

## ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE VERNACULAR.

BETWEEN the language of literature and the language of common life there must be, whether in a living tongue or a dead one, differences growing out of the nature of literature. The very making of literature is an attempt to give more or less permanence to thought which would otherwise pass away with the moment which gave it birth, and to give wider utterance to thought which would otherwise be confined to one's immediate audience. It is natural, therefore, that literature should hesitate to use forms of expression which, though quite unexceptionable in conversation, would defeat either its end of permanence or the one of intelligibility by offending the reader's prejudice or puzzling his understanding.

There thus grows up a distinction between the language of literature and the vernacular. In the one, the best and surest expression of thought is everywhere and always to be striven for; in the other, thought may appear in whatever dress fancy and the expediency of the moment give it.

There are, for instance, constantly cropping up in language a number of forms of expression which gain a local or temporary currency only to give place to others like them, which in turn have their little day and disappear. Such flotsam and jetsam are no real part of the stream of speech moving steadily along from generation to generation, and are unsuited to purposes of literature. Many of these folk of the hour, it is true, though but merest gutter-snipes in their origin, having once caught attention and gained importance by accident, do eventually become most useful members of literary society; but until their social status is recognized it is not safe to trust them with the serious business of literature.

Then, again, many words, owing to

the fact that they do not catch the stress of the voice, get contracted. While really due to the operation of natural laws of speech, such contractions, to the ordinary mind, seem to be the result of carelessness, and are not easily tolerated in literature. When they are represented in writing, a pedantic apostrophe takes the place of the lost element of the word. The printer points his finger at them every time they appear, as much as to say, "You've forgot to put on your cravat." One prays for the time when users of English will make the discovery that these are integral words of the language, and not curtailments. But until that time the deliberate effort to write literature makes it necessary to use them sparingly, and always to attach to them their sign of ignominy.

Then there is the necessity of avoiding repeated words and turns of expression. In speaking, the same ideas are expressed over and over again in the same words without making the repetition of them tiresome; for they are differentiated from time to time by differences of stress or intonation or accompanying gesture. In writing, however, such a differentiation is possible only to a limited extent. How far repetition is tolerable depends upon the prejudice of the reader. If the written word were recognized as the spoken word, and not the letters of it committed to type, the reader would have little cause for offense in these apparent repetitions. But he thinks he has abundant cause; the art of rhetoric teaches him that. The writer, then, unless he have the power of compelling the reader to follow him up hill and down dale, over hedges and through the mire, must be careful how he taxes the reader's patience.

Still another difference between the

two arises from the fact that the spoken word is more easily intelligible because accompanied by certain dramatic accessories of tone and gesture which help to make it clear, while the written word must depend wholly upon the connotation which experience has given it. This difference, however, is not so great as at first sight it would seem to be; for the written words themselves, always appealing to the ear, carry with them in their context the tones and inflections they have when uttered. There is not here, as in repetitions, anything to offend the reader's taste. It only makes necessary a greater number of words and fuller expression. And here, again, the question depends largely upon the power of the writer. It is quite possible for English that was originally intended solely for the ear to maintain its quality as the best literature when printed and directed to the eye. We are so used to thinking orally that the moment a word appears before us we recognize it as sound; and as the words weave themselves into thought, tone and emphasis take care of themselves. The eternal drama of human experience thus unfolds itself in the pages of Shakespeare without let or hindrance; the actors are ever ready for their cue, in the railway train, on the street, in the library, anywhere. Ariel comes with the swiftness of light, and the play is on; we've but to whistle and it's gone again. And so with rhythm; the words in a line of Spenser's, silently appealing to the eye, will "drop melting honey" into ears still tortured with the griding screech of a trolley car. There needs nothing more than attention and a knowledge of English; the rest will take care of itself.

There is another difference, like the last of dramatic quality, growing out of the fact that we leave more to be inferred when we talk than when we write. But here, again, the difference is more apparent than real. The same quality of connected reasoning and clear expres-

sion is to be found in good conversation as in good writing; the same disconnectednesses and abruptnesses in both forms of expression. If we use more of the one sort of thinking when we talk than we do when we write, it is merely because we choose to do so.

