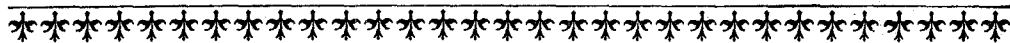




THE FIELD OF ART

The Art of Edwin Austin Abbey

BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ



THERE lies before me a scrap-book that I filled in the 80's and 90's with the illustrations by Edwin A. Abbey then appearing in *Harper's Magazine*, illustrations reproduced by the leaders in our golden age of wood-engraving. Indeed it carries the record even further back, because in the old book-shops I used to hunt up everything of his that I could find, and some of these fugitive bits belong to the very outset of his career. Well, the interesting thing about that scrap-book is that it does not "date," it is without that subtle, deadening touch that time so often leaves upon a work of art. Last November Mrs. Abbey brought from England a collection of over 300 drawings and paintings by her husband and assisted at their organization into a memorial exhibition at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City. This exhibition continues until the end of March. If in approaching it I pause upon the scrap-book aforesaid, it is because the two things, taken together, enforce the central fact of Abbey's art. That was his gift for poetic recreation, his imaginative grasp upon the past, and his possession of technical aptitudes requisite for the development of beauty in the process. His career was "all of a piece," that of an artist having from beginning to end an exquisitely romantic vision.



The illustrator is often a curiously potent figure, his intervention leaving an indelible mark upon the poetry or

prose he touches. Is "Alice," after all, quite thinkable without the stamp placed upon her personality and adventures by Tenniel? It does not always require great artistic power for the illustrator thus to achieve a kind of collateral immortality. Doré, in the impress he has made upon the memory of mankind, surpasses Daniel Vierge, the latchet of whose shoe, artistically speaking, he was unworthy to unloose. The play of some mysterious interpretative magic is everything in this matter, and, with it, some endearing tincture of style. Abbey had both resources. They must have been stirring in him even in his teens, when he was a night student at the Pennsylvania Academy, and they came rapidly to the surface when he began to work for the Harpers in 1871. He was still a very young man when his individual strain presently made itself felt. Turning back to the scrap-book, I savor again the quality of his early drawings for Herrick. It would be foolish to claim positive brilliance for them or anything like absolute mastery. But charm is there, an intensely sympathetic visualization of the poet's motive. There is a clew to this imponderable side of the man offered by his old comrade in the Harper establishment, Mr. W. A. Rogers. Contributing some memories to the biography published by Lucas in 1921, Mr. Rogers says that "so much of him was pure spirit." One other passage I must quote at greater length:

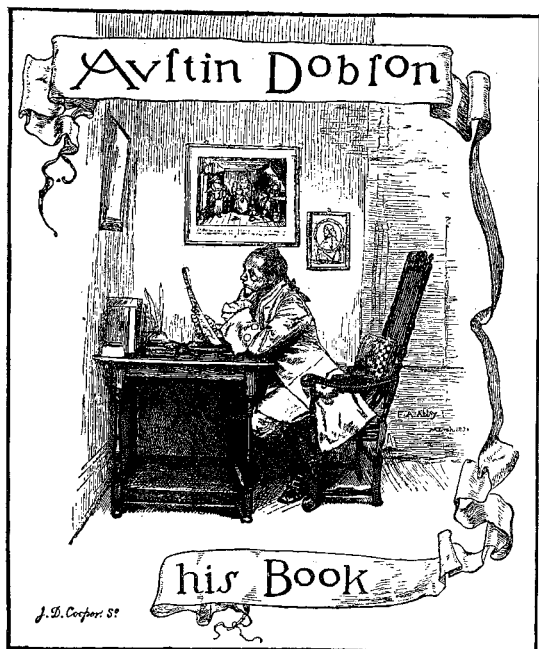
In appearance he was different in many

*You are Invited to See a Collection of
Drawings in Black and White by
Alfred Parsons and Edwin A. Abbey
at Reichard and Co's - 226, Fifth Avenue
March 8th to 21st 1890*



An Invitation.

From the drawing by E. A. Abbey.



Austin Dobson's Book-plate.

From the drawing by E. A. Abbey.



A Hogarth Enthusiast.

From the drawing by E. A. Abbey.



A Study.

From the drawing by E. A. Abbey.



The Golden Dish.

From the pastel by E. A. Abbey.



The Wandering Minstrels.

From the water-color by E. A. Abbey.



