, which peopled the holy precincts of Olympia, with their temples and treasure-houses, their votive monuments offered by Greece, Asia Minor, the African coast, Sicily, South Italy, and, later, the whole Roman Empire. Of the mere effigies of victorious athletes and chariot-drivers there must, at the lowest reckoning, have been well over a thousand. Many bases - inscribed stone cubes - are lying about among the dry grasses of the sacred enclosure; many are still standing in their

place, guarding the empty terraces, the fallen column-drums, of what were once temples. But more pathetic than these pedestals, even when they show the vanished statues' foot-prints and the holes of their rivets, is the solitary bronze foot in the museum. It has been broken off at the ankle, like the stem of a flower, when the statue was wrenched off for melting: a shapely foot, the veins standing out as if the figure had been in a momentary position, pressing on that foot, the other, perhaps, raised. The foot of a lad wrestling or making some athletic effort. And the green bronze, broken off rough, looks as frail almost as a withered leaf; as would the victor's wreath of wild olive in the temple where he had offered it to the gods.

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The little museum, built to look like an antique temple, dominates this solitude, with its sentinel pine and its myrtle bush. It stands open, and peasants in European slop-shop rags, or in those pleated tunics and long white hose which make one

think of early Renaissance dandies, go in and out fingering  
amber rosaries.

The statues of the two gables of the temple of Zeus Olympius are arranged on either wall of a long room, so low down that you walk almost on a level with them. And the first impression I had was of vague, superstitious fear at finding myself alone and in such close quarters with this stone people, rigid and massive, despite their violent action (wicked centaurs plunging and rearing, heroes and heroines trying to free themselves) almost like the kings and saints of Amiens Cathedral. Art astonishingly compounded of constraint and realism, of most humane beauty (in the lovely ladies draped like fluted pillars) and a sort of goggle, bogy quality; art which, as one grows familiar with it, becomes infinitely attractive, with its rude richness of promise, its untamed pleasure in difficulties of all kinds, with here and there the actual achievement of almost Pheidias beauty. The order and harmony of the mature Greek sculpture ready, one feels, to discipline into



perfection, all that tumultuous effort, even as the gigantic Apollo checks the fighting centaurs and Lapithae below him with the turn of his severe, serene face, and the gesture, like that of a choir-master almost, of his extended arm.

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I had intended writing down my first impressions of the Hermes of Praxiteles, but, instead, I made this entry in my diary: Scrambling among the lentisk scrub and the dry balm and thyme of the little hill hard by (some peasants' horses browsing those hard aromatics, while their owners gathered olives by cutting the big branches) we came upon a tortoise. the sight of the creature gave me an absurd classic emotion; not the animal bought to eat slugs and beetles in my garden, but Apollo's lyre, strung for him by Hermes.

. . . . .

In the presence of the Hermes in the little museum at Olympia, the Hermes so infinitely beyond anything which the

best photograph (always more or less foreshortened) and the best cast (always more or less blunt, opaque, and dusty) can give an idea of - there returns to me the thought I had had already, many, many years ago: learn the lesson of the masterpiece. *of a masterpiece means something wholly different from*

It is the fashion nowadays to pooh-pooh the art of Praxiteles as already decadent, and even to attribute to it sensuality, which the naïveté of archaeologists fails to recognise in the unskilful, and only the more expressive work of the time of the Persian wars, with its Asiatic, half-hieratic lewdness, not yet pruned away by the double influence of the athletic model and the architectural form. But even if Greece has produced a higher art than the Hermes, we do not possess it. It is absurd referring to mutilated and weather-beaten fragments, or to copies: what should we say to judging of a Michelangelo Cupid, copied, shall we say, by Canova, or broken and beaten out of shape by two thousand years' exposure? *therefore, all*

Critics do not seem to understand what a masterpiece

means, and only a masterpiece can mean. To do so I must again refer to Michelangelo; you cannot replace the knowledge of the Medici tombs by that of copies. It is not, as people vaguely talk, a matter of execution. Or, rather, execution in the case of a masterpiece means something wholly different from what we imagine.

Execution of a masterpiece means the final co-ordination of all details among each other, and subordination to the whole. In sculpture it means the connexion and accentuation and unification of all the smaller <sup>e</sup>plane; hence the distribution of lights and shades, the establishing and connecting of all the minute curves and straight lines which make up the great ones; the giving of the figure an envelope, an atmosphere, a specific halo, in which it lives.

This the Hermes has, as no statue save a Michelangelo has it. It has the complete and homogeneous life which only an original masterpiece can show. It teaches, therefore, all



the subtlest doings and refusals to do of which art, and, in so far as art represents life's highest discipline, of which life itself is capable. A Pheidias original might be greater still, but we have none.

The Hermes is not art of the category of Bach's nor of the later Beethoven's, but it is art of the category of Mozart's: with the majestic serenity, the tender joyousness, the undercurrent of poignancy and pathos of the farewell trio of the three Ladies in the Zauberflöte, and of certain quartets and concertos. Moreover, I have realised again how such a work has absorbed into its shape, fused with the structure and gesture of the comely human creature, all the loveliness of line, curve, surface, and motion, existing in all manner of natural things. The masses and profiles of mountains; the dells and dimples of valley and pastures; the sea's billowings and its diffused sheen and intermittent gleams; the shapes of clouds and of waters; the movements of noble birds and animals;

the striving and poising and unfolding and making room for each other of the branches and buds and leaves of plants; of all these things the artist has put some reminiscence into this image of a mere human being. Unconsciously as they were put, so unconsciously also do we recognise them; and seeing, or rather feeling, in this human figure an epitome of the whole visible world, we become aware, though we cannot tell why, that such an antique image, without halo or attribute, is no longer a man or woman, but a divinity.

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While at the museum this morning, sounds of bagpipies, hand-drums, and occasional shots. And the image of Tangier rises in my mind. The very wail of the pipes, quite different from any European thing. It was a wedding, winding up the hill, people on horseback and foot appearing and reappearing between the olives, white, coloured, little puffs of smoke between - a sudden vision of the East. A few minutes later

somebody whistled that most hideously vulgar polka which has pursued one in Italy all summer, and which originated, no doubt, in a Paris music-hall.

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One afternoon I got a ride: a poor, poor little pony, led by an old peasant in Greek gaiters and tunic under a ragged European tweed coat. The saddle a great wooden pack with a piece of Turkish curtain thrown over it. I rode for an hour or so among the hills, walking the steep bits up and down, out of compassion, mingled with terror, for that lamentable little beast.

It carried me first to Druvo, or Druva, the village on the hill which was the only representative of the ancient Olympia until the railway station gave rise to the inns and the half dozen cabins around them. This successor of Olympia consists of a score or so of, oh! such miserable houses of unburnt brick, standing in the midst of dust-heaps, where pigs



grunt among offal, and not broken amphorae (as in the fields below), but discarded preserve cans lie around. In the middle is a house hardly bigger, but with rounded windows and a bell on a wooden trestle; the church! with its burial-ground in no way closed off from the stubbly field and thistles and refuse-heaps all round: the graves unmarked save by bashed-in paraffin tins at the head. . . . Among them is a slab, with an inscription in German, the grave of an overseer of the excavations. It made me feel queer about the heart. Perhaps he preferred being buried among the stubble and thistles and those Greek graves, with their petroleum cans, in sight of the hills of Arcadia and the Alpheius snaking past the stadium and hippodrome towards the sea. He was elderly, humble; and, like Winkelmann, he may have longed for years and years (in some Northern village school, perhaps) to see the South, the classic lands.

But when he lay dying, and the cicadas sawed and sawed through the baking malarious days, did he not long sometimes

for the lime-blossoms falling on the sward of a German church-  
yard, and the chorals and organ through the church-doors, and  
the spirt of water of the village fountain, and the clatter  
and cool smell of the mill?

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DELPHI AND THE CASTALIAN SPRING.

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A marvellous daybreak, when the boat, where I had slept peacefully among bugs and cockroaches, put in at Itea, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth. It had poured all yesterday as we travelled across the low-lying yellow vineyards, marked with cypress and reeds, of the Peloponnesus. One had felt snow in the air; and there, this morning, it was. Powdering the great mountains which steeped in the sea, making their blue that ineffable storm-blue only snow gives: snow and snow mist, and snow blue above, and dun and tawny below, where their bare rocks touched the water. These are things impossible to write about: such colours are emotions, poignant like music. The blue, for instance, of the further shores of the gulf, under their cloud-crown and against the blue of the water, as we saw it over the great olive woods which fill the valley. A valley, or almost sea-plain, as if the Carraras rose up at the walls of Pisa and out of the sea. Or as if the sea receded



and left, instead of the Gulf of Sp<sup>3</sup>ia, a wide valley filled with olives. They are covered with the large, cherry-like, eating olive, and peasants, mostly in costume, are beating the black ones down.

We met a string of camels, with their look of being made of rags, a strange Eastern sight, under these mountains, with the snow visibly falling on them. Those camels suit the mangy look of that little harbour of Itea, where we had breakfast, and of the wretched inhabitants loitering on its wharf. Yet, when these Greek peasants wear their costume they look almost absurdly handsome, stagily so, their white woollen overcoats giving them a sort of Holhein breadth of beam and swagger, with their long, white-gartered legs and tasselled shoes.

Ascending these rocky mountain flanks, thinly covered with grey herbs, and here and there arduously ploughed and sown; going up higher and higher, among boulders on boulders and walls on walls of lilacky limestone, seamed orange with iron ore, and seeing the veil of falling snow on the peaks, and

feeling the cold Alpine air, I had a remembrance of the bare mountains rising behind the wide valley of Assisi. I understood that Apollo was, after all, a wonder-worker, a kind of antique saint, the master of ascetic righteousness and poetry, the dragon-slayer whose worship was full of purifications; no mere nature god, but a great spiritual power, as he extends his protecting arm over the Lapithae and bids the brutal Centaurs stay their hand.

And this austere mountain fastness, burnt brown and tawny by the summer, already crowned with the blue of snowstorms, looking down upon the vine- and olive-yards, and on the sea across its capes, is one of those places where nature purifies all things with her droughts and snows and down-sweeping storms. Above the large village of Chryso (these villages of sunburnt mud barely show against the mountains, except by their patches of garden) the mountain becomes full of odd caverns and the broken, weathered fragments of rock, veined with iron-ore, take odd looks of torsos, of horses' skulls, and monstrous

sculpture, like that of Girgenti. Places for dragons everywhere, and goblins at every turn, Medusa's heads and monsters of all kinds, before Apollo came from across the seas and slew the Python and purified and sanctified to his own use the oracle of Mother Earth lurking in these mountains.