These distinctions between the language of literature and the vernacular are formal, not essential distinctions; they grow out of the differing physical conditions of representation, and are not of language itself; they do not make two kinds of language. Indeed, it would be easily possible for us to ignore them entirely. For where the written form of expression has kept pace historically with the spoken form, as is the case with English, there are not two vehicles, one for written thought and the other for spoken thought; there is but one. So for us there is but one kind of English, and that is the English we think with.

The successive attempts to create a special language for English literature have been failures. It is our lasting glory that our greatest writers have been men who were not bred in the schools. The language has successfully resisted every effort that has been made to reduce it to a uniform logical formula of literary expression. We can now look back with a feeling of pity for the early Elizabethans, striving to improve English poetry by squaring it with classical quantity, and to make Alfred's vernacular worthy of Cicero's praise.

Were no disturbing conditions present, it would be evident to any one who could read that written English is the same as spoken English, due allowance having been made for the different physical conditions of expression. It would be no harder to write English well than to speak English well, and both would depend upon the power to think English well. Education would then have no difficulty in coördinating a writing and reading power with a thinking and talking power, to such a degree of perfection

that all four could be exercised as easily as one of them. That the ear, the tongue, the eye, the hand, do not now work together in perfect accord, in this process of receiving and transmitting thought, is evidence that the matter is not one of merely coördinating physical powers in an unconscious effort to secure a given end. The ear and the tongue can unite perfectly and easily and unconsciously, in normal cases, to perform in different ways the same function. That the ear and the hand cannot do so without embarrassment, confusion, and artificiality shows that disturbing conditions are present.

And disturbing conditions are present. They are due mainly to two causes: the one, a too early familiarity with classic literature combined with an ignorance of English; the other, an archaic system of writing English no longer representative of the language, and not understood as archaic writing. To escape these two dangers, and arrive at a clear forthright use of one's native idiom, requires no small amount of skillful piloting. The siren voice of the one, the confusing currents of the other, have numbered among their victims some of the brightest names in English literature.

To examine the first cause. The literatures of Greece and Rome attained their perfection under conditions which it is not probable will be repeated soon in human history. They became classic through the very fact that it was then possible to atrophy language and fix it in an artificial way by an education essentially aristocratic and exclusive. The normal process of growth was arrested by referring continually to a previously fixed standard of correctness. Grammar became a thing of books and precepts, and was not the unconscious expression of the logic of the race. All this while, however, the common tongue of the people, untrained in the schools and unfamiliar with forms of expression

other than those of experience, was obeying natural laws of growth. But to the minds of the upper classes this growth was a decay, and they constantly arrested it by adherence to an ancient form regarded as normal and fixed in their literature. There were thus two languages in the place of one: a literary speech which was also the vernacular of the upper classes, and a vulgar idiom of the masses which had no literature.

It became possible, therefore, to elaborate fixed rules of literary expression in formulæ which were scarcely subject to change, and the highest beauty of the literature was found in the strictest adherence to them. Violations of such rules were *barbarisms* (a term we still have with us), unintelligible combinations of words or sounds, and were considered to be corruptions of the standard speech, — there was no other way to explain them in an absence of a knowledge of historical grammar, — just as many good people nowadays feel called upon to excuse Shakespeare for using corrupt English. In the case of Latin, the breaking up of the Roman Empire spread the vulgar Roman idiom over Europe, to become the parent of the Romance languages. The Roman Church and Christianity perpetuated and spread the classic idiom, until the Renaissance came to reinforce it and make it the norm of literary expression. The Romance languages were not regarded as Latin, so that for mediæval Europe there was but one Latin tongue, that of the literature. There was thus imposed upon the living languages of Europe the dead language of a foreign literature, whose skillful use depended upon the observance of certain inflexible rules. This became the highest ideal of literary expression. The attempt to fit it to contemporary thinking was a failure, — a failure which led to the immediate development of vernacular literatures all over Europe.