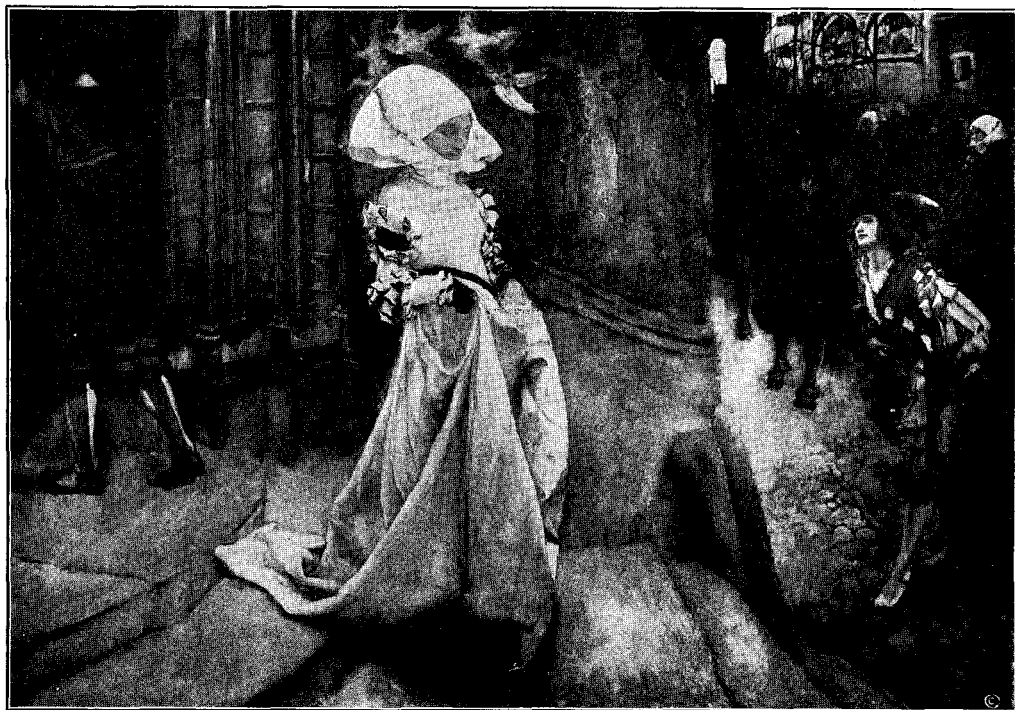
Falstaff and His Page.

From the painting by E. A. Abbey.



Iago.

From the painting by E. A. Abbey.



Faust and Marguerite.

From the painting by E. A. Abbey.



A Measure.

From the painting by E. A. Abbey.

subtle ways from any one I had ever met. His features, while strong, were cut like a cameo; by force of contrast his dark, deep-set eyes gave his face an effect of great pallor. And, while he treated me with the utmost cordiality and used every effort to put me completely at my ease and on a basis of comradeship, I can feel to this day the thrill of an experience away beyond the material. As I grew to know him better in after days, this feeling grew deeper rather than less. It was all well enough, it seemed to me, for his companions to call him "Ned," to laugh at his merry pranks and funny sayings, but always, to me, his visible presence and what he said and did seemed to be the least of what he was.

Just such an impression as this I received from him in our various meetings. I remember an evening's talk with him across a narrow table at a great banquet in his honor. He was the pivot of the occasion, yet in some strange way he seemed detached from it. I remember sitting with him in a New York studio when he was painting on his "Ophelia." Then, and on other occasions, he struck me as essentially aloof from ordinary issues. There was nothing of preciousness about him. Far from it. But he had, unmistakably, an inner life, and was a creature of fine grain. You felt instinctively that, as Mr. Rogers has said, "so much of him was pure spirit."

He was able to illumine an author, even a Shakespeare, because he had an imagination quickly responding to that author's illumination. And besides his intangible traits he had a habit of tremendous industry. They gave him a degree at Yale in 1897, and as Professor Fisher handed him the diploma he touched upon his imagination. But, he went on, "this original power would be inadequate were it not allied with cultivation of a high order and patient researches." I once asked him if he made many preliminary studies. He replied

in the negative, explaining that it seemed to him a tiring of one's energy, calculated to take away the spontaneous bloom that a picture should possess. But this did not mean that he did not take endless pains. One of my first impressions of him belongs to the period of his work on the Shakespearian comedies. He was passionately curious in all matters of costume and architectural background, and when he was worrying over the latter he used to come down to Stanford White's office and overhaul the photograph-books. In the exhibition at the Academy there is an unfinished picture, an ecclesiastical interior with figures, called "A Great Lady in a Church at Rothenberg." It is interesting as one of Abbey's mediæval evocations. But I mention it chiefly for the purpose of grouping with it a "Study of a Column of the Church at Rothenberg." Side by side, the two throw light on Abbey's method, his meticulous search after accuracy, his eagerness to document the world in which his imagination roved.



I have indicated it as the world of the poets and it had far horizons. For example, one of the best of his pictures at the Academy, one of the best though unfinished, is the "Faust and Marguerite," a page from Goethe. He was adventurous in his themes. When he was engaged in 1890 to make a series of decorations for the Boston Public Library he undertook to illustrate the legend of the Holy Grail. How earnestly he sought to get at the last nuances of the subject is shown, I may note in passing, by one act of his. To get what help musical atmosphere might give him in his meditations he listened to "Parsifal" at Bayreuth. Decidedly he was not the

archæologist alone. He was concerned with mood, with spirit, with the elusive essence of things, and, as I have said, his range was wide. I might cite many instances of his diversity. But analysis of Abbey would take a wrong direction if it did not reckon with the unique harmony between him and things English. It is proclaimed in his first dealings with the lyrists. It continues to manifest itself in his countless illustrations to Shakespeare and in picture after picture that he painted. The very heart-beats of the man were attuned to the rhythm of English life, the dramatic, multicolored, and somehow fragrant life that is mirrored in English letters. For him in a peculiarly enkindling sense the master wrote of

"This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this
England."