Above the bare fields of rock rose the great, jagged, black carrion crows, and at one place, where the bend of the road showed a snowstorm driving between two peaks, circled two eagles. We were at Delphi.

. . . . .

Castalia: It is a runnel of perfectly clear water, perfectly white, which must be rare among this iron-ore, that stains all the other streams we met coming up, and the run-off of the night's rain to the colour of tanyard. Castalia comes out of the cleft between two high vertical rocks, over pebbles and watercress, and there is, rather lower than the excavated fountain, a rough modern one, with a little domed shrine and two plane-trees.



A woman was washing in the run-off of the Castalian water, and a pair of trousers, turned inside-out, hung drying on the rocks.

At the Castalian fountain, or rather stream, we saw a strange little bird climbing up the face of the yellow rock - a fat, bluey-grey creature, climbing like a fly, and every now and then fluttering on very lovely wings, all crimson and orange below. There were lots of other small birds on the rocks and among the stunted bushes, and a note a little like a robin's. But above, high up, circled the great jagged crows.

The run-off of Castalia rushes down the olive yards of the Marmaria excavations in steep channels, forming pools beneath some of the immensely big and gnarled olives, the like of which I can remember only at Magliano in Maremma.

I returned this evening along the high road which bridges over the Castalian spring, in the train of peasants coming up from their olive-yards, mostly riding, with faggots on their packs and sacks of olives, some dogs and very big, woolly

sheep, evidently taken out by their owners to feed on the less arid slope of the valley.

These peasants at Delphi are pleasantly friendly, and evidently, for all their ragged appearance (but the men wear the costume), well-off and brisk. No one begs, everyone says Good-evening - Kalespra. A man shooting birds among the olive offered me a woodcock, and, on my giving him a couple of cigarettes, thanked with a very charming gesture of bowing, with the hand to the heart.

Someone had lighted a fire of weeds this evening, on the platform of the Temple of Apollo, or the steps of the theatre. It flared up in a great flame, and for a long while the wreath of smoke ascended against the rocky wall, mimicking the sacrifices brought, once upon a time, by the Athenians or Spartans, the tyrant of Syracuse, or even the Great King. There had been but little sunset, barely a crimson bar above the Gulf of Corinth; but over that sanguine stain there suddenly came into sight a high and distant range, the peaks of Peloponnesus.

The air was still, but briskly wintry. As I walked up the valley, that music of mule-bells and the sheep-bells lulled me like babbling of brooks, walking as I was with them behind and in front. This most musical tinkle will always remain associated in my mind with Delphi. It begins with the procession of the peasants downhill in the morning, and barely ends with their procession uphill in the evening. And all day the pure little chimes rise from distant olive-yards below, as the horses and sheep and goats browse down by the river while the peasants are at work.

In the upper excavations, in the rocks about the Temple of Apollo, and all along that magnificent and tragic triumphal way which winds with its great limestone flags between the broken-off treasure-houses and temples, and the bases with the statues' feet still marked on them, and the stones with the long inscriptions, there grow wild fig-trees, scant and gnarled, with a few last hard little figs, and a scent of dried leaves which to me is ineffably delicious. Also tiny little



bushes of cypress, no bigger than the smaller juniper.

So far - no laurel! And I have felt inclined to bring the twigs of bay-leaves in which my gardener had packed some grapes for my journey, and sacrifice them - a gift from Etrurian hills - to Apollo! At last this evening, among the fallen columns and disinterred steps - toned to the colour of the flesh of Titian's Bacchus - of the Marmaria excavations, I came upon a bay-tree! A very old, gnarled trunk, cut almost down to the rock, and covered with poor stunted little twigs so short that you could barely break off more than a wind-warped little leaf at a time.

Hard by that stunted bay-tree, near that round, exquisite temple base and almost under the big olives, stands a broken marble column which, on second glance, is a headless herm, the neck and shoulders delicately modelled. And by its side is a flat piece of grey limestone on which an unskilful sculptor has carved, or rather incised, a laurel crown.

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AT THE SIGN OF THE PYTHIAN APOLLO.

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One of my memories of Delphi, and (such is the perverse-  
ness of that unaccountable organ the heart!) perhaps not the  
least secretly romantic, will be that of the absurd little  
tourist's inn, consecrated as Grand Hôtel d'Apollon Pythien.  
For what can be more intimately romantic than an empty inn (it  
was shut up for the winter when we arrived!), in which one  
rests and sleeps after wonderful adventures; its humble prose  
enclosing, brooding over, a day full of poetry? Dear little  
Grand Hotel d'Apollon Pythien, by whose spirit-of-wine stove  
we sat of an evening, turning over infinitely old bound Punches,  
and (left behind by some pessimistic tourist) Benjamin Con-  
stant's Adolphe; and unloading our pockets of bits of marble  
and tesserae of mosaic, even (O wonder!) of a scrap of green  
bronze, perhaps part of the robe of a masterpiece, and of the  
aromatic hay of wild balm and thyme and dry figleaves which  
we had plucked on our walks and could not possibly leave be-

Whind! Dear little Grand Hotel at Delphi; may Apollo and the Castalian sisters protect thy sheltering salon and bare, spotless bedrooms, and decorate thy (imperfectly closing) glass-house doors with fragrant, though invisible, garlands of poetic memories! As I wandered rather listlessly and sadly, yet with a strong, vague emotion, the valley was filled with the sounds of a passing flock; not tinkling, but a musical clashing as of innumerable cymbals; a sound which seemed to take one from all sides.

This bleak, magnificent valley of Delphi, with its glimpse of sea over promontories and hills, and of chains of snow peaks above the olives of the plain, will always remain in my mind as having for its voice, not water, like other mountain places, but that tinkle of mule-bells and clashing of the bells of invisible sheep and goats. One of the thoughts which have haunted me at Delphi is that of Gluck.

It is surely not fancy that makes his music seem Greek; it is no mere association of names. Mozart has treated one



Greek subject, and Beethoven, let alone Wagner, might have treated a dozen, without a note of theirs seeming Greek.

At Delphi I was haunted by the scene, in Alceste, of the Oracle in the temple; this is the music which such a place can bear; it suits the rocks, the incalculably old olive-trees, the snow and storms up the sere valley, the sunset, as if some God were bleeding to death, above the pools, the promontories of the gulf; it suits the sound of herds and flocks, such as Apollo may have tended; and the Apollo of the Oracle is a God of purification and justice such as he who extends his arm to stay the rage of the Centaurs in the temple of Olympia.

Out of a few indications given in the jargon of eighteenth-century opera Italian - "Chi mai dell 'Erebo", "Un 'ombra beata" - an oracle, a high priest, a temple, Admetus, Alcestis - this Gluck, who wore a wig covered with pomatum and powder, and took snuff, made music matching the poetry of Euripides, of the Homeric hymns, and of Pindar. Nay, in Helen and Paris, the mere words "Chorus of Athletes", "Biondo Apollo", etc.,

set him composing a hymn, a march, which those pre-Pheidian youths might have sung and stepped to the bronze Chariot in his long, fluted garment heading the procession, erect behind his quadriga. How is all this explained? Gluck had written his great operas two or three years before Winckelmann had written his history; and had it been otherwise 'tis excessively unlikely that twenty Winckelmanns would have made an eighteenth chapel-master look at an antique. But there seems to be a moment in the life of every art when, a certain skill having been attained, a certain power of expression realised but not yet surpassed, when facility and arduousness, effort and felicity being balanced for an instant, characteristics inevitably result, which are the same whatever the period and the material; qualities of gravity and sweetness, of breadth and restraint, which, whether the forms be for the eye or the ear, affect us as directly expressive of the highest, fairest, and at the same time most restrained and impersonal modes of human feeling and being.

This afternoon - my last impression; a solitary walk in the holy precincts. Snow-clouds have closed the valley, leaving only the buff and orange and lilac and silver of the olives, as of a frayed embroidery, almost covering the distant blue. Great cold; and a cold, leaden sunset an hour or so afterwards, when we drove down that great iron and rust coloured boulder of Parnassus, and through the olive woods back to Itea.

In the beginning of that kind of steep Via Sacra between the vanished treasure-houses and the bases, where stood the effigies of the Athenian and Spartan commanders, I met two very poor-looking peasants; but they did not beg (none at Delphi ever did), only the woman showed me with a smile the corpse of a tiny yellow finch lying on the pavement, and smiled when I picked it up and laid it on one side. It had the decency dead birds have, only its breast-feathers a little ruffled by the hawk or crow, who must have dropped it into that place of the immortal dead. I thought of another little yellow finch I once saw, crushed in the mud, under the wheels, in Via del



Iritone. This one had the whole triumphant way, the temple of Apollo, the theatre where Pindar recited and Herodotus read, for its churchyard.

"Parnassus", I repeated to myself, as the horrible little boat "Agios Joannes" with its cargo of shivering peasants and grunting pigs, steamed out of Itea in the bitter winter mornig.

"Parnassus" - and a lot of associations rose up with the words. Parnassus - double-pointed Parnassus of German literature (doppel spitziger Parnass der Deutschen Dichtkurst), with Schiller as one peak and Göthe as the other, in diagrams, which haunted my childish lessons; "Parnasse Musical", that was a collection of easy tunes, such as "La Donna è mobile" and "Partant pour la Syrie", for beginners on the piano; "Parnassus", up which Johann Sebastian Bach had composed a gradus or stairway - or was it Clementi? Be it as it may, there Parnassus, not of German literature or pianoforte-playing, was; Parnassus of Greece, there as I stood on the stern of the "Agios Joannes" - Parnassus rising higher and higher with every turn of the

boat's screw, out of the rainy plain, above the one-storied mud-houses of Itēa, kapheneions and megaxenodocheions (always mega, as if it were in the nature of an inn, however microscopic, to be great), and the bright blue pavilion by the water's edge, on which I had spelt out, not without a startled feeling "Acetylene Illumination" - rising and turning with the steamer's movement, till a foot-hill covered the little streak which was Delphi - a bare headland, closed olive groves, which run in two streams from Amphira and Chryso to the strand. And there Parnassus still was, after an hour, raising its long back above the bare capes and the wintry sea, with the loose clouds creeping across it.