But for a long time the vernacular literatures were ignored. Writers who

used the vulgar idiom felt called upon to excuse themselves for doing so, on the ground of a patriotic desire to relieve the ignorance of the masses, or some such thing. The literature of the universities was still in Latin and Greek. The ideal of literature continued to be a classic one. Aristotle was dethroned, but Plato took his place. This ideal has continued to dominate our vernacular literature to this day, and the writer of English still strives to imitate a form of literary expression which is not consistent with his habit of thought, and has never been consistent with his native forms of expression.

He may not do this directly ; but unless he knows English thoroughly, and has unusual confidence in the power of his thought, he can hardly escape an indirect imitation ; for the grammars and rhetorics which he uses are full of principles derived from the study of classic literature, and not from English masterpieces. His education soaks him in these principles. He learns to make his sentences rather than to allow them to make themselves ; he turns them this way and that way, so they'll parse, — that is, fit into certain mediæval categories of thought ; he avoids forms of expression which will not square with *bokara* and *bramantip*, torturing and twisting his native idiom to fit this Procrustes bed until it is a limp mass of lifeless paragraphs : logical ? — yes ; well proportioned ? — yes ; connected ? — yes ; but at what a sacrifice of point and vigor, of that forthright quality that calls a spade a spade and has done with it, that incisive quality that cuts straight to the core of the matter and exposes it, that robust English that Chaucer and Shakespeare knew ! All this carefully constructed rhetoric he spells out in a painful effort after what he supposes to be accuracy, knowing full well that if he trips in this fine footing he lays himself open to the charge of ignorance and barbarism.

Simplicity and sincerity are far to seek in such writing ; self-consciousness is everywhere over it, subterfuge lies close to it. The best writers of English do escape from these things, — they are forced to by our modern conditions ; but the escape is one of the difficulties of learning to write easily and well.

Not until our grammars and rhetoric textbooks are founded in the intelligent study of English literature, and based only upon principles derived from what the world agrees to consider the best English writing, shall we get rid of these artificial standards.

But besides these writers of English who come thus indirectly in contact with the ideal of a classic literature, there are a great number who are brought directly in contact with it through study of Latin and Greek. If they had a thorough knowledge of English literature before they turned to Latin and Greek, the result would be only to plant them more firmly in the use of their own idiom. But it has been the fault of our educational system that this contact was too early, and the familiarity bred of it only a superficial one. Because the student does not know the strength and wealth of his own literature, classic literature becomes to him the first unfolding of the power of literary expression, and he naturally seeks to imitate it. The contrast between his idea of the poverty of his own idiom and the richness of this foreign one is made more sharp by the fact that to get it into his own mind he sets it over into combinations of English words quite unknown to English thought, and lacking its vitality. He is now learning two things : not only to warp his vernacular, but to use for purposes of literary expression words which he does not think with, and which cannot be used for English thought because such combinations of English words have never existed. His teacher is often quite convinced that intelligent effort prevents this, as he requires "English" translations. But he

is not really doing this at all so long as he allows the student to fix any part of the Latin idiom he reads into corresponding English words. Quite satisfied with *Gallia est omnis* being put into English clothes as "Gaul as a whole," he forgets that in English countries are not "divided;" that no English mind would think, "Dakota as a whole is divided into North and South Dakota." Even if he were constantly aware of the cast of the equivalent English thought for every Latin passage his students read, he could not impart it save to a few of them; the others would carry away with them, despite his best efforts, un-English forms of expression to trip and clog them "all their lives after." The young mind thus early begins to think English that is not English, and is not long in coming to believe that the English language is inadequate to many forms of thought. What wonder that he should so think? He knows nothing of Chaucer, and learns Shakespeare's English — what little of it he does learn — in the same way as he learns Cæsar's Latin.