His long life abroad—from 1878 to the day of his death in 1911—broken by occasional visits to this country, has always seemed to me a matter of what might be called external fact. His success there, his charming popularity, the welcome he had into the Royal Academy, the commission to paint the coronation of Edward VII, the offer of a knighthood—all these things, though duly to be recorded in his biography, remain, in a sense, unimportant. What really counts is just the identification of his genius with English romance. He was as inevitably the commemorator of its glamour as La Farge was the initiated painter of Japan and the islands of the South Sea. In the interpretation of "this England" he was as much its predestined laureate, and as racy, as was Winslow Homer the born painter of the New

England coast. With what a sure gait does he move through the plays of Shakespeare, striking with equal ease the notes of comedy and tragedy, and winning pictorial beauty from both! And through all his designs, whether poetic or historical in their burden, there runs the perfume, the sentiment, the indescribable enchantment of time and long vistas, which you feel on English soil.

I find it hard to relinquish this clairvoyant and endearing phase in Abbey, and at the same time, while emphasizing its predominance, we must not allow it to obscure the extension of scope which was well within his powers when the call came. I have stressed his penetration into the spirit of things English. It remains to be also underlined that he was an artist decisively sprung from our own land. It was not for nothing that he refused the knighthood, holding fast to his American citizenship. His imagination, too, possessed its American tentacles, and when, some twenty-five years ago, he was commissioned to paint the elaborate decorative designs embellishing the Capitol at Harrisburg (which I described at length in *SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE* for December, 1908, and January, 1912), he flung himself upon the task as upon the creation of his *magnum opus*. He brought to it the same ardor and the same insight that he had used in making his drawings for the songs of Herrick. In place of the humor and high thoughts of Shakespeare, he turned to the problems that had absorbed our pioneers, took his cue from miners and men of the forge, embodied "The Spirit of Religious Liberty" in a great ship sailing off into the blue, portrayed the builders of the State, military and other leaders, painted an "Apotheosis of Pennsylvania," altogether satu-

rated himself in American history—and his power of sympathy, of understanding, never failed him. Fragmentary studies for this huge emprise of his appear here and there in the Academy exhibition. They mark a new, totally different, gesture from that elucidating English romance of which I have made so much, but the measure of the artist's pictorial invention and of his technical accomplishment remains the same.



What was that measure, considered in the broad perspective of modern art? There Abbey's Americanism suffers a sea change. He was a remarkable draughtsman from his young manhood on. The rather ordinary gait of his first essays in wash and line—ordinary, yet with a foreshadowing of better things to come—is soon outrun by his potent originality. In the Shakespearian pen drawings he is the consummate master of his medium. He has neither the simplicity nor the power of Charles Keene, for example, nor has he the vigorous sweep of Menzel, but, instead, he is a draughtsman of incomparable delicacy, with a gift for getting all the color that is to be got out of black-and-white, without the tricky employment of violent contrast. He stood alone in his exquisiteness. It is well to avoid a possible misunderstanding as regards his deviation into color. The superficial observer might be inclined to think of him as an illustrator turned painter. As a matter of fact, he was exhibiting in water-color as early as 1885. I recall brilliant achievements of his in this medium thereabouts and not long thereafter—including the lovely "Wandering Minstrels" now at the Academy, which dates from 1891. I saw handsome pastels of his in New York in the middle

90's, and the Academy brings back from an even earlier date, from 1890, his first work in oils, the charming "May Morning." No, it was not want of experience that accounts for Abbey's specific character as a painter. It is rather that he left America just at a time when, under the auspices of the Society of American Artists, French methods were spreading a fire of emulation through the studios. Abbey, already disclosing in his water-colors a mode influenced by the sober English tradition, went to live at the heart of that tradition and substituted the serene, equable pace of the Royal Academy for the bravura with which our painters were building up a nervous and exhilarating type of brushwork.

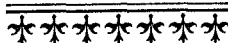
Whatever he may have known about the forthright stroke that came into vogue with Manet, it was evidently not to his taste. He was a fluent, even swift, craftsman, but his painting has a smooth, leisurely, pondered air. It is deliberate, *soigné*. He had nothing like the directness and flourish of his friend Sargent. The latter seems often to achieve his effects by a dazzling sleight of hand. Abbey's are carefully developed. To that extent they are opposed to the currents prevailing in his time, even in England, where there were colleagues like the late Charles W. Furse dedicated more or less to the virtuosity of the brush. Decidedly, for all his feats with the pen, Abbey was no virtuoso when he worked in color, unless, perhaps, in some of his moments with pastel. But it is important to remember that painting is not made up of "handling" alone.