A majestic mountain enough, once it is pointed out to you, but not of the sort which catches the eye and fancy, like Soracte or Amiata, or the Carrara peaks, let alone the Alps.

We see it vaguely in the shape of its enshrined Apollo. We see it also with associated visions of class-books, eighteenth-century poems bound in calf and printed with s's like f's,

and cottage pianos with Mozart's head in relief on them. And in this Parnassus is symbolical of Greece and all Greek things, our system of education (ours, and inherited through Byzantine and Renaissance days, from Hellas itself), in its anxiety to train mankind nilly-willy to noble and elegant modes of thought, has made many things at once venerable and ridiculous, which, left to themselves, might have been simply interesting and delightful to those - well, capable of interest and delight in them.

To insist on giving what is not appreciated is surely not merely a waste; it is also a profanation. And one asks oneself, for the hundredth time, whether our classical education has not rather dogs-eared antiquity, and spotted it with ink, than placed it on a spiritual altar, with the pinch of frankincense and the dry myrtle garlands.

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DAPHNI AND THE LITTLE BYZANTINE CHURCHES.

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There is no exaggeration in what people tell one about the sky and colouring of Greece. During these wet days the clouds on Hymettus, seen behind the tea-rose and saffron of the Parthenon marble, were an inky purple - magnificent, incredible. And on fine evenings the hills turn a violet far more wonderful than anything I have ever seen in Italy. We have just had one quite clear sunset, as we drove back from the monastery of Daphni; and it lasted much more than an hour, and ended off with a rim of absolute geranium-red round the Acropolis. The sky above the sea, and above the usual amber, was not pale green, as happens in Italy, but a pure vivid violet, out of which shone the evening star.

I am glad to connect this exquisite evening with a place small, sweet, remote, and intimate like Daphni. One crosses the only cultivated strip of the shallow valley or river plain round Athens, the poor little muddy Kephissus revealing its

presence by that of century-old olive-groves, poplars half gold and still half silver, and a few vegetables and reeds, which refresh one's soul in this country of stone and dust.

Driving along through more aridity, one gets among stony little hills, with here and there a vivid green pine, thick and feathery, like those which overhang the sea in the Riviera. These bushy, stumpy little pines gradually clothe the hills; and underneath them spreads a carpet of silvery skeleton thyme-bushes, quite leafless but smelling deliciously. In the midst of these woods is the little church of Daphni, a kind of microscopic rudimentary St. Mark's, a flattish cupola lined with golden mosaics, some Byzantine cloisters, a farmyard littered with carved marble - antique, Byzantine, mediaeval, even a fleur-de-lys'd coffin! - all tucked away, humble and venerable and so peaceful, behind some cypresses and poplars, and a great screen of crenelated castle wall.

Inside some stonemasons were working silently (these Greeks are so silent compared with Italians) repairing the

great earthquake rents in the building. And an old man was saying his prayers quite undisturbed. He put a pinch of wonderfully fragrant incense into a pewter chafing-dish, and carried it round to the various holy pictures which screened the invisible altar, muttering and bowing as he went.

The driver, who speaks a little Italian, offered to take us further along that road to another church - a "chiesa molto antica". It turned out to be a few heaps of almost cyclopean walls among the dry thyme and the pines; the chiesa of no less a saint than Aphrodite!

A few yards further we were at the top of a little pass; in front of us a view of blue sea and blue conical mountain suddenly opening among those bright-green pines. A great flock of fine woolly sheep, brown and white, were browsing among the silvery thyme stubble, herded by men in long white hose and mediaeval-looking kilts and hooded overcoats; the sheep-bells chiming deliciously.

The driver pointed with his whip to a few white houses on



the opposite side of the bay. "Levsina", he said.

It was Eleusis. And the road we were on was the sacred way along which the pilgrims went to and fro; the mysteries; the great purifying initiation.

The Sacred Way! Driving back we came up with a family of shepherds, returning from the hills for the winter, with their mares and foals, and donkeys carrying their pots and pans and beds; their babies and even their cocks and hens riding on high saddles. Such poor, poor, wretched people, tattered, fever-stricken, silent. One poor old woman lay down her length along the road, to rest a few minutes in the dust. How horrible that the very wretchedness of such people, their vermin, and their dull indifference, makes one shy of holding out a hand to help them. The old woman remained stretched out for a while along the roadside, while the others trudged on, indifferent. And we - well, we drove back to Athens, not exchanging a word, but feeling, both of us, I think, that we did not care very much at that moment about Eleusis, or Demetri!

Is it contrariness on my part, or merely that one is touched, after all, most by what has touched one before? However this may be, what appeals most to me, I really think, in Athens are the Byzantine churches, like this of Daphni, and whatever remains of early mediaeval art.

The saints and kings, as out of the Bayeux tapestry frescoed in what had been the cella of the Theseion, are wonderfully majestic, rich in colour, solemn in gesture, already like Cimabue, or rather like the great real painter hidden behind that legendary name, the Sienese Duccio. These mediaeval Athenian frescoes belong to no decayed art, but to a rising one, although it was to grow and mature in Western lands. And in the poor little mediaeval museum, under the same roof as the incomparable collections of antique sculpture, vases and goldsmiths' work, there is a gilt hoop-chandelier, a third-rate thing, but evidently the ancestor, or at least the humble cousin, of the magnificent hoop-chandelier at Hildesheim. Is

it not possible that we must look for the third (counting the Mykmaean as the first) great flowering of Greek art along the path of Byzantine monks and merchants, in Venice and Pisa, nay, even along the Rhine and in Westphalia?

This is all very likely. But the truth is that I care for those little, unnoticed Athenian churches for their own sake. The first we went into was a very poor one in a muddy corner, between the Theseion and the local railway station. It was hung with faded myrtle wreaths, and a few thin tapers lit up the silver shrines and the looming dark faces of the holy images. Near the door was a set-out of similar tapers, labelled five and ten lepta (five and ten centimes), which one stuck in a long candle-stick in front of the rood-screen, leaving the price on the little table. The church touched me in an odd way, and ever since seeing it, I have hunted out all the similar churches. It is a case, very often, of looking for them, they are so small, so sunk below the level of the town, so tucked away, cupolas and gables and all, among other build-



dings, barely reaching, with their final cross, to the first floor of the modern houses. They stand open at dusk, with their few glimmering lights; and in their tiny emptiness, filled with an incense more fragrant than that of Western countries, the bearded Popes in violet dalmatics go in and out of the Holy of Holies with its mysterious half-hidden altar, swinging the cens<sup>l</sup>er and chanting on an odd, almost dancing, rhythm.

These little dark, empty, humiliated churches, with their suggestion of St. Mark's of Pisa in cupolas and transept-gable, have touched me more closely, with their something pathetically venerable, enclosing, protecting though so humble, than the roofless temples upon the hill. Ancient Greece is too far off or, rather, one has made one's own Ancient Greece too completely for oneself, lodged Pericles and Socrates, AEschylus and Plato, all the marble gods in exile, too long in corners of one's country, one's own imagination.

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OEDIPUS ON KOLONOS.

The cabman repeated "Kolonos"; but, not having Greek enough to ask whether Oedipus's, I shall probably never know. Whatever it was, it will be my sweetest recollection of Athens, connected partly through the little rebirth, after fever, with those first mellow autumn days in the Peloponnesus.

Kolonos, Kolonos of Oedipus and Antigone, happens to have been one of the places in Greece of which I was most certain - a spit of land, sheer rocks, a narrow ridge of thickest olives, with just room for a road leading to a temple on the headland. I know the orientation of that road, Athens behind and invisible; a place set apart for that hallowing release from life and doom, that reconciliation with gods and men: such was Kolonos.

This we were driven to, axle-deep in mud along a tramline, was a vague, rising ground among suburban houses, growing up few and far between, with no streets, only ploughed fields and

dust-heaps between them. Nothing could be more like no place at all, save for a rough bit of flattish rock coming through, and on it two monuments with a rail round them - Ottfried Müller and poor Lenormant, already battered and broken-headed.

"Kolōnos?" I repeated with a despairing gesture all round. "Kōlonos", answered the driver, resolutely nodding at that rough slab of rock sticking out of the thin, vague suburb. So Kōlonos or Kolōnos it had to be; at least, we should be taken to no other. We accordingly got out and went to look, well, at what there was not; and, in default of it, at the tombs of the defunct archaeologists.

It had rained heavily during my days of illness, and for the first time we found a thin fur of fresh green: among the gaps of that rock little fields of microscopic herbs, such as we see in spring among the old frostbitten grass. And there was in the wet sunny sky, as in my mood, a happy languor rather of spring than of autumn. There were the usual flocks of goats among the dust-heaps at the back doors, the little mud-



houses having plenty of room between, and in front and behind were bits of market garden, the grey of olives and reeds and some beckoning cypresses. The afternoon was silvery, and a pale strip of sea shone between delicate sharp lines of coast and sharper visionary mountain lines against the pale sunny sky beyond.

It was very quiet and sweet, or I felt it so. A few paces further, always on that same rising ground, stood a solitary, ill-grown cypress, and a tiny church alongside of it. On its front, painted bright blue and white, it carried, like a single horn on its one-eyed forehead, a single hoop belfry, as one sees in Aquitaine. And the porch, also painted blue, had a rude ionic capital on one side and a doric on the other. It was locked, but from the loop-hole behind one got a peep of a cut-glass chandelier and the usual Greek brass candestand. A very poor, battered, rude little place, and, perhaps, all the more for its fresh coating of sky-blue, looking incredibly old, in a sense that no classical building can possibly be -

old, old like a person, and so venerable.

It was borne in on me that it was here that Oedipus must have died; yes, propped against that blue wall, under the porch with its capitals which didn't match and were too big or too small for their columns. The bell would have rung in that bell-fry, a smell of incense come out when the wax tapers gleamed among the eikons, and the messenger of Athens would have arrived through those market-gardens, with their olives and yellow plumes of mulberry and plane-trees. That is how I now think of the death of Oedipus; and it feels very natural, grave, and pathetic, like this poor little place and this shapeless bit of rock, with the lovely hill-lines surrounding and the silvery sea and clouds.

Emboldened, we pointed to the wished-for green - the oasis we have looked down upon from Lycabettus and the Acropolis, drawing my longing far more than the sea, with the sense of vegetation and peace and of the presence, however hidden,

of a stream. We got, always by dumb show, into some gardens, where the kind people - an old gentleman particularly, in a shabby frock-coat - picked us roses and oranges among the close-set laden mandarin trees. Then on, through mud, with orange-trees overtopping the mud-walls thatched with thistles, till, behold, a river - between mud-banks, indeed, but still with reeds, and golden planes, and half-silver, half-golden poplars, with things growing, tended, happy. And as we went on between those mud-banks the poor little brook became fuller and clearer, and at last had a weir, actually ripples and sparkles.