We do not tell him that our own literary product is barbarous and vulgar when we compare it with classic ideals, but we often allow him to infer that it is. If he grows into anything like an adequate appreciation of the literature written in his own tongue, he always feels that it is a pity that it does not more nearly conform, at least in outward aspect, to classic literature. He never understands the technique of its poetry; he is always thinking about dactyls and spondees (though his idea of Greek and Latin hexameters is generally an impossible one), and forever distributing stresses according to the rules of quantitative rhythm. He fails to catch the magnificent splendor of English rhythm; he is unable to discern the nice adjustment of sentence-stress with word-stress, to perceive the infinite variety that English verse is capable of.

His idea of prose is artificial, too. He feels that somehow English has never reached the stage of adequate prose expression, and he is always torturing his idiom into "balanced" sentences or "periodic" sentences, or judiciously distributing it in "short" and "long" sentences. He never learns that the best Greek and Latin would be quite insufficient to express the thought of a single day of our present life. He is like a boy who has grown up in a foreign land, and finds a perfect home nowhere.

It scarcely needs to be pointed out that self-confidence is the first thing necessary to clear expression. The Committee of Ten, in their survey of educational method and their attempt to fit it to the probable needs of the coming generation, have, to a certain extent, overlooked this fact. And we shall probably go on wondering for some time to come why it is that our young people require such an inordinate amount of instruction to enable them to express their thought simply and clearly, and still be puzzled to know why it is that they do not lay hold of their native literature with a firmer grasp.

The very end for which the student is studying Latin is thus being defeated at every step of his training. His study, instead of giving him a wider idea of the power and means of literary expression, and teaching him thereby to realize the strength of his own idiom, is robbing him of what little confidence he has in it. He gets more pusillanimous and pedantic every day, and if something does not intervene to change the current of his development, he will fix himself in a habit of expression that will prevent him even from seeing truth clearly, let alone expressing it.

The trouble lies, not in the fact that he is studying Latin and Greek, — were he prepared for it, nothing could be better for him, — but in the fact that he is doing so before he knows his own language and his own literature; indeed,



often before he has any idea of what language and literature are. He is not studying either language or literature; he is merely exercising such faculties as would be useful in solving the puzzles in a weekly newspaper.

Suppose, however, his education had been started along another path. Suppose his English thinking, as it unfolded itself from his experience, was continually seized upon as thought; that he was constantly shown how a widening knowledge of English idiom was a widening power of English thought; that he was not allowed to express in words any English thought that was not clear in his own mind; that he was not allowed to read English words without getting the full meaning out of every one of them, and understanding the fitness of just those words for just that thought; that to do this for the best English literature he was taught the grammar of English for every piece of literature he read; that he was reasonably at home in all the great works of his native literature, and was fully aware that at every point where he did not and could not understand an English literary form of expression but one of three things was possible: either the writer did not know what he was saying, or he had not been reported correctly, or the student did not understand the English of the period when the author wrote. Suppose such a student were then set at Latin or Greek. He would worry every word, every phrase, every sentence, until he got its full meaning as thought, and would not be satisfied until he had done so. He would thus get at the foreign literature in a way that would strengthen his knowledge of his own. If he went on to read other literatures in this way, it would not be long till he saw the meaning of all literature and of all language; till he recognized language as the function of thought, and literature as the millioned recorded impulses of the human brain.

This kind of study would soon drive the absurd methods of literature-teaching out of our universities. Students with such a training would cease to be interested in committing to paper and memorizing the prejudiced opinions of superficial journalists. They would cease to care for an æsthetic that had no foundation. They would not waste time in learning that Professor A liked this, or that Professor B liked this, or that Professor C was glad that Mr. Swinburne agreed with him in thinking that there were certain elements in Dekker's characterization, etc. The Subjective Elements in Browning's Poetry or the Objective Elements in Tennyson's would cease to be attractive lecture-subjects. The number of predications to the square inch on a page of Chaucer would likewise scarcely seem of importance, especially when the student was ignorant of what Chaucer meant to say with that *x* per cent of predication. Students would cease to think of "literature" as a mixture of George Meredith, Kipling, Paul Verlaine, Quo Vadis, The Christian, and the Dolly Dialogues. There would then be some hope of reaching a rational system of teaching English literature and a rational basis of criticism.

