

did not lose himself in God, nor merge himself in Nature; he stood erect; he worshiped, he observed, and he created. He did not, through failure of clear thought, attempt the impossible, as did his fellow in the farther East; he saw clearly the limitations of his faculty, and he discerned that freedom and power lay in accepting, not in ignoring, those limitations. He constructed the Parthenon instead of miles of rock-hewn temple; and for monstrous and gigantic unreal symbols he carved the Olympian Zeus and the inimitable Venus of the Louvre Gallery. He peopled the world with divinities, and in his marvelous illustration of the fecundity of the human spirit and of its power he created an art which not only affirms the integrity of the soul, but predicts its immortality. There have been great artists from that day to this, and art has passed through many phases, but the old law finds constant illustration; and between Tennyson and Swinburne, as between Shakespeare and Marlowe, one discerns the gain and the waste of power inherent, the first in self-restraint, the second in self-assertion.



The Soul's Autumn

By Marie Mumford Meinell

"What a brave winning! Lo, the idol ours!"
When, softly as the fingers of the wind
Unleaf the tallest tree, the fairest flowers,
So God, with pity infinitely kind,
Strips the illusions, one by one, till fain
We are to trust His wisdom once again.



Blanchland

By R. Owen

Who reads "Dorothy Forster"? Who, among the hordes of Americans who make lovely Lakeland their happy hunting-ground, ever penetrates to this wild and somewhat dreary Northumberland, than which there is, I believe, no more romantic and interesting county in England? I could cover pages in mere mention of its Roman remains, churches dating back to Saxon days, castles galore ruined and intact, battle-fields, and scenes of ballad, legendary, and superstitious interest. It is as rich in all these as the Lake District is poor; and, speaking broadly, the elements of natural beauty are as deficient here as they are almost superabundant in Westmoreland and Cumberland. But this county has beauty, too, in its rich valleys by thickly wooded rivers; and of these none is fairer than the secluded green oasis in the wide-reaching moors, known, says Froissart, as La Blanchelands even in the days of Arthur. To those acquainted with Mr. Besant's best work, any description that I can give will seem feeble, yet possibly of some interest; those who do not, may it pique their curiosity to read his!

For I write from Blanchland, the small monastic village which Mr. Hilyard extolled as a place in which it was impossible to spend money. I am living in the old quadrangle, drinking water from the "font erected by my great-grandfather Sir Claudius" (who died in 1627), walking for hours daily on the moors over which Lord Derwent-water rode a-courting; worshipping in the church where once monks sang the daily offices, where Dorothy in later days talked theology with My Lord, and where poor excellent Mr. Hilyard tremblingly confessed his Oxford peccadilloes to the much-dreaded Prince-Bishop of Durham. Oh! I know it all: the bridge haunted by the last Abbot; the embattled gateway under which poor Tom rode off to the fatal meeting at Greenrig, to

Return to Lochaber no more;

Dorothy's own bedchamber, with a bit of painted glass in the mullioned window; the great room where the banquet was served at which Lord Crewe and Lord Derwent-water drank to the Prince; the fine old kitchen below, where the more roistering younger sons and smaller North-

umbrian gentry—the faithful pair Perry Widdrington and Ned Swinburne among them—kept their less significant feast; the banks of Derwent, flowery in June "like the Garden of Eden"—I know it all, every locality in that exquisite book, from the links of Bamborough, where the Midsummer Fire was held, to the dismantled chapel of Dilston, reft now even of its lord's ashes, and the crypt beneath Saint Aidan's Church where "Daphne" has slept for more than a century and a half. "Alas! poor Dorothy!"