And there were "trattorias" under big cypresses and half-bare fruit-trees. All very humble, like the river itself, but with something friendly and elegiac, like places near Rome. This lovable little river is the Kephisus, and it is his image and not the horrible, dry dust-heap, Ilisus, on the other side, which redines with welcoming arms on the Parthenon front.

It was between these gardens, under these beautiful big



trees in autumn gold and silver, that poor Antigone must have  
led her blind father, resting perhaps, when people were kind,  
at one of the little wooden tables and benches of the eating-  
houses.

FAREWELL TO GREECE.

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I am glad that the theatre of Dionysos should accidentally have been kept till our last afternoon in Athens. It never tempted me, seen from behind the railings of that dusty road; and now the charm of it quite took my breath away. It has not the tragic romance of the theatre at Delphi, looking at the wars of the clouds with the mountains. It lies rather low, and only one side sees a strip of sea and a tip of blue hills. It is, so to speak, the theatre itself which is the poem, the play: strictly speaking it is the seats.

That semi-circle of stone chairs; what company of men or gods was ever as comely, as delicate, as pathetic as this? They are at first sight similar, with slight variations of height; but they are quite different in the carrying-out of the same exquisite shape, and time has made them individual by breaking their lines, by effacing more here, less there; especially by painting them with delicate difference of weather-

ing. The marble has taken, on the whole, a colour of ivory deepening into sulphur yellow, but with every variety in the intensity and distribution of this heavenly colour, and of the lilac which the dark stains take in contrast to it. The chairs, with their deep, curved seats, are as different as any row of different occupants could be - some erect, long-backed, the arm-rests still intact, like majestic braced athletes; others shorter, with a slightness as of youth, others giving almost the bowed shoulders, the tired deep seat of age. And each bears the name of its occupant: the priests of all the gods of Athens, from the oldest, grown out of the soil, to such parvenu divinities as Hadrian the Saviour and Antinous!

And in the midst, next to the magistrates and the polemarch (I think) sits the high priest of Dionysos himself, with satyrs dancing with wine-skins round a great vine-tree carved in the back, and Chimaeras on the base, and a lovely Cupid, kneeling almost in the attitude of Michelangelo's, in



low relief on the arm-rests. Then there are the priest of Demeter and Persephone, the priest of Theseus, the priest of Hephaistos, the priest of Artemis, all the solemn and gracious assembly. We do not want to see their human form: their ghosts have been embodied into these exquisite marble shapes, their delicate curved legs and backs barely raised out of the block, their deep, rounded seats and irregularly broken arm-rests; marble limbs, marble raiment of inexpressibly lovely ivory and sulphur yellow and lavender, passing the loveliness, the tints, and the shimmer and smoothness of Oriental silk. And here and there, between them, where the rain-water has left a tiny pool in the stone, a bit of thyme or scented ragwort is returning to life; nay, just above, a miniature fig-tree is trying to grow, and has succeeded in a crop of minute autumn leaves.

Tearing myself away most unwillingly from that godlike company of empty seats, we climbed up the steep, ruin-strewn rock of the Acropolis, exquisitely rosy lilac in the sunless afternoon light. At the top, under the great wall of the Ac-

ropolis, are several natural caves, and one of these, formerly sacred to Pan and the Graces, has been closed with a wooden rail and turned into a chapel. Some poorly dressed women were saying their prayers before the shabby little images hung to the bare rock and burning incense to them. The incense met one in the open air; and from the town came the sound of church bells, clashing cymbal-like together, as they do in this country, so that one wondered for a moment whether it might not be one of those great flocks of sheep and goats which one sees going across the hill of Philopappos opposite.

The sun was setting among clouds, a bright spot of reflection revealing it in the water of the bay; the hills of Aegina and Salamis rising ultramarine against the suffused lividness. When the women had finished their prayers and left, I put some pennies in the little money-box, taking two of those thin, yellow tapers which lie there for sale. I lit and stuck them in the brass candlestand; and burnt a bit of dry thyme, a farewell offering to Pan and the other divinities of the place.

. . . . .

The farewells at the Piraeus, the boatfuls of friends, relations, hovering in sight of the steamer as she swung slowly round; the waving of hands and of handkerchiefs, till she turned on her course; men straining their eyes from the bulwarks, and women mopping theirs. A knot rose in one's throat, and tears were difficult to restrain. It seemed far worse than any parting of one's own; the very essence of all the partings one had ever gone through or foreseen, poisoning one's soul, without the helping or deadening circumstances of the real case; abstract emotion, mere emotion overwhelming. It is thus that literature acts, and even more so, music.

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Out of a scirocco sea paved, under the loose afternoon sky, with rounded slabs as of violet marble, rises the last Grecian island which we shall see. A rock, with nothing on it save a light-house, no tree or bush, but wearing a tight-fitting garment of buff-and-dun serenity over its delicate flanks,



uncovered here and there, and ruddy with some precious marble, like those of some sunburnt and wine-smeared Dionysos. The mountains of the Peloponnesus, serrated and conical, begin to take a darker blue as the sky beneath the clouds flushes crimson. The lilac slabs of the sea turn to rosy tesserae, nay, to rose petals. The island gradually swings round, erects itself foreshortened, and becomes shrouded in darkness and distance, only its beacon light breaking now and again out of the night. The ship breathes steadily on her course; and the water rustles like shaken silk as she cleaves through it. In a couple of hours we shall have passed Cape Malea, the uttermost point of Greece, and have set our course northward for Italy.

. . . . .

Back in Italy. The semicircular lights of Naples, and a more distant one, a beacon perhaps, which must be in the sea, look up into my room. And a lightning flash rises every

now and again also, as the electric tram rattles past. Tomorrow, at this hour, I shall be driving past the gas-lit hoardings of Rome, and the two colossi, with their horses rearing over the fountain in the blue darkness round the electric rays. And Greece is far already in time, as far as it is, somewhere across the dim sea, in space.

An absurd tightening of the throat comes with that thought. For I have not loved that country or left any of my heart behind in it. But I have brought back from it a sadness which is new and unexpected. The sadness of understanding, what I seem never to have guessed before, that the world of Hellas has perished; is dead, buried, its very grave devastated.

Till now, somehow, one seemed to think that it still existed; a land east of the sun and west of the moon, where temples stood, and statues still arose out of the earth; and the gods might still haunt their groves and the nymphs their well-heads.

And now I know that such a country does not exist; that these museums, all the world over, hold far the greater amount

of the wreckage of that lost world; broken things, headless and armless, or restored; and that the temples are on archaeologists' maps, or barely more. And that beyond the sea is a little country, very poor, very new, arid and empty, with people who look, some like Turks, some like Slavs, a few like Italians, but whom it is impossible to connect with the people of marble, the people drawn in red upon black or in black upon red, whom I think of as "Greeks".

Not the gods of Greece only have vanished, but Greece itself. That is sad. And there is added another sadness. It is extremely improbable at my age that I shall ever see those places again. Alpheius, winding between the little pineclad hills and the yellow vineyards; the violet and rosy rocks of Delphi, with the pools of inland sea, the crimson sunset among the snows; those valleys full of that tinkle of bells. Where is it gone to? And the blocks of fluted and chipped marble among the dry grass of the Acropolis? Shall I ever see any of it again? I think not. And in this thought, also, is the



sadness of time, of days gone and which will never return.

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PART III

THE END OF THE WORLD

LIBER SENECTUTIS

PART III

LIBER SENECTUTIS

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GREEN CAKES.

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The Arno, the other day, frozen and frosted over near the bridge-piers, made me think - very childishly, but the whole matter is childish - of those wonderful green cakes iced with sugar which dear G. D. used to get for me in Paris. Will any creature ever again bring me green cakes or know that I like them?

There are things one has a right to perhaps only once in a life-time, but the longing for which abides. It is right that it should, so long as the vanity thereof be admitted. For that longing means that certain capacities of feeling and imagining have remained in us; and even if they never again find their object, if no green cakes be brought once more, why they serve to enhance objects which we can have; or may be objects we can see others having. They serve to hold in tender reverence what we once received; and, as a matter of memory, need never lose.



I suppose every grown human being, let alone every human being grown old, recognises the bitter fact that there is, moreover, besides much no longer to be received, also (bitterer still) much which there remains no chance of our giving. We are most of us elderly folk, secretly but surely, superannuated children and loveless lovers. Let us be glad of what we no longer get and no longer are asked for! What we no longer employ as receivers or givers, why, it may help us to understand.

'Tis, after all, such latent, such atrophied possibilities, which unite us to the present and the future of others as well as to our own past. Let us never grow old in the sense of ceasing to comprehend other folks' youth or of remembering our own. Let us cherish the memory of all the Christmas trees of our childhood and those who gave them; the memory of all the green-sugared cakes once brought to us and brought no longer. Those green cakes, and what they stand for, have become part of our spiritual flesh and blood, making those souls of ours

less fat or less watery than they might otherwise have grown.

January 18th, 1905.

FORGET-ME-NOTS.

Watching the cygnets on the Ouse yesterday, and the water-hens diving among the rushes, I became aware of the fact that there are no end of flowers more interesting than forget-me-nots, but perhaps none which attract me in so romantic a manner. It is not merely that you have to climb on the spongy grass-tufts of the river-bank at the risk of suddenly finding your feet under water; nor even that their amphibian habit gives the flowers the pleasant lushness of water-plants, and that appealing look of eyes smiling blue through tears. The charm of forget-me-nots, the sense of rarity, indeed almost pricelessness attaching to them in my mind, is due to certain little wreaths which were made of them when I was a small child in Germany; made, but not by oneself (like the honeyed chains of cowslips in the meadows of W.) nor by anybody one knew; made on the contrary in unknown delectable places by unknown privileged hands, to be exposed for sale in corners of the



market or on chairs by some church porch or city gate; costly things intended to be bought, as it seemed to me, only by persons of vast wealth or profligate lavishness; for certainly it never entered my wildest dreams that any of them should ever be bought for such as me. They lay, these forget-me-not wreaths, or more properly sat, steeping in the shallow water of soup-plates; the blue flowers and narrow green leaves packed so light as to give the look of a pincushion with never, in their severe restraint, the least little sticking-out bit of sky-blue or tender green. At most some of the slenderer flowers would curl sideways in unaccountable disobedience to the Maker's stern will; an attractive mystery. More precious still was the circumstance of there always being a few blossoms which wouldn't be blue or anything near blue, but insisted on being undisguisedly pink. The under part of the wreaths was an additional reason for wonder, being woven of tiny black twigs and wet moss, which struck one not as a parsimonious sham, but only as an added and gratuitous wonder.