As the draughtsman to whom I have already alluded, Abbey had that sure, flowing line which is a comfort and a joy to the connoisseur. I have glanced

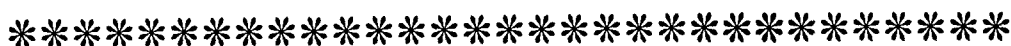
at the refinement of his pen drawings for Shakespeare. That is forever cropping out in the scrap-book aforementioned, rich in drawings of his earlier and middle periods. As time went on and he tackled larger problems, either in easel pictures or in mural decorations, he got into a stronger, more sinewy stride, and some of his later drawings, like those made for the Harrisburg work, have in them a notable fulness and force. He sees form in a sturdier, ampler way as he envisages it in more monumental designs, and not only does he develop a firmer grasp upon it but he seems to proceed with a greater ease and a broader precision. But what I most admire about Abbey is his steady growth as a designer. He could compose adroitly when he had to face the narrow boundaries of a magazine page. All the time, as he enlarged his view, he adjusted his figures to a heightened scale with mounting power, and I do not know which is the more impressive about his work—the unity of a given composition or the ebullient variety with which he invests the whole gorgeous pageant. Occasionally he falters. I balk a little at what I may designate his processional figures, the serried ranks of pikemen in the background of “Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the Lady Anne,” or the marching nuns in “The Education of Isabella the Catholic,” or the figures ranged in such orderly fashion in “The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester.” This foible of his, if I may so call it, threatens occasionally to submerge his drama in nar-

rative. But look, on the other hand, at “Fiammetta’s Song,” or the “Faust and Marguerite,” or that gracious picture which is called “A Measure.” In each case the romantic composition is delightfully put together. That was Abbey’s supreme gift, the gift of the imaginative picture-maker, sometimes seemingly casual, sometimes stately, but always the creator of poetic illusion. It is an inspiring rôle and he rose to it.

He filled it, as I cannot too often reiterate, and he filled his works, with the life of the spirit. I have told before, but I must repeat again, the story that I had from my friend the late James Wall Finn, a decorative painter who had spent some time in Abbey’s studio. He described to me a winter’s day on which Abbey and Sargent, storm-bound, both painted from a manikin posed in the snow just outside the studio window. When they were finished Sargent’s study was of the lay figure regarded as a lay figure, though it had been draped with a long velvet cloak and provided with plumed hat and lute. Abbey’s picture was of flesh and blood, of a gallant serenading his lady-love. How like him that episode was! We know that he was an adept at historical reconstruction, deeply learned in matters of ancient dress, furniture, and accessories generally. His studio was full of “properties.” But as he contemplated them some alchemy in his brain gave them a newer and vividder existence. He breathed upon them and they moved. The past became the present. The dream became reality.



A calendar of current art exhibitions will be found in the
Fifth Avenue Section.



In His Own Country

(Continued from page 154 of this number.)

slowly; she stopped suddenly, peering at the stump, thinking it was a man humped down, or a bear; then she began to run forward, her thoughts coming swiftly. Last spring Joe Boyle, driving his automobile down from his farm one night, had bumped into something, and it turned out that he had killed a bear. Bears hadn't been seen in this section of the country for years; though farther east, around the bay, and beyond Wiarton, a man had killed fourteen last winter. She stumbled on the path but kept on going, though hardly able to breathe. The country had flattened out, but ahead were fields on gentle slopes. There was more moonlight. She walked more slowly, breathing easier.

She could go no farther; she had to lie down. The farm land now sloped upward. Over the zigzag fence was a corn-field, and at the slope of a hill three jack-pines. The pines were too isolated on the curve of the hill, too gaunt against the sky-line, and she would have been uneasy, she knew, sleeping under them, so she climbed the wooden fence, her skirt catching on a nail and holding, though she attempted to lift it carefully. She tugged until it tore loose.

A few feet away from the fence, between two rows of corn, she spread her coat. There had been no rain all week and the ground was not damp. Lying down slowly, she stretched her legs, waited, expecting to be frightened. Leaves of corn stirred and rustled, and she listened to small sounds, but was not scared. The corn was clean and friendly. The corn grew in back yards of many houses on the streets in the town. Her fingers reached out and held loosely to a stalk. Drowsily she realized that the night air was good and the smell of the corn-field fresh and pleasant. Heavy-eyed, she tried to look up at the stars and wished vaguely some one was with her to make love to her. Pete had wanted to go fishing up the lakes and sleep out-of-doors. They would fish in the stream farther east. Sometimes they might go up streams at night, fishing for suckers, Pete walking a few paces ahead of her, the suckers in the streams banging against her legs. But it was too late in the year for good suckers, she remembered. In

the spring, when the water was colder, they were fresh and firm, but later on the water got warm and they got wormy and no good for eating. She would let Pete do the fishing for trout and follow him all day, cooking his meals, and they would lie down together in the evenings, and hear the night-birds. The nights would be warm; she could stretch out with few clothes on.