A familiarity with English literature, derived at first hand from contact with the literature itself read intelligently in the light of a full knowledge of the language in which it was written, would not be long in developing the power of thinking clearly and writing easily in English forms of expression. Having thought through his own mind the best English literature in the best English words, the student would not be at a loss for apt forms of expression: they would be his mother tongue. He would not think of using words correctly or incorrectly any more than he would think of walking correctly or incorrectly. The distinctions of "loose," "balanced," and "periodic" in sentence-structure would have no terrors for him; figures of speech

with their long Greek names would not trouble him. These things would not enter into his writing any more than the distinctions of a mediæval metaphysic enter into his conduct. He would bid them defiance, and say what he had to say in bold, straightforward English words. The writing them into literature, if they were worthy and fit to be made literature, would be the mere mechanical process of representing his words by conventional signs.

Such a habit of direct expression would surely bring with it clear thinking. The teaching of English would become what it ought to be,—the training of the mind to think clearly, to formulate thought unconsciously, to get knowledge through the channels of thought worn for it by countless generations of English-thinking minds.

But there would still be an obstacle to remove from the way to clear forthright English writing,—the obstacle already referred to as the second cause of the embarrassment of the written word. We have in English, to a greater extent than in any other language of western Europe, unless it be French, an irregular and arbitrary system of representing words. It is an obvious fact that the forms of the words we write down cannot represent the words we speak. Though an educated man does to a certain extent overcome this difficulty by memorizing every written form for every word he uses, it is not only a process that takes years of valuable time, but is also one that establishes in his mind, willy-nilly, a distinction that ought not to be there. He comes to feel that in literature one must not expect to get that clear and sharp impression which one demands in the speech of every-day life; that in literature thought may be suggestive, transcendental, and need not make pertinent indubitable sense. The reading of Shakespeare never fails to bring out clearly this underlying assumption. For there are passages —

the average reader does not realize how many they are — that cannot possibly convey any thought at all without an intimate knowledge of the English of Shakespeare's time. These may be read to almost any intelligent audience, innocent of such knowledge, and they will never be questioned. It requires argument to convince those who hear them that, understood as they understand them, such passages are meaningless nonsense.

If any one wants to make the experiment for himself, let him take some passage of Shakespeare the key to which lies in a familiarity with a delicate turn of Elizabethan idiom. Let him read it with unction, and note the effect it produces. I doubt — and I've tried it myself repeatedly — if a single one of his hearers will give the slightest manifestation that the words have not for them a pertinency and an aptness leaving nothing to be desired. They think they have been listening to Shakespeare, when all the while they have been taking into their ears a lot of nonsense which, to suppose it comes from Shakespeare, would be an insult to the greatest master of English the world has ever known.

They see Shakespeare printed in modern English (there is no complete text in existence, so far as I know, that does not put Shakespeare into our modern strait-jacket of orthography); they hear Shakespeare's words spoken as modern English words; they feel that Shakespeare must have known what he was about when he wrote, and that if his words do not seem clear and sharp to their thought it must be because it is great literature they are reading. The conclusion is that literature has in it a certain element which transcends common sense, passing beyond every-day processes of thought and forms of expression.

The cause of this confusion lies in the nature of language, and in the fact that English is a living tongue, constantly changing in process of development.

Now, we can think only with the language in which our experiences unconsciously formulate themselves. We acquire our thinking language from experience, and not from books. Books may give us thought that is the outcome of the experience of others, and we can add this to our own; but we cannot get the thought into our own minds until we formulate it in terms of our own experience. When the thought is so expressed that the words in which it is expressed are not those which the receiving mind uses for its own thinking, the unfamiliar words must be translated into corresponding words which are familiar. It makes no difference how close the approximation is between the words said and the words heard; there is no perfect understanding unless the two are identical. The thought of the imparting mind cannot become the thought of the receiving mind unless the formulation of it is exactly the same for both. As far as the imparting of thought goes, it is a case where a miss is as good as a mile. If it is not exactly the same in both cases, a third or intermediate thought links the two minds together. It is in this middle that the trouble lies. It may be a fairly good translation of the thought to be imparted; it may be, and it is far oftener than we have any idea of, merely a rough guess at it. But in neither case does the thought pass from one mind to the other. The only words which will convey thought to our mind are those we think with.