It may seem strange after what I have said, that I should acquire such intimate knowledge of these unattainable objects. I studied their peculiarities not while being dragged firmly past them by my nurse, but from furtive discovery of a faded and disgraced garland in some neighbour's dust-heap. And also on the rare and almost portentous occasion when such a wreath was somehow introduced into our household. This would oftenest happen in company with sundry small home-baked cakes by a process, never clearly explained but spoken of with laconic reprobation as "a present from a servant". When the intrinsic and adventitious attraction of forget-me-nots is even nowadays enhanced in my estimation by a kind of taboo horror, the sense of such guilt as it is guilty so much as to question or even, if you are a law-abiding child, to allude to.

September, 1908.

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DIJON.

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At Dijon, after a night journey in icy autumn mists, I had a wonderful sunny day for my birthday, of which I spent the forenoon in seeing the museum and rambling about the streets, pleasantly old-world with parliamentary hôtels (was not Des Brosses president of the Parliament of Dijon?) and church corners. Tired and footworn, I yet made an effort and visited the Jardin de l'Arquebuse, for I remembered how, between thirty and forty years ago, I had gone there with my Mother. Some irregularity of railways detained us at Dijon for an hour or two - now I come to think of it, could it have been a few weeks before the outbreak of war in 1870? - and we spent those hours first in the self-same Cathedral where I rested this morning, and where a venerable Archbishop happened to be preaching to a congregation of children. (I remember my Mother pointing out his resemblance to Fénelon, always an ideal of hers.) And after that we had repaired to that little



Botanical Garden, where I wandered again but alone, and among rustling leaves, this morning of my - I scarcely care to count up what - birthday. This Jardin de l'Arquebuse is not a monumental Botanical Garden like that of Oxford or Padua, with terraces and statues and wonderful foreign trees. It has but few vases and no fountains; and only a long spalliered-over house, a nice silly leaden urn with a leaden flower on its high-pitched roof, with only that grace of outhouses and staircases which the French eighteenth century could not help giving. The garden itself is a trifle neglected, its ornamental canal chickweeded over, its box hedges ill-trimmed; and the yellowing poplars and planetrees stand out gorgeous against the black glass shed of the railway station, whose smell of soot and lubricating grease mingle with those of the autumn leaves under foot and of the outlandish plants sunning themselves, perhaps for the last time this year, in tubs. To me the charm and amusement of all such gardens is the contrast between the dahlias, asters and zinnias, so brilliantly, un-

blushingly commonplace, and those box-hedged squares where a few other plants are seeding and withering in their little forest (like the desks of a doll's orchestra) of Latin labels. That is droll and pathetic, and not unsuitable to the thought that I was there as a child with my Mother, and now again, all alone, on my fifty - I scarce know what - something'th birthday. In celebration of that date, I allowed myself an infraction of my gouty teetotalism, and drank a glass of white table d'hôte wine to my past years and friends and to my remaining present and future ones.

That birthday wine, although of the sort described as "vin compris", was full of queer and delightful associations, something like the pleasantness of the poor little exotic plants of the Botanical Gardens, agnus castus, and holly-ilex and myrtle, but which meant for me the river-bed at Olympia, the thickets of the Maremma, and, familiar but not less poignant, the quarry-hill above my own Tuscan home.

October 14th, 1908.

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which our family expeditions were ever pushed. And I remember, as much as I actually experience at this moment, the painful sense of its shingly desolation and of the wicked-looking dwarf evergreen willows berried with poisonous orange.

That is left behind and we <sup>are</sup> running close to the lake.

On its opposite shore the trees have grown up and nearly hide the gimcrack castle of Huneck, which used to be a goal of our walks. Somewhere above, and turning off the main road to Oberhofen, is an upper, less frequented road towards Thun, through orchards and past a flower-adorned old fashioned house where lived an old gentleman and his daughter who, without at



THUN.

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A casual Swiss train is carrying me, unexpectedly, round the Lake of Thun, that is to say round so large a part of my childhood.

Here is the mouth of the Kander, staining the blue of the lake with its glacier water. It was the furthest point to which our family expeditions were ever pushed. And I remember, as much as I actually experience at this moment, the painful sense of its shingly desolation and of the wicked-looking dwarf evergreen willows berried with poisonous orange.

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all knowing them, indeed I almost think without ever having beheld, had inspired my Mother with a romantic liking.

With that upper road, and almost with the bend close to that house, is connected the family discussion whether or not we should go and settle in England, instead of drifting (as we did drift, though perhaps not without the pressure of my childish fingers) back to Rome. My life, my work, myself, would, but for the decision come to on that road, have been so different, probably so much more useful.

Then, as the train goes on past more gimcrack turrets, this time of "Rougemonts" among their trees, we cross the road leading along that park and its collection of rare fowls, rather untidy but very attractive, in a wired-off farmyard. Here is Scherzligen church with which - why? - is connected the story of the Erl König, which must have been talked of or perhaps merely vividly recollected, close by, so that the harmless steeple still gives me a half shiver.

Then, as the train stops at the landing-place at Scherz-

liffen, the lake ceases, becomes the river Aar, blue-green, brimfull, and along its further bank is our daily walk: surely the trees are fewer? Surely there used not to be the embanking wall? For my Father used to walk along the river edge - I can see the silhouette of his back - rod in hand, tugged at by the lake trout. And now comes the island, its terraced house (familiar in old-time sketches of Niesen and Blümisalp) half hidden from my sight by the sedge and the willows of the backwater behind it. That backwater was to me a place of unaccountable romance, with its few houses, half hidden by sedge and its shady island walk, where Ruffini and Mrs. Turner used to sit on a mouldering bench under a willow, and, in my mind's eye, I have always seated the old brother and sister in Ottilie.

The train having resumed its leisurely progress, there, at a gap across the river, is the house we lived in summer after summer, the Wellingtonia in the little garden now huge; is the swing still by its side, which was put up for me? The



house is now illustrious, to the point of picture postcards, as having subsequently become the residence of Brahms. And I am glad to think of it hallowed by his music after having been the little prosaic reality which held so many of my little childish dreams; or was it perhaps the other way round? And were those obscure childish fancies more of the stuff of Brahms' divine songs than, shall we say, the too-too solid bearded reality of Brahms himself?

Here we are alongside the little town itself, though not yet in the station. I get a glimpse of old street and roofs, and a bridge. The inns, already old when I was a child, Croix Blanche and Falken, which had a great wrought iron bird with an oak garland swinging for its sign; alas, alas! They have rebuilt it in Munich Art Nouveau style! And the great barracks by the Aar, whose armorial shutters suggested its having been the town granary, they also are gone. Now only the church and castle remain visible, the pepper-potted hill where my dear young governess lived close under that square keep,

and the mysterious widow who fascinated me by having been in

Rome!

And then, as the train moves on towards Bern, then ....

well, to my Present.

July 21st, 1909.

WIESBADEN.

Spent twenty-four hours at Wiesbaden on my way - or rather on my way - from Munich to Bonn.

It is said that people who have seen ghosts, real ghosts accepted by Psychical Research Experts, do not recognise them as such at the moment of seeing them. Certainly I did not recognise Wiesbaden as the ghost which (its living reality barely remembered) has haunted me as the representative of my earliest childhood.

The last evening there has indeed left me with one of those impressions which are recognised as you recognise of some flowery herb that it will become a sweet and pungent ingredient in the pot-pourri of memory: the colonnades and pediment of the Kurhaus against the luminous evening pallor; the great trees cut out upon the velvet of the electric light; and under the great white luminous globes, the variegated crowd of light hats and summer toilettes before the orchestra-stand



with its fitful gusts of horns. And then the walk the following morning, past the fountains spraying among the silky artificial grass, through the gay little shop-streets till we got to stalls and umbrellas of the market-place.

Delightful. But none of this will ever be Wiesbaden for me, nor any relation thereof. Not merely because that pre-Bismarckian town (it was a Residenz, possessing its own sovereign duke) has been, for the most part, built-over and built-out. But because, a more hopelessly disconcerting circumstance, it has by some unaccountable freak, got turned backwards forwards. I mean that my Wiesbaden lies in a direction diametrically opposite to this real present one. In my Wiesbaden the promenade and Kursaal and Springbrunnen - that moving, glancing white shaft of luminous bubbles, of which my childish mind stood in fetichistic unavowed fear - all these things were, or in my thoughts distinctly are, to the left hand of the Wilhelmstrasse of my recollection; the town, including the Burg-strasse where we lived, being on the right

side; whereas the modern promenade and Kursaal are on my right, the town on the left, without (I can swear!) my having turned round in the meanwhile; so that, pull things about as I may and change my own direction, I cannot get anything into the place where it should be, so that after twenty-four hours in this Jugend-styl Wiesbaden and all its splendours, there still remains uninterfered with, that Wiesbaden which has haunted me ever since my earliest childhood. The Wilhelmstrasse with its plane trees and posts and chains, the Trinkhalle and Kur-saal tailing off from it, to the left. And the row of houses, where, in a back room hung with the print of Mozart playing before Marie Antoinette, I listened to my Mother playing Rossini's Non più mesta, which seemed to me the triumphantest tune ever invented; and where, but in another back room, I stretched myself on the rug feigning death in order to enjoy (had not my patience given out) the tragic, remorseful~~x~~ return of my heartless parents. All this was to the right, where the Kurhaus is in this false, real Wiesbaden; and to the right

also that other street, Burg-strasse, where I recollect trifles with coloured sugarplums being concocted for "poor little Mr. Benson"; also the American Civil War taking place, the death of the Prince Consort (interpreted as concert) and the great excitement of being shown how to model little hams and mutton chops out of wax. It was in the Burg-strasse I looked through the keyhole at the half-trimmed Christmas tree in my Father's room. And all that took place in the Wiesbaden oriented exactly the reverse of this present one, with the Kursaal to the left hand side of the Wilhelmstrasse and its planes and chains.

July 10th, 1911.

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### THE DILIGENCE ON THE SIMPLON.