A night-bird in the jack-pines screeched, and she shivered a little and tried to find pleasant thoughts again before going to sleep. A last time she opened her eyes and saw corn-stalks, and moved her body slightly to one side, off a pebble, then went to sleep.

It was early when she woke up. The sun was low. Tips of white corn-cobs gleamed through green husks. Golden tassels brushed against her face as she got up on her knees and peered through the stalks at the road. She raised her head to look for the farmhouse, evidently on the other slope of the hill. Stiff and tired, she crawled toward the fence, not wanting to be seen. Standing up, to get over the fence, she discovered a bad pain in her hip. Strands of hair fell on her shoulder. She thought of going back to look for hairpins, but was anxious to get over the fence.

On the road she walked slowly, limping a little. The road reached the top of the slope and she looked far ahead at the hills, and farms on the slopes. To the left the hills farther away were very blue in the early morning, but hills ahead were tinted brown and green. Years ago her father, or the hired man, had driven her from high school in the buggy, and she had loved watching the blue hills losing their color as they got closer. The pain in her hip, as she walked, relaxed, her body lost its stiffness. A stream trickled under logs at the side of the road. She bent down to wash her face and hands, the water on her face refreshing her. When she knelt down first she had felt like crying; straightening up, she was prepared to go on walking, no longer sorry for herself. It was time to think of talking to her mother and father. Her father would be out in the fields. Her mother would talk very rapidly, worrying while asking questions.

The sun was half-way up when she reach-

ed the concession route leading to her father's farm. She swung open the long wooden gate and, though stiff, walked briskly all the way up to the house, since some one might be watching from the window.

She opened the kitchen door and her mother, preserving fruit, said: "Is that you, Flora; what made you come in the morning?" Her mother was a small woman with a wiry body and tired, lined face. The kitchen smelt of stewed raspberries. Flora sat down and told her mother how Bill had been acting queerly, and how last night he had run out of the house and she had been scared to stay there alone.

VIII

Two days after her return to the farm her father drove into town to see Bill. He told Flora that he had been unable to find him and no one knew where he had gone. Her father believed, before going into town, that she had been foolish to leave her husband. When he came back he said it was best she had left him; strange talk was in town about his behavior the last month.

In the early fall her father worked hard with the harvesting, and she helped her mother in the house. It was hard getting up so early in the morning. Her father and the hired man went out to the fields, when only light streaks of dawn were in the sky, and she fed the chickens. An hour later they had a heavy breakfast, too heavy for her, accustomed to a light meal at that hour. Later on, the early-morning air exhilarated her; with a bowl of chicken-feed in her arm she stood, watching the light striking the hilltops, the valleys in shadow. The hills sloped gently, rounded and cultivated, but farther back the hills were higher, more rugged and wooded and blue in the morning. There were blue hills, farther back, only in the early morning. Her mother suggested that Flora should drive into town and do some shopping. Always she refused, surprising herself once by shuddering. Alone afterward, she was slightly ashamed that she had shuddered, giving an impression that meeting Bill, or even walking in town, would be too terrifying. But in time she got to believe that shuddering expressed the proper attitude of a badly abused woman. She had long talks with her mother, working together in the kitchen, and explained how Bill had sometimes shaken her and done other unbelievable and horrible things, till she had cried like

a child. Her mother, a small, wiry woman, had always worked hard and had never had time to think of other women's husbands, so she encouraged Flora to talk, and they agreed that if she had remained with Bill another day life would have been unbearable.

For years she had known that her mother had peculiar faults, always secretive, evasive, telling white lies to her husband. After working with her for weeks Flora realized that her mother had always been afraid of her husband. He had forced her to become very guarded and careful in her way of living, and rarely gave her enough money for the house. He never gave her any spending-money. Eagerly she explained to Flora that she kept a few pigs herself, fattened them, sold them, and kept the money. She called it her "pig money" and had a hiding-place for it.

Very carefully Flora insisted that she could never live with Bill again, and when both her father and mother took it for granted, she felt she could afford to ask occasionally whether any one had heard of him since the night he went away.

Bill's mother came to the farm to have a talk with Flora. From the window Flora saw one of Jameson's livery cars coming up the lane, the old lady sitting alone in the back seat. She had on a black bonnet with a flash of red silk, and black ribbons knotted in a bow under her chin. The day was cloudy and cool and it looked like rain. The driver opened the door and helped her out. Flora stood on the side-porch steps, waiting.

Bill's mother said determinedly: "I'd like to have a talk, Flora. Not here, but in the house."

"Come on into the front room, Mrs. Lawson."

The man in the livery car took out his pipe and crossed his legs.

They sat down in two wide mahogany rocking-chairs on the thin, tan-colored carpet. "Where's Bill?" the old woman said quickly.

"I don't know; really, I don't; that is what I'd like to know."

"What was the matter between you, then?"

"Nothing; he ran away, and he was ill-treating me and acting funny, that's all."

"Bill never ill-treated anybody. There wasn't a bad bone in his body."

"I don't think you ought to contradict me."