English is constantly changing as it passes through the minds of succeeding generations, in a process of development conditioned by physical and mental characteristics which at present we don't know anything about. The development is not apparent to us, for we hear only the speech current in our own generation. If, however, we could make ourselves citizens of the universe, — as we can partially do by the study of history, — we should clearly perceive this

March of Speech alongside of the March of Thought. Reconstructing the past stages of English as well as we can from the internal evidence of literature and the external evidence of records, we know that the changes, even for a period of three centuries, practically give us a new language. These changes take place in the sound of words, in their accent, in their form, in their meaning, and in their arrangement. Written English takes little cognizance of them, so that we are not generally aware of their existence, and we print Shakespeare in our spelling and read it as if it were our own language. But we do not think Shakespeare's thought; we make a translation of it into our late New English and think that. Shakespeare's generation, however, did not have to do this. To them it was vernacular. And there is no good literature in English that was not immediately intelligible to those who read it at the time it was written. If we could only realize this truth and the more general one I have been trying to make clear, the importance of studying English historically would be apparent. For though in nine cases out of ten the translation is a correct one, in the tenth case it is grossly and palpably wrong. It is this tenth case that makes the trouble and introduces the confusion into writing by giving countenance to vagueness and inaptness of expression.

To illustrate, suppose we take some passages from Shakespeare.

I am reading *Love's Labour's Lost*. I meet with this (IV. ii. 78): —

*Jaq.* God give you good morrow, master Parson.

*Hol.* Master Parson, quasi pers-on. An if one should be pierced, which is the one?

*Cost.* Marry, master schoolmaster, he that is likest to a hog'shead.

*Hol.* Piercing a hog'shead! a good lustre of conceit in a turf of earth," etc.

Assuming that I know the thought these words carried to Elizabethan ears,



I say to myself, "The schoolmaster has connected 'parson' with 'pierce one' and made a stupid pun, and Costard has carried this one step further." But what a travesty my English makes of Shakespeare's! His word for "parson" was *pěerson* (not "pursun"); that for "parse" was *perse* ("pěrs"); that for "one," *on* (not "wun"); that for "pierce" (to broach), *perse* ("pěrs"). Our printers have flattened the passage to stupidity; our editors have emended the *perst* of the Folio and Quarto into a pointless "pierced," and the *persing* (that is, "parsing"), which shows that even the editor of the Quarto knew Holofernes did not see that Costard's joke was at his expense, into an equally pointless "piercing." Here it is our ignorance of the sound of Shakespeare's language that makes us miss the point entirely.

Let us take another case, still in Love's Labour's Lost, where we are led astray by the meaning we attach to Shakespeare's words. I read (I. i. 92): —

"Too much to know, is to know nought but fame."

I get no idea from it. I infer that Shakespeare intended to make Biron say something about too much knowledge, and so I think something about too much knowledge; probably, "Too much knowledge leads one to care for nothing but fame." I suppose Shakespeare meant that. I cannot see why Biron wanted to say such a thing just at that point, nor why he chose to say it in such a clumsy way. But after all, it sounds well, and it is as clear as hundreds of statements I read every day. But I have not really read the verse at all. I have merely translated it incorrectly without knowing that I have done so. Suppose, however, I know that in Shakespeare's English "fame" meant something like what I should call "hearsay." The meaning of the words becomes apparent, clear, apt, strong. They fit right into the context, —

"Small have continual plodders ever won

Save base authority from others' books,"

(supposing, for the nonce, that I understand these verses), and I have an eternal truth. But still I have it in my own words, — I don't think "fame." I say "fame" for the sake of the rhythm and rhyme, but I think "hearsay" in its place. It is still a translation, though this time a correct translation, and not a guess. I cannot make this "fame" a word of my own, because I cannot think it. It is not intelligible in terms of my experience. Shakespeare's thought can reach my mind only by an intermediate process of translation into my vernacular.