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Lying on the grassy slope above the Chalet, my view is fenced in by the yellow and lilac petals of flowers, the Alpine grasses and herbs which outline themselves, unconscious of the great valley between, against the blue and green mountains opposite, their snow-patches and avalanche-scars. And the wind off the glaciers barely stirs this gay, tidy minuteness like a zephyr in Elysium.

All changes when I get on to my feet. For now the valley faces me, narrowing like a theatre perspective, and in it a white thread, with the mountain-lines rushing down to meet its furthest bends, and peaks turning on their side to close it in, the road to the Pass and to Italy disappears at last between the snowy obelisks of the Simplon range.

In the early morning the valley is filled with the luminous mists of the sun peering over the jagged rims and silver-white glaciers, a dust of broken light. In the midday the

valley is blotted by sunshine. But always it keeps those intersecting lines drawing one like a funnel, along the shingle bed of the Rhone and the poplars of the flat road on its banks: drawing the eye; and drawing the memory to my childhood, when it also drew me with the power of Italy and Rome beyond. That road passed over the Alps, leading to the remote, the almost inaccessible south as it seemed to my childish longing; itself remote and almost inaccessible.

The railway in those days came to an end at Sierre, and Sierre itself, which the map showed tantalizingly near our Bernese summer home (why the back of this Niesen, of the Jungfrau range in front of our windows, must certainly look down on the Rhone Valley!) - Sierre itself could be reached only by a cross-country journey which seemed interminable to one's childish measurement of time. And from Sierre the diligence of the Postes Fédérales, with the long, long day of the pass before it, started at dead of night, its six great horses looming in the steam of their own breath, catching the flicker of

the guard's lantern, which outlined the ladder whence boxes and packages were hurled on to the roof of the coach and were gathered into a vast tarpaulin mound. I cannot tell exactly how often I thus started at midnight from the Postes Fédérales of Sierre; where are they, their canary coloured coaches and smoking horses and tasselled and badged driver and guard? It certainly feels nowadays as if that perspective-funnel of converging mountain-slopes had sucked most of my childhood and adolescence into itself. Whatever the actual number of these Simplon crossings, I remember that on one of these occasions (perhaps it may have been the last) it was my happy lot to travel in the high hooded seat at the rear of that stacked-up tarpaulined luggage. It seems improbable that I should have perched there all alone; yet alone I felt and treasured that aloneness there aloft, whether it was real or imaginary; since children, who are so little alone in the body, contrive and cherish all manner of spiritual solitudes and hermitages. That rearmost uppermost seat, of which I cannot recover the



beloved technical name - or was it the Imperiale? - corresponded I fancy to the legendary "Rumble" on which the maids and couriers of Milords rode Vetturino into Italy. That seat must have been bespoke at my urgent childish request, for I had prepared to savour its full adventure and romance by providing myself with a pocket reading-lamp, a little black thing which I lighted in the yard of the Postes Fédérales of Sierre, and with infinite precautions carried up the clambering steps of that dicky; the deliciousness of its heated tin and smoky oil perfumes, like the ineffable smell of stale gas in theatre-corridors, the most romantic recesses of my early memory. And then, as that road along the Rhone engulfed itself endlessly, white straightness, stoneheaps, trunks and shadows of poplars, flashing into the coach's light only to disappear, yard by yard into the darkness and void beneath the diligence and behind it, I clasped the heated lantern in agonized but happy fingers; and in its fumes of guttering candle and scorched metal-varnish, I read out of my pocket Göthe (also brought

with deep pre-vision of this midnight journey) the ballad of the Treasure-Digger . . . until, no doubt, the light went out, and I fell asleep in warm cloaks and warm (though previously despised) parental arms, awakening at icy cock-crow in front of the tulip-bulbed steeple of Brigue, for café au lait, before the long waking dream of walking up the hillsides with their endless parapets. I dropped behind at short cuts, catching up the labouring horses at steep corners, to drink, O bliss! ice-cold water spurting from the rock among ferns and Parnassus-daisies, and tasting rapturously of folded leathern cup. Until, half asleep once more towards nightfall, the rushing stride of the six huge horses carried one down into Italy.

July, 1914.

THE UPPER EMA.

---

I don't know how to begin about that visit the day before yesterday to the Upper Ema, although I am anxious to lay hold of some of it in writing since, apart from the writer's merely instinctive use of his instrument as nearest to hand for clutching at the Faust-moment, there is my experience that re-reading what I have written about places does serve as an act of evocation.

Let me begin at random with the wish (felt when I passed for the first time through that gorge) that this stream should really be the Ema, and not, as the intricacies of the lie of the land and of the ordnance-map made me fear, the Greve. Not that I have anything against the Greve: on the contrary, I think with time-dimmed pleasure of fording it, years ago, near that Gothic Monastery of Settimo where it goes into the Arno. And I can see in my mind's eye, and should like to see again with the bodily, certain shallow reaches



thereof between reed-brakes and with yellow poplars shedding into its stream, both under San Casciano and much further down by Scandicci, when I walked there with the Sargents that autumn at <sup>Torre</sup> ~~Torre~~ Galli. But for all that, I was vexed at my suspicion that this winding stony stream between steep, wooded rocks might also be the Greve or, indeed, anything except the Ema. In remembering that early childhood, I have never applied

My familiarity with the undoubted Ema was indeed mainly at the laundry village of Grassano where, passing so often in my cart, I used to see half the washing of Florence spread to dry on the stream's shingle after defiling its scanty waters, and the association was rather odious, though freshly washed linen streaming in the wind always takes my mind off the soapy preliminaries and the need for them; still this laundry-business of the little river may have been purified to my fancy, even as its soapsuds are neutralised by sunshine and lavender, owing to my first having heard it spoken of as the Felice Ema. That was nearly fifty years ago. And I cannot

tell whether my then childishy adored Miss S. had not mixed up the name of the stream with that of the church, San Felice, on its lowest reach, or whether she intended the adjective to express her felings to the place, to which she once took me, my first initiation almost to Florentine fields in spring, to pick anemones and see cherry blossom. Certain it is that, save in remembering that early friendship, I have never applied that adjective felice to this particular stream, although the recollection of those passionately seen flowers shown me by that childish flame of mine might warrant the word and the turning of Ema into Proserpine's Enna. But such associations, like lavender in a press, may be only the more clinging for being hidden, so that the felice Ema of Miss S. may be accountable for some of my recent pleasure in identifying the newly discovered (and so remote) river-gorge with the Ema, also for the vexation till a clearer map allowed me to say definitively and triumphantly (telling people who naturally didn't care) that these were the upper waters of the Ema and not of the

Greve.

Which leads me to say (winding and obscure like the ravine in question, and not without a painful suspicion of imitating my Bête Noire, Proust) that there seems something especially attractive in the bare thought, as well as the appearance of the uppermost reaches of a stream. As was the case when, in the last year of the war, I was taken to the Upper Windrush, high on the Cotswolds. One feels a tenderness for the baby nymph as well as attachment for her familiar grown-up graces; though Heaven knows there is nothing, save such feeling of one's own, common to that silent English stream, stealing in folds as smooth as the grasses on its surface and as secret as the nests in its rushes, making no more way than if it were the moat of the gabled manor house on its brink - nothing in common save one's love for young unprofaned waters, in common to it and that rushing and brawling Tuscan brook sending up its various-rhythmed duet with rocky boulders and stony weirs into the curved sounding-board of the narrow mountain gorge.



I got the friendly lady who had lent her car to stop it in that hidden and longed-for place, allowing us to walk the mile or so of flat road cut in the hill's shoulder and twisting above the stream, so as to pick the myrtle and especially the lentisk with which the rocks are thickly grown. Especially the lentisk, a glimpse of which on a former belated drive had attracted me to that valley; for although myrtle never loses its classic wonderfulness of blossom and berries, yet it is familiar in this part of Tuscany, growing even within a walk of my house, whereas lentisk is not of these Apennines and means for me a Mediterranean climate, the <sup>mar</sup>Maremma, Portofino and Olympia. It has something savage and fierce (never associated with gardens) in the resinous scent - does one like or dislike it? - it leaves on one's hands. We broke twigs of it where it overhung, with myrtle, arbutus and tall heather, the road cut in the hillside and clothed the rocks below to the little river's bubbling weirs and pools. After which we sat, profaning with our tea-things, on one of the shaley

slopes at the mouth of the gorge.

It was a scirocco afternoon, but with no colour in the sky's moist, moonstone greyness. Only the more vivid became the russet and green, frayed like old velvet, of the oak scrub, the sparse pines (little umbrellas against the sky) and of that luxuriance of southern aromatic evergreen. While everywhere else the roads were rutted deep in mud, this mile or so above the stream was perfectly clean, and solitary - like the stream. Indeed, the only habitation, and that on the opposite bank, was an old mill with weather-stained crumbling outhouses which, for any sign of life, might have been as long disused as the bridle-path, almost a torrent-bed, which crossed an old bridge and wound up the hill behind that mill, through thin sere oak-woods to some long disused pass into the valley of the Upper Arno. A path, a track, reminding me of the wintry woods in the background of one of the wings of the great Van der Goes, and suggesting the Christmas carol about the hunting of the deer. Instead, there was a fire in a dimple high up,

sending out smoke-streamers into the moist grey sky with now and again a little spirt of orange flame when the charcoal oven was being slaked or stirred by invisible hands.

That same day I had noticed from my window such a feather of smoke just in those distant folds of hills, taking the usual pleasure in its suggestion of solitary scrambles and of those circles of jet in the turf which one comes across in Italian mountains, the pleasure also of the scent, bitter-sweet, heady, woodland of that smoke whenever one recognizes, itself bringing so much lovely detail of wood and rock close to one's mind.

That fire, and a few horned sheep in the myrtle thickets were, along with the white singing stream, the only life to be seen in that valley as we sat profaning it with our tea-things and our talk.

Profaning it. But were we? At least to me there came, alternating with the sense of such profanation, the suspicion that after all, this sanctuary of aromatic grown rocks and



rushing mountain waters was made so, thus consecrated, its

indwelling nymphs and sylphs brought there (relics like the  
disciple<sup>s</sup> baskets of broken victuals), by just us the profaners  
with our tea-things.

The suspicion that I am the artificer of that genius of  
places which, turn about, I worship or profane. And is not  
this suspicion applicable, in great part at least, to other  
things than the upper waters of the Ema and its aromatic  
Mediterranean bushes?

New Year, 1926.