"Hm-mm-mm. It's an odd thing his going away didn't worry you more."

"It did. It worried and worried me till I couldn't stand up straight."

"It didn't."

"I say he was ill-treating me and acting like he had a wind in his head, and the Lord knows what he's up to now."

The old lady sucked her lips, having trouble with her teeth. Her head was swaying; the lids of her eyes got red and moist. She whispered: "If you go traipsing around telling people Bill was bad to you and beat you, I'll wring your neck, you vixen." She leaned forward, her jaws moving up and down; and Flora tilted back in the chair, eager to answer her sharply. The old lady's eyes were bloodshot, her whole body trembled, and Flora suddenly felt scared and yelled, "Mother, come here," and leaned farther back in the chair.

Her mother came into the room at once. Without asking a single question she said: "Now, now, Mrs. Lawson; that'll about do, won't it? That'll be about all from you." Bill's mother glared at her, raised her hands abruptly, and began to cry. She rocked back and forth, crying and muttering: "To think I'd ever live to see the day when anybody'd say my Bill had a wind in his head."

She never expected to see Bill again, she said. Flora's mother, talking quietly and gently, suggested many abuses Flora might have suffered, and hinted that if she remained with Bill she too might have been driven out of her mind. Mrs. Lawson, not interested in Flora, simply wanted to talk about Bill. Flora merely listened till it became embarrassing, sitting there saying nothing, and she left the room quietly. Bill's mother never called on them again.

The nights were long in October, and sometimes Flora wandered along the road long after it got dark. A declivity, a couchlike slope with dried grass, just back from the road, suggested to her a place where a girl might sit down with a lover. The hired man on her father's farm was leather-skinned and tired, much older than she, and not interested in women. She accompanied her father into town in the Ford, hoping to see Pete Hastings on the main street. The night before she had lain awake in bed, imagining herself sitting in the car on Main Street, her father in a store making some purchases. Pete would come walking lazily along the street, see her, saunter over. Before her father came

out of the store they could have two minutes together and she could tell him about the quiet road near the farm after dark and the hollow in the slope with the dried grass. But the day they went into town it rained hard. In the morning the sky was clear, but at two o'clock in the afternoon, half-way to town, dark clouds passed over the sun, and it rained. She didn't see Pete.

She found an interest in a new way of living. Neighboring farm people, hearing her mother's stories of Bill's strange behavior, were sympathetic, treating her as a good woman who had suffered with fortitude. The Maloneys, on the next farm, who had been poor until two years ago, invited her to come over in the evening very often. No one ever knew how they became prosperous so suddenly, and got the new barn, electric rods on all the buildings, and three fine horses. Mr. Maloney's wife had been dead for years and his housekeeper, a dark, thin woman with splendid legs, looked after him. Irene Maloney was Flora's age, and her sister Katie three years younger and much prettier. Irene talked eagerly to Flora about her father's hired man, who wanted her to go away and live in the city with him, but she was too lazy to leave the farm. She talked guardedly to Flora about Bill, hoping to surprise her into revealing something startling.

Flora believed now that she had really suffered, so every Sunday she drove in to the Anglican church with her father and mother. She wore black on Sundays and shook her head sadly when any one mentioned Bill's name. After church town people stood on the sidewalk under the trees and farmers got into their cars at once, to be home in time for dinner. Flora never gossiped, but she knew people were watching her sympathetically, a woman close to a great tragedy. After church man in black who was unhappy and had one Sunday she saw Dolly Knox on the street and her father stopped the car. Dolly talked very rapidly, and Flora, embarrassed, said she would go and see her some afternoon, but did not ask her to come up to the farm.

The days in November disturbed and saddened her, and she longed for good times and some one to make love to her. Bill was merely some one she had lived with a long time ago and had grown tired of. She sat in the house by herself, sewing, remodelling old dresses skilfully. Her father brought her a bouquet

of autumn leaves in wild, rich colors. She told him that some day she would go back to town and do dressmaking for a living. October had been a fine month, and she had liked the green becoming brown and the red leaves on the trees, but in November the red leaves were a crisp, dried-out tan that withered and were blown away. Leaves were blown across the fields and over the hills, and a wind carried them away in eddies. In the evenings, lying awake in bed, she heard dead leaves rustling on the ground and was unhappy. The trees were stark naked. In the evenings her mother and father read all the magazines subscription agents had sold them during the summer.

In the middle of the month she brought up the mail from the box at the gate on the rural route. The town paper interested her only casually and she did not read it until the evening. On the front page was a picture of Bill and a two-column story that Johnny Williams had written himself. Her father, reading over her shoulder, patted her on the back and moved the lamp closer to her. She became excited and the character in the story lost all reality for her. Two weeks ago a policeman, riding through a city on his bicycle, noticed a man sitting on a bench. The man's clothes were torn and dirty, and he had a beard. He had no hat. He leaned on the bench, his eyes closed. The officer got off his wheel and spoke to him, but the man, opening his eyes, muttered words the officer did not understand and tried to get up and go away. Obviously he was very sick or drunk, and the policeman, taking him by the arm, walked slowly to a street corner, where he phoned for an ambulance.