Why do not people know that book better? Every one reads and likes "The Chaplain of the Fleet." "Dorothy Forster" far excels it. Every one thinks "Esmond" a wonderful picture of eighteenth-century life. I submit that Mr. Besant has drawn one as faithful, as fascinating; and never could Thackeray have portrayed so lofty and noble a heroine as Dorothy, or, having drawn one as lovable, he would have detracted from her loveliness by making her jealous of Lady Derwentwater. He could never have conceived it possible that two women should love one man, each in turn having been loved by him, and yet that they should be friends. Every one reads "Lorna Doone." For Lorna's sake Exmoor is every summer thronged with *pèlerins d'enthousiasme*—if I may coin an expression which somehow looks better in French—while Blanchland—ah! that thought "must give us pause." "There's the respect" that makes neglect of Mr. Besant's book bearable, even thankworthy. Blanchland yet slumbers in the midst of its moors, as it has done since the Scots departed in the days of the first Edward, after a raid commemorated still in the name of one of the surrounding hills. To be sure, if any one came he would have to build a hotel and run it himself, like the nabob in the Catskills, for the Lord Crewe Arms, once the Prior's lodging and then the Manor-House, is "very tolerable, not to be endured." We went there for a fortnight's rest, lured by a commendatory asterisk in Murray, rapturous in the prospect of living among such reminiscences; but one day convinced us that even Lord Crewe's portrait would not sweeten tainted lamb and rancid butter, and one night disillusioned us completely—reminiscences dispelled not the actual. We were on the point of driving over the moors again, ten long miles, to Hexham, when we heard of rooms in a cottage; and as they proved clean, though very humble, we took them, but I do not think they are of a kind to induce admiring tourists to come. We get delicious cream and butter, and good bread; these are our mainstay. Sometimes the butcher has not killed a "beast," and we are obliged to fall back on ham and eggs. We send to Carlisle for tea, and to Hexham for cake and jam, as well as to buy photographs and to have umbrella-ribs mended (the Northumbrian zephyrs snap them at the rate of two a week), by carrier; and I assure the epicures of New York that until they have eaten almond-cake flavored by transit in a carrier's van suggestive of Mr. Hardy's tranters and of the Vicar's wife's cakes in "Robert Elsmere" (which the carrier never brought), they do not know what a *bonne bouche* is. Our carrier, by the way, is likewise the presiding genius at the harmonium on Sundays; and as his name is Jabez Oliver, he is very likely a descendant of that Job Oliver once bewitched by Dorothy's maid, Jenny Lee.

It is but just to add that Blanchland is equal to the great exigencies of life, as may be seen from a glance at a neighboring sign, "Mary Peden, Bride and Funeral Cakes;" but great exigencies are rare, and we continue to send to Battle Hill, which long Mays ago ran red with Yorkist and Lancastrian blood.

All this, and yet I have not really described Blanchland. It consists of a quadrangle of low stone cottages, with entrance on one side by the embattled gateway of which I have spoken, and across from it by a centuries-old bridge over the river Derwent, which here separates Northumberland from the county palatine of Durham. Not far from the gateway is the Abbey Church, of which only the tower, north transept, and choir remain; and next it is the inn, a most picturesque building with battlements and arched windows and doorways. The interior is very quaint; no two rooms are on a level. The kitchen

or bar-parlor, where the villagers assemble in the evening for a pipe and glass of beer and sapient political discussion, is really very pretty. There is a large, deep fireplace, above which stand some old pewter tankards and brass candlesticks; a high-backed settle is on one side; small, square, well-polished tables and old-fashioned chairs are scattered about invitingly; red curtains give a nice bit of color; glass cupboards full of crockery are against one wall, and on the others hang a bewildering number of oddities, among which a big brass warming-pan, a collection of silhouettes, and a rarely beautiful lacquer cabinet from the sacking of the Summer Palace at Peking are conspicuous. The one window gives on the cloister-garth where the monks are buried. In the ancient refectory, where one hundred and eighty years ago Lord Derwentwater wooed sweet Dorothy, hangs a fine portrait of my Lord Crewe, whose unflinching Protestantism withheld Dorothy from happiness. "Alas, poor Dorothy!" as she cries herself; another victim in the long and at last nearly ended struggle for the Stuart interests. Surely the triumph of the Protestant succession did not require this poor sacrifice—to her so great, to it of so little ultimate importance.

The house will soon be full of men here for the shooting, and presumably willing to rough it. They will bring some life into the sleepy little place. Last week we had a day of stir and excitement. A flower show, the event of the year, was held in "a faire green meadow," as Sir Thomas Malory would say, beside the Derwent, with attendant attractions in the way of stalls for sweet stuff and gilt gingerbread, a cricket-match, and a sixpenny ball in the evening. Every remote farmstead—quaintly Scottish in name—far back on the moors sent its contingent of smartly dressed young people. It was like a bit of exquisitely done stage-setting to see the moonlit quad that Saturday night, the lads and lasses returning from their dance with a parting chorus of "Auld Lang Syne" and "We won't go Home till Morning;" and next day, after morning service, when the band, which had been imported from the traitor Mr. Patten's old parish of Allenheads (dear Dorothy's "infamous Mr. Patten!") I have a copy of his "History of the Late Rebellion" before me as I write, cherished for her abhorrence!—when the band, I say, played in front of the inn, and groups of villagers stood in front of their cottages listening, so like a picture or a *mise en scène* was it all that for a moment I was more surprised *not* to see Lord Derwentwater, with fair curled wig and velvet coat, come riding through the archway, or, at the very least (here is bathos!), Lester Wallack on a prancing black steed, whose reins he would toss, in his superb lordly way, to a peasant, than I should have been to see either of them.