VINCI AND THE FALSE LEONARDO.

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On the way down from the High Apennine (or rather deviating from it on purpose), we stopped last mid-October at Vinci, which we reached, after some going astray, in a terrific whirlwind of dust, seeming to foretell, although falsely, the beginning of winter storms. Of course for the sake of Leonardo who as the Bastard of the signore (or potentate) thereof, must have been born and bred, one imagines, in or about the castle of which the great black towers crown that low hill. And, thanks partly to the commemorative slab and bust and the post-cards, we thought very little about him at the time. But after a couple or so of months I find myself thinking of Vinci in conjunction with Leonardo and his work. Or, more correctly, what documents attest is not his work, but to my mind sums up all that legend makes one expect of it: the fountain said to be Verrocchio's, in the inner sacristy of San Lorenzo. Its wonderful garlands, its animals, boars, an eagle, snakes, zoologically realistic, like some trophy of the chase, but tailing

off into incredible grotesques, tied together into bogeyness with those knotted snakes; above all, supported at the corners by the claws and bat-like wings of the two crouching harpies, one of whom, at least, has the queer, elusive loveliness of those two juxtaposed profiles (to me the nec plus ultra of Leonardesqueness) of the Nativity cartoon.

That fountain, which we are told is not by Leonardo, fulfils so absolutely one's notion of what he produced when the lad had collected together all those uncanny animals enumerated by Vasari. This again takes me back to the village or little fortified town of Vinci, and what it must have been in his day: an insulated stronghold between the not yet reclaimed swamps and ponds of Fucchio, unable to drain themselves into Arno, and the woods, the chases of the Monti Albani, low buttresses of the Apennine. Forest must have been close at hand, the name Cerreto (from quercus cerrus, the mountain oak) tells it; and the pinewoods, now thinned out along the Pisan highway, of the Golfolina gorge, are but a



few miles off; besides those marshes where, hunting from flat boats, there must have been not wildfowl enough but snakes, huge toads and crabs, monsters of all kinds to Leonardo's queer likings.

Moreover, that whirlwind of dust, whose spirals he must have watched bringing darkness over the Arno valley, has made Vinci somehow a fitter birthplace of Leonardo, cosmic we might say, and not quite reassuringly human. What, however, suits him best is my remembrance, refined to essentials (like his sky lines), of a long autumn walk, starting from the other side, along the crests of those hills over Vinci: places of outcropping rock among broom, stunted pines and heather, full of fowls, whence one looked down on distant Florence and close below, on the towers of Vinci; and returning from which, (and this impression unites through thirty years with that recent hurricane of dust) we found ourselves in a precocious snowstorm.

Such impressions, Pater would say (I am re-reading Pater)

must have been among those of the boy Leonardo.

Be this as it may, such fluctuation of impressions have mine become about him, his birthplace, his legend and that fountain which is not by him, but which stands so thoroughly for him in my mind. For permeating it all is the sense of early winter in Tuscany: storms, mists, keen high air; winter which, while stripping the woods of their leaves adds somehow to our sense of what they are, the contrary to the indoor and the human.

Florence: Epiphany, 1928.

CORFE CASTLE.

There was something so queer, quasi supernatural, in the way it suddenly appeared - appeared in the sense of an apparition - three days ago on my way to Dorchester, that I have been almost expecting not to see it again now on my return journey. And indeed, with all my straining I have scarcely seen it, and rather with the eye of faith, as something grey, it might almost have been any grey village, between Wareham and Poole, tucked into the hillside.

Instead of which, those three days ago, there it was distinct; and if not instantly undoubted, merely because it was so amazing. One is accustomed, in Italy especially, to romantic visions of towers, San Gimignano, Serra Valle and so forth: one watches for them against the sky from distant railways.

But not in England! And nowhere, to my knowing, like this.

This apparition has the unlikelihood of the Sword Excalibur's sudden emergence from the sea. Or, as in the Castle of Otran-



to, when the giant mailed arm thrusts over the bannisters.

For the odd part was that the great broken-off erect branch of the castle wall, and then the rest of the ruin, appeared, apparently, over the shoulder of a low pale chalk-down, not marking the highest point of that quasi-island, but rising out, of its very heart, as I had seen its green mounds, its grey village, a few days before.

Perhaps some of the sense of supernatural has been due to the strangeness of that day of being taken to see Corfe: the sunshine fading as we left Wareham among its salt-marshes, a sea-fog meeting us as soon as we mounted the Downs, licking their pale pastures and chalk-pits and blotting out all the rest: no sea, no land remaining, only the nearby fallows and pastures, the black villages of the island which the mist turned into a true one, and putting behind those black Castle-ruins on their pale grass, behind that black, steep village of ancient houses and church, a background of only a fainter darkness of mist; a wash of shifting watery stone-colour.

A place of tragedy - confused in my mind with all the Shakespearian castles of murdered Kings - set apart for fatal, terrible doings, with a dim St. Edward the Martyr as figure-head through the centuries, and char-à-bancs becoming unnoticeable in its strangeness.

Train: August 16th, Oxford: August 17th, 1928.

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A LATTER-DAY ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCH.

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Broadway Old Church: a place to me, of secret pilgrimage, which I have never failed to make whenever in this neighbourhood. Pilgrimage - and in so far secret - into my own past, into moments of my life whose joy and poignant solemnity I have kept swept and garnished, isolated and erect in my memory even as this little old church has been, its freestone (Cotswold ashlar) clear blond where the sunshine, fitful in this valley, touches its vaultings and pillars, and with something beyond itself like the white cloud-balls and the wind-swayed trees through its white glass, a coloured escutcheon solitary in one of the mullions.

For me this valley-corner means perhaps the happiest moments of my life, of my mature life at all events: when I stayed at Pie Corner in the two years 1918 and 1919, war was coming to an end and had ended, and one could still hope.

The first time was mid-October: I remember the icy room



up some steps, where I read Miss Haroun al Rashid in bed, a book which, for that reason, perhaps, I still care for. I remember the magnificence of the gold and crimson fruit-trees outside on the grass, magnificence I have never seen again. There was still some war going on, and some trepidation in one's heart as the news came in day by day, but anxiety adding a mere transient shuddering chill to the overwhelming sunshine of peace, warm and golden like the autumn orchards.

The next year there was the pang of leaving England after that long exile there, of returning to one knew not what altered familiar world and self.

Then, yet another year, when staying at quite the other end of Broadway, I trudged out to this church, rather worn-out; and rested there long, and wrote just as I am doing now, trying to hold fast the moment and the mood. And in the interval K. had died; and hope (hope for the world) had gone. And one's last shreds of youth.

These are the memories and moods which, as others would

have brought a prayer, I bring in secret pilgrimage to this little old church, so reverend, untouched and beautiful a sanctuary.

Aesthetic emotion? No doubt. But not solely any more than, is to me, so much of that of music. Or rather into such emotion of parting or remembering there often enters in my case an aesthetic element, a desire for some little ritual, like a flower given or kept - or as when, yesterday, before leaving(for ever) the dear Judge's Lodgings, I played to myself alone in the house, the last bars, the cadenza of the slow movement of that first Mozart quartet.

Except perhaps at Charleton, full as it is of the first days, legendary themselves, of my friendship with K., a K. so long since altered - such pilgrimages as this one into my past have always been unaccompanied by the thought of others. If others enter into these moods, it is - well! as part of that loss which is a gain: Elysian ghosts, not creatures who could make one hot and cold with their living contacts.

Coming out of the little church, I felt once more how fit the place and season for such a sanctuary of remembrances: at the foot of the old, old churchyard runs an unseen brook revealed by its willows; and beyond, there rises the green wall, almost vertical to the eye, of the narrow valleys of this sheer escarpment; the Cotswold wall tufted with a single tree or tiny clump, solitary against the sky, as if no world whatever lay beyond its few score of feet. And round the church, old-silver-coloured on its smooth unweathered exterior, spreads the solemnity of big elms, leaving room for the battlemented tower to raise its four-squariness against the autumn sky, washed storm-blue.

I seem always to have been happy in Broadway (even in the thick of the war-years) with kind people too indifferent to hurt me.

Of course in all such places and moods as this of Broadway church, there is likely to be an under-current, or rather a ground-bass, of the sense of mortality from the knowledge of



the graves all around one: the sense that those obscurest forgotten ones, their headstones effaced, their very mounds trodden level, were once real with the only reality which matters, this now of feeling; and that the passage of time which has washed that away is also effacing our reality, this now of what we think and feel.

Broadway: September 6th, 1928.

THE RIVER WALK IN THE CASCINE.

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A la recherche du temps not perdu, but passé, which may be the exact contrary. Since what, as my alteration implies, what was being looked for, was not so much a piece of my past, except inasmuch as a feeling one knew had existed therein was the most important portion thereof and what I desired to evoke,

For this reason I seized - was it yesterday or the day before? - the pretext of ordering some strawberry plants at the horticultural school, to go to the Cascine, where I have been only once in heaven knows how many years, and without that excuse, might not have been for as many more as remained to me to go in.

I said to myself that while the gardener saw about those strawberry plants (this summer's drought having killed ours) I would take, all alone, that walk from the Indiano along the river-bank by the side of the thickest part of the wood, and I knew that I was doing so because I remembered that walk

so often repeated (often unwillingly enough!) in my adolescence, to have been accompanied ~~more~~ than once by a particular feeling I wished to recapture, like a half-known melody. The feeling thus localised along that hedged and gravelled river-bank, with the distant perspective of Florentine churches and villa'd hills, was an intense longing for something beyond, not different but more, much more of the same kind; a longing for the Italy - poplared rivers, towered cities and distant mountains - of which this was a sample strip, brief, narrow; and perhaps its particular straight enclosedness and impossibility of getting beyond those hedges except into far distance may account for the poignancy and recurrence of the feeling, a so much but no more of the Italy to which circumstance in those days denied my access. The walk was, in a manner, like a view through a grating; and what I longed for was, so to speak, seen at the end of my chain. Be this as it may, it seems to have haunted that walk.

And I embodied, so to speak vicariously satisfied it,



in the beginning of a novel ( I must have been eighteen or nineteen) about a party of people meeting at Orvieto in just such autumn weather; although oddly, Orvieto of all places is least like that riverside walk. Perhaps I felt that gangway of my thoughts as leading to Orvieto, one of the very few Italian places I had recently been to. Anyhow, it was this longing for a local beyond, this intense reaching out towards a Genius Loci from whom I was shut away, this adolescent love-episode which I suddenly wanted to re-capture, to taste once more.