At the hospital they said he evidently hadn't eaten anything for a long time and was out of his mind, and ought to be taken to an asylum. For three days he remained in the hospital; then they removed him to the city asylum, and he became unconscious. Later on the doctors tried to feed him, but he seemed unable to move his jaws, or they were so rigid his mouth could not be opened. He was out of his mind, or was suffering from some emotional hysteria that practically paralyzed him, and when he opened his eyes he spoke to no one. The doctors fed him milk in a tube inserted through his teeth. He got weaker and they believed he was going to die.

In his pockets they found an envelope with

his name and address. They communicated with his mother and told her that her son had only two weeks at most to live and that he might just as well die at home as in the asylum. Old Mrs. Lawson, though recently infirm herself, went down to the city and had insisted that they send Bill home at once. She had him taken to his own home and moved there from her cottage to attend to him and feed him through the tube. She was very angry with people who came to see him for the last time on earth, and told Doctor Arnold, the local doctor, that he would not die, and for three days would let no one but him see him. The local doctor said it was unbelievable, but he wouldn't wonder if she kept him alive, though of course he was out of his mind all the time.

Flora cried when she read the paper and knew she ought to go and see him, and kept on crying and pretending to herself that she was reading advertisements in the paper, till her father said that under the circumstances it would be better if she didn't visit him at all; he was being cared for; he had left her and had gone out of his mind, and, anyway, had ill-treated her, and she had her own life to live. Her mother said that it was a fine sentimental notion, to see her husband, yet it was impracticable and the consequences couldn't be predicted, so it would be better not to see him.

She had no inclination to go and see Bill. Peeling potatoes in the kitchen at noontime, she closed her eyes and thought of him, his face covered with hair, his jaws locked. At night, stretched out on the bed, she felt unhappy and almost sick, hardly able to believe she had ever known such a man. Uneasily she suspected that her father and mother would declare that it was her duty to nurse him. Next morning they told her they understood some of her feeling and agreed that she should remain away from him. After that they were careful not to mention his name to her.

She would not go into town with her mother or father and stopped going to church on Sunday. She did not come to this very positive opinion suddenly; only after she had thought of the arid days in her life with Bill before he had gone away. Her first feeling of sympathy for him she guarded cautiously, determined it should not convince her to see him and afterward regret it; she was a young woman who

ought not to waste her life with an invalid who had ill-treated her and separated himself from her. Her mother and father both believed that he would die and it was foolish to prolong his life artificially. The talk of death shocked Flora, made her think of religion and a funeral, and vague thoughts of an after-life she couldn't encompass. She tried to imagine herself dead, but lived on over her thoughts, and it seemed then that Bill would live on in her thoughts, even though he ought to die. He would die and she would go to his funeral, but in that way she could not separate herself from thoughts of him.

Haying-time was over, it was getting dark early. Her mother, sitting in the parlor, was mending socks, her glasses tipped down on her nose. Flora was knitting a sweater she intended to give to her mother. Without lifting her eyes from the knitting Flora suggested that she might get a divorce and go away and live in another town. Her mother withdrew the palm of her hand from the sock and pinned the needle in the ball of yarn.

"Who with?" she asked sharply.

"No one. I don't want to live with any one."

"Well, you'd better not."

She looked steadily at Flora, went on darn-
ing, and never mentioned it again.

Snow fell lightly early in December. They had only one hired man for the winter. Her father was planning a new silo for next spring. Though Flora had grown up on the farm, the life now became so dreary that she grasped at any thought promising a break in the monotony. The landscape was dreary, especially at twilight. Bare trees and barns were outlined against an early winter sky at twilight. She took long walks by herself on the rural routes, sometimes thinking of meeting a young man and having a conversation with him, or of going into town at night and walking the side streets till she met a young man she didn't know very well. Her father and mother would be indignant if she ever walked with Pete Hastings now Bill was back in town. At Christmas-time the snow was thick on the fields. It was a bad Christmas, though they all went over to Maloneys and took small presents off a Christmas-tree. The next morning she threw out dish-water from the back-door step, and looked westward where the line of hills curved, wondering why the blue hills had so little color in the winter.

Her father sometimes mentioned Bill, but she imagined he was just eager to talk, passing the time in the evening, and paid no attention to him. He thought it remarkable that Bill should have lived. He had heard that he was sitting up in a chair, fed with a spoon by his mother, who had to undress him.

Katie Maloney, wearing a red toque and a green muffler, came along the road at four o'clock in the afternoon and waved to Flora. Talking rapidly and sincerely, she said that many people were going to see Bill because they were astonished that he had lived, and she asked if Flora had read the piece about him in the paper. Katie unfolded the paper and Flora read the story. Johnny Williams believed that Bill had been working too hard on some great human undertaking, and had worried himself out of his right mind and had nearly died. But he had lived because he had a great mother, and might some day recover.

Katie Maloney said: "Do you think he'd mind if next time I was in town I went around to see him?"