So we might illustrate the difference between Shakespeare's accent and ours, or the difference between his syntax and ours, such as that contained in the "small" quoted above. These instances suffice to show how, in reading Shakespeare's English as our own English, we are continually translating it, and frequently missing the thought. We forget that Shakespeare could not convey the thought in his mind by using the corresponding nineteenth-century forms of expression, because he did not know them. We assume that he did do so, and content ourselves with the badly focused photograph of his thought that we get in consequence of our assumption. We thus come to think that written words are different from spoken words, an idea that is strengthened by the fact that as soon as we write down our words we put them into forms that are different from those we use in thinking. We thus rob literature of its vitality, come to tolerate crude thought as literature, learn to write in vague and half-understood terms, — we, who have the best language in the world for clear thinking, speech moulded by generations of people impatient of nonsense, and a literature that plunges into the uttermost depths of human experience.

*Mark H. Liddell.*

## HER LAST APPEARANCE.

## I.

THE weight of dullness oppressing the groups of passengers gathered on the deck of a great ocean steamer suddenly lifted. A whisper ran round that, for the first time on the voyage, Miss Vivienne was about to issue from her *cabine de luxe*. A file of deck-stewards appeared; the first bringing a reclining-chair; the second, rugs and cushions; the third, a low table, a bag, and a pile of books. Next came a correct-looking English maid, with foot-warmer, vinaigrette, and a beautiful little Skye terrier. Lastly, a tall, slender woman took all eyes: she wore a loose-fitting garment of sealskin; on her head was a sealskin cap, while over her face was a veil of brown tissue which crossed behind her neck and knotted under the chin.

Little comments were buzzed about as Miss Vivienne nestled into her chair. There was a dramatic effectiveness in the way she permitted herself to be propped with cushions and covered with rugs. One woman remarked that she wished she possessed the actress's secret of preserving her figure; another said it was her inborn natural stateliness which gave distinction to all she did; a third declared that almost any woman could show elegance and distinction in such a sealskin redingote, which must have cost at least five hundred dollars, while as for that rug of Russian sable and silver fox fur, conjecture lost itself in trying to fix a price; then still another murmured, "No, it is the business of these actresses to be diabolically effective."

She was their spectacle, and curiosity, observation, criticism, carried to almost any limit, were legitimate. Miss Vivienne, whether by chance or by intention, had established herself, not side by side with the other passengers, but at a suffi-

cient distance to create the illusion of the line of footlights. The lookers-on saw study, pose, even in the way she turned and faced the sea, as if enjoying the keen air, the fresh scent, the joyous dappled expanse where whitecaps were dancing over dazzling stretches of blue and green. Society, besides applauding and patronizing Miss Vivienne, had recognized her all her life, since she had forced it to respect her and accept her profession for her sake. Still, at this moment it was the impulse of no one among the group of women to cross that line of demarcation. The men were chiefly gathered in the smoking-room, discussing the probabilities of the day's run. One man, however, who had been leaning against the rail, now went slowly up to Miss Vivienne.

"Who is that?" the women questioned one another.

"His name is Dwight. I was curious about him and asked the purser. His name is not in the passenger-list."

Mr. Dwight continued to stand quietly by the recumbent figure, until the Skye terrier, peeping jealously from between the rugs, snapped and growled. At this sound Miss Vivienne turned, and looked at the middle-aged man, whose well-set, capable head was gray, whose eyes were gray, whose mustache and also his suit of tweed were gray, — at first with languid indifference; then, recognizing him, she started up and caught his hand between both of hers.

"What, *you*, Owen?" she murmured, with intense surprise.

"It is I," he said, smiling, — "most surely I."

"*You* coming back from Europe? I did not know that you had ever crossed the ocean in your life."

"I never did until a fortnight ago. I happened to see in the paper, on the