And, therefore, this afternoon, the first warm and golden autumn afternoon since my return to Italy, I got myself taken by my car (a car! a car undreamed of by anyone in those years; a car to whom miles are nought; a car my own to do what I like with!) to that gravelled path by the river. And I tried as I walked (not without the reflexion "a nice sunny level walk in winter" - which betokened old age and growing infirmity) - walked opposite the thinning poplars along the

shallow stream where boats and carts dug out the sand, with the tall pines and ilexes alongside, and that perspective of villa'd hills and cupolas and towers before me - walked and tried to recover, now that I could go anywhere if only I wished, the passionate longings of when I could go nowhere.

Florence: October 19th, 1928.

BOULOGNE SUR MER AND LITERARY IMMORTALITY.

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"I have never been at Boulogne", I replied, probably to myself, since no-one else had asked - "I have never been at Boulogne before." Now, as a fact, I was born there, or within so few miles thereof, and from my window of the hotel, I could watch a constant to-and-fro of motor buses "Boulogne-Pont de Briques" proclaiming as it were, the imposture of my alibi. Also suggesting that I might spend an hour, or a quarter of one, pilgrimaging to the precise spot where I was born. Had I not, until trees or houses obstructed its view, (before the war) seen from the train, recognising by one of my Father's many sepias, the very house "Château St. Léonard", with its Louis Philippe terrace, in which I actually emerged into the world, A.D. 1856; came into the world with the legend that the doctor said "Madame, je n'ai rien à vous reprocher", words repeated to me many times during my childhood, as a reason for filial gratitude and sometimes of reproach, little suspecting



that Dr. Perrichod (that was his name) doubtless said the same words to all the ladies he thus assisted, and irrespective of the subsequent glory of their offspring. And, by the way, how small is the world and how telescoped is time, that sixty years later I should have been the guest (at a place less attractive than its name, "Cavalière du Lavandon") of an old be-craped and somewhat moustached widow lady who was the daughter of that doctor who had introduced me to the world and particularly to Pont de Briques, Boulogne sur Mer, Pas de Calais, and, as I have mistakenly taken for granted, also to eventual immortality.

Now, if Boulogne had not been simmering under a kind of mid-night sun (for no daylight was ever so hot and so dim) making its quays like some faded Vernet print of a "Harbour of France", I might have taken heart of grace, and, after wandering round the donjons and douves and leafy ramparts of the Upper Town (how the open windows reveal Louis Philippe buffets

and miroirs à glace and Balzacien retired officials!) - I might have taken likewise one of those motor buses and pil-  
grimaged to that place of my Birth. And the queer thought arises that had I been somebody else (which I might so easily have been) who in some future times had read my works, the probability is I should thus have spent my afternoon; the place of my Birth being one of the few objects of interest to travellers at, or near, Boulogne sur Mer. For have I not pil-  
grimaged to similar Birth (or, for that matter, Death) places of other writers. Which thought led to the further one that this would have happened only if Dr. P. had assisted and congratulated ("Madame, je n'ai rien à vous reprocher") somewhat earlier in the History of Literature. Since it was easier in earlier days to attain such immortality as is starred in guide-books simply because, given that somebody had to be immortal, there weren't so many people to do it. So that, after comparison of the prose and poetry in Golden Treasuries, etc., indeed, that of most departed writers, with my own and the

consequent recognition that the latter, to wit, mine, is better worth remembering, yet, I may assert with equal confidence that it will not be remembered, or the Birth Place of V. L. be recorded (elsewhere than on obsolete passports, as Pont de Briques, Pas de Palais, near Boulogne sur Mer), and pilgrimaged-to by my passionate Readers of Future Ages.

For one of the few certainties which life has brought me is that the competition for immortality much exceeds nowadays the immortality available for distribution; and that literature is ceasing to be vere perennius and assuming its true status as journalism and perishable. About which fact, though at moments disappointing to my secret hopes, I cannot fairly complain, and am bound to apply to Fate Dr. P.'s remark at my own birth: "Madame, je n'ai rien à vous reprocher."

. . . . .

But apart from this matter of "oblivion versus immortality", there would be more for me to say about Boulogne sur Mer because, as a fact, I really had been there before, though



only at the age of five, the year of the wedding of the afterwards King Edward VII, whose effigy alongside of his bride in the Illustrated London News, is one of the few images I retain (perhaps because I coloured it by hand!) from those months at No. Blank, Grande Rue, Boulogne sur Mer.

Also that of Major Bergonzi's garden at Pont de Briques, cruelly branded on memory by one of those mishaps disgracing parents after accepting the hospitality of old friends for their offspring. Much later in life I learned, connecting him with a wholesomely austere plum-pudding, that Major Bergonzi had fought in the Crimean War, had a wife who was a Swedenborgian (?) and had been born in Italy, as was proved by his playing the guitar after meals.

Oxford: June 20th, 1930.

GENIUS LOCI IN NORTH OXFORD.

Its back purlieus, especially, appeal rather absurdly to my fancy. Partly because, for all the streaming by of bicycling youths and maidens in white or flowery garments, I cannot believe them really tenanted save by elderly ladies and old gentlemen: like the empty shells and dry star-fish on the sand ridges which the tides and storms have long since left unvisited. And yet, it is, I feel sure, from this sort of place that issue most of those English people one meets in Italian trains and galleries and inns, especially pensions. Those, at all events who have wandered up the steep lanes between palaces, the cypress paths above Tuscan and Umbrian torrent-beds: those to whom, slightly absurd figures, rather than to its comely inhabitants, belongs the solemn and poignant romance of Italy. Such as they have brought it back, unable to put it in words. And therefore thoughts of Assisi, Siena and so forth issue to me like rather jangled music from these smug North Oxford semi-detached dwellings, with their

plots of unwilling flowers, their names allusive to past homes or "beauty spots".

Perhaps I feel like this because some of the intensest romance of Italy was taught me less by the real places overseas, as by Pater's books, their perfume brought home, slowly distilled, to just such a North Oxford house as these are. It was in the diningroom in Bradmore Road, hung with photographs and pre-Raphaelite pictures, that Novara, which I have never seen because a place of enchantment: "Novara ... Yes - Novara, there was such good bread at Novara. And sweet singing in the cathedral", said Mr. Pater in deep dreaminess.

Oxford: June 29th, 1930.



BATTERSEA PARK.

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Just now in Battersea Park - sat in the little garden which was such a haven (in the war years) with its Villa Borgheseish little fountain - I noticed how I was struck by the splendour of flowers. It was especially the small (clustered) orange lilies. And I remember how, during the war years, I used deliberately to seek and cling to their and other flowers' vividness in a way I had never known before, making the most of even the poor flower beds at Adel, which had before been merely occasion for discontent.

And the vividness has remained! Also in many other things, the avoidance of my old habits of grumbling, breaking the habit of taking pleasant things - beauty, interest in people and things - as my right or a matter of course. And, instead, making the most, seeking for it and thanking, a habit which has remained (at least about things!) and altered my life and me rather profoundly. Not "durch leiden", but "durch Dankbarkeit wissen".

February, 1931.

plots of unwilling flowers, their names allusive to past homes or "beauty spots".

Perhaps I feel like this because some of the intensest romance of Italy was taught me less by the real places overseas, as by Pater's books, their perfume brought home, slowly distilled, to just such a North Oxford house as these are. It was in the diningroom in Bradmore Road, hung with photographs and pre-Raphaelite pictures, that Novara, which I have never seen because a place of enchantment: "Novara ... Yes - Novara, there was such good bread at Novara. And sweet singing in the cathedral", said Mr. Pater in deep dreaminess.

Oxford: June 29th, 1930.

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### THE BECKONING BELFRY.

Architecturally, the oldest things here in Ravenna are, on the whole, the belfries. Also, incidentally, the most attractive. Often belonging to shut-up, or even desecrated, churches, they emerge over the walls of gardens. You see them in certain backstreets; again perhaps with a battered brick apse, from the melancholy little promenade which was once the circuit of city-walls: rising into the moist sea-air from between high walls, seeking the light in this damp, sunken city like their companions the pomegranate spattered against the masonry, the rosemary trained to rise by a long twisting stem above the walls, and the bay trees sentinelling over the parish priest's or the decayed noble's lettuce and red-leaved vines. Ancient belfries, mostly Byzantine; testifying to what this town must have been before the silting marshes cut it off from the Adriatic and from life. Belfries so many more than you can account for, even among so many suppressed churches,



so many more than have any conceivable use, except as nesting places for birds or the fancies of idlers like myself.

It seems odd, but is explicable on second thoughts, that here at Ravenna, as in Rome, the belfry has remained unchanged while the church has so often been rebuilt or destroyed; so that the remote centuries seem still to commune together and speak to us also from the unchanging skies with their sunshine - and mists and storms, which, however other things alter, are always the same. A thought which, as often in the squalidest parts of Rome, is fraught with some foolish fascinating consolation.

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NEW YEAR'S EVENING, 1934.

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"Come Ho! and wake Diana with a hymn" -

Although general seediness and noises in my ears should prevent even attempting such a thing, themselves perhaps, by my "Peau de Chagrin" fatality, the result, the punishment of such proceedings, yet I want to note that I have begun the dreaded New Year (and my seventy-eighth) in this spirit and with these words running in my head.

What happened is this: after several evenings just missing it, I watched the full moon rise from my East window. She - for it was certainly she - emerged very slowly from behind the quarry hill, throwing up little beams, almost sparks, among the jagged blackness of cypresses and rock, making a white furnace along them; and then, at last, when the sky aboŕe and the clouds were all silver and blue, slipping her moorings like a boat, sailing free, and rising, a perfect silver disc, with extraordinary speed into the waiting firmament.

Patet Dea!

I had called my little cook, who was busy next-door, having more than once noticed that she cared for moons and such sights. And we stood together at the window, watching this lengthy assumption of the goddess, not without exclamations. Waking Diana with an inner hymn.

That hymn went on in my mind, long after she had vaulted and vanished into the stormy higher sky; found appropriate voice, became an audible hymn when I strummed part of Opus 131 and was able to hear it, with aid of recollection. I have not often, at least of late years, been filled with such religious joy of beauty, and happiness of being capable thereof; "Waking Diana with a hymn" at the opening of this lowering New Year. (It was a genuine emotion, with a slight heart attack brought on afterwards.)

January 2nd, 1934.

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