"Why should he mind if he's out of his head?"

"I hope he wouldn't mind. It'd be no use seeing him if he minded."

Flora was angry with her father for not having shown her the paper last evening. She was unable to understand why she was angry with him, because she knew that he always avoided talking to her about Bill. Alone, she sat in her bedroom wondering why Katie Maloney had been so anxious to see him, talking as if it were a distinction to see a sick man with a wind in the head.

All week she wondered whether the Maloney girl had seen Bill. On a Thursday afternoon Katie came over to see her, eager to talk. "It was odd, so awfully odd I couldn't say anything," she said. "He just sat there in a chair and he had a dark-brown beard."

"And didn't he speak at all?"

"No, he didn't speak at all; just sat there, staring out the window, paying no attention to me."

"Why didn't you speak to him?"

"Well, I wanted to, but mainly to reach out and touch him. I heard it said last Sunday that to reach out and touch him was good luck against getting sick."

"Who told you such a thing, Katie?"

"Oh, I heard it last week. They say he was

having such wonderful thoughts and he went out of his mind. Nearly everybody knows it now."

She walked down the lane with Katie, laughing out loud while Katie nodded her head vigorously. On the way back to the house she thought of people timidly touching Bill. Then she felt restless and unhappy. She noticed that the barn roof was sagging. The foundations of the house and barn were of stone. The house was of brick but the shingles on the roof were warped and loose. Next time she met Katie she would tell her about Bill's fine thoughts and how he had studied hard, and the story of Saint Thomas Aquinas, who had lived in the Middle Ages. Katie would shake her head two or three times and go home and tell it to her sister. Then Flora felt ashamed of herself for taking Katie's talk seriously, as if any one could tell her anything about Bill.

For days she was muddled, wondering why so many people should be interested in Bill now that he was sick and out of his mind. Three weeks later, in the morning, she took the buggy and drove into Gardner's grocery-store. Mr. Gardner was amiable, and, wrapping up tea and bananas for her, asked if she thought old Mrs. Lawson would mind if on Sunday afternoon he dropped in to see Bill. He admitted that he hadn't known Bill very well when he worked on the paper, but had heard, since, that he was a great thinker and scholar, and believed he might have many wonderful things to tell some day, if he ever got better. She assured Mr. Gardner that it was all right for him to go and see Bill. She spoke spitefully of Mrs. Lawson, who was practically an interloper.

"They say he just sits there in a chair," Mr. Gardner said.

"Yes, he just sits there, looking out the window."

"They say he's out of his mind, but I don't believe it. The Lord only knows the things he sees and hears sitting there like that. It's not the likes of us to say. And, besides, he was a very religious man."

"You go and see him, Mr. Gardner, and it's all right."

In the buggy again she was indignant that people would ask if old Mrs. Lawson would

mind if they saw Bill. "He's at least my husband," she thought.

Most of the way home she thought of Bill sitting in the chair and believed now that it was wonderful that people should be anxious to see him and touch him, though he never moved or opened his mouth. It was likely, as Mr. Gardner suggested, that he was not really out of his mind at all but having his own fine thoughts. She slapped the horse's haunches, the buggy swaying, the wheels grinding over small rocks on the road. Here the farms were back from the road, and sawed-off or charred stumps stuck out of the melting snow.

In the evening she discovered that her mother had heard all the strange talk about Bill. Flora talked angrily of Bill's mother, and then, talking idly, told the story of the grandmother who had got off the boat before it left the old country. Her mother was ironing and listening attentively. Flora said: "Oh, I'll bet a dollar most people's grandpeople were just as interesting when it comes down to brass tacks."

She coaxed her mother to talk of her people. Her mother remembered an aunt who had lived in the town, in the days when people thought it would become a railroad centre. The aunt ran a boarding-house for trainmen and travellers near to the station. She ran the house for ten years and made some money. "I can remember seeing her one day with her apron full of dollar bills," she said. And then the boarding-house was burned down. "She had few boarders, and I can remember plain as day seeing my aunt coming out of a hole in the fence, and I knew in my soul that she had set fire to the house to get the insurance."

Flora thought that it wasn't a story she could very well tell to other people. "Wasn't there anybody in our family who got to be well known up here years ago?" she asked.

"Of course there was; people to be proud of."

"Who? Have I heard about them?"

"For instance, there was my uncle on my mother's side that laid the first track in a section of the country up around here when most of it was bush. They gave him a gold watch and a beautiful broadcloth suit. I can remember that broadcloth suit as plain as day, seeing the way he'd hang it up or put it on."

(To be concluded in March number.)



ANTHONY WAYNE



FROM A PAINTING BY
EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY



THIS PANEL IS A
STUDY FOR THE FIG-
URE OF GENERAL
ANTHONY WAYNE
IN THE APOTHEOSIS
OF PENNSYLVANIA
WHICH IS PART OF
THE DECORATION IN
THE HOUSE OF REPRE-
SENTATIVES AT THE
HARRISBURG CAPITOL



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