On days that are not gaudy nor gala, Blanchland knows little of life. Beyond the arrival of the mail-cart at ten and its departure at two there are not, I believe, five vehicles seen crossing the quadrangle in the twenty-four hours. No one comes here. Why should they? Mr. Besant discovered the place, forgotten since the Dissolution. Let us be thankful that it is buried so deep in its wild moors that, like the Scots on their first visit, sightseers do not find it. Let us trust that the magic of his description may not, like the monks' too hasty peal of *Te Deum*, call attention to its whereabouts, lest he live to repent with the poet that the flower made known by his means be too well known,

And now the common people
Call it but a weed.



Terse Truth

A whole bushel of notions don't weigh half as much as one little stubborn fact.—*Ram's Horn.*

Every educated man ought to be a reformer. Education sinks in worth if it does not warm the love of justice and instill a disposition to remedy social evils.—*Professor George P. Fisher.*

The law of the harvest is to reap more than you sow. Sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny.—*George Dana Boardman.*

Hints for Readers

I enjoyed very much the article in *The Outlook* on George Meredith and his new novel; especially the sentence in which the most popular of his novels and in the same breath those which critics have agreed upon as truly the man's best were given. I wish you had made a comparison between "Lord Ormont and His Aminta" and the two the critics have agreed upon; then your article (in my humble judgment) would have been complete. To a country minister who can buy but one or two works of each of the foremost novelists, such a comparison would be helpful in determining which to buy—"The Egoist," "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," or "Lord Ormont." Will you kindly say whether or no the latter is equal to the former?

J. H. K., JR.

Inquiries similar in character to those contained in this letter are constantly received by the editors of *The Outlook*, and it is in the hope of meeting the needs of a considerable class of readers that special attention will hereafter be given to such questions. Among the readers of *The Outlook* are many young men and women who are making their first acquaintance with English literature, and many other men and women who have comparatively little opportunity for reading, or whose reading has been in specific directions, and who desire suggestions as to reading in new fields. In answering such questions as may be sent in, the endeavor will be to convey in a very concise and simple form trustworthy information concerning writers about whom such information may be sought. Mr. George Meredith, whose latest novel, "Lord Ormont and His Aminta," was reviewed in these columns several weeks ago, has written a considerable number of stories. Of these, perhaps the most attractive to the beginner is "Diana of the Crossways." The preliminary chapter of this novel is Meredithian to the last degree, and might well be omitted until after the story has been finished. In the judgment of the lovers of Meredith, his best stories are "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" and "The Egoist," both novels of great power and insight. Probably if a vote were taken among the readers of Mr. Meredith, "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel" would be found to be his most popular story. "Rhoda Fleming," "Vittoria," "The Adventures of Harry Richmond," "Evan Harrington," "The Tragic Comedian," and "One of Our Conquerors" are the titles of Mr. Meredith's other stories. He has also written a number of short stories and several volumes of verse.

Should Dickens still be read by a man who wants to make himself familiar with the best that has been done in fiction? Or should he be taken from his place on the book-shelf to make room for the new metaphysical school of which Meredith seems to be the chief prophet?

AN OLD-FASHIONED READER.

Dickens should be read by every person who reads the English language, for, notwithstanding very grave defects, he remains one of its masters. Moreover, catholicity of taste and appreciation ought to be cultivated by every intelligent person; one ought to be able to love both Tennyson and Browning, to enjoy both Meredith and Dickens. The great body of readers, and the critics as well, have substantially agreed in giving the first place among Dickens's novels to "David Copperfield," both on account of its style, its sentiment, and its construction as a story. "Our Mutual Friend," "Nicholas Nickleby," and "Martin Chuzzlewit" follow close after. Dickens's most powerful story is undoubtedly "The Tale of Two Cities." In many respects it is his best piece of work, but it is by no means so thoroughly characteristic of him as the novels which have been named. It is a kind of *tour de force*; a very noble piece of writing, but not quite in the natural power of the man. "Little Dorrit" is generally regarded as the most uninteresting of the Dickens stories, and "Dombey and Son" and "The Old Curiosity-Shop" as the most in-artistic and untrue, in that they are so given over to sentimentalism. Sentimentalism and exaggeration were the defects of Dickens's quality.