

Literature Music Art

A BOOK OF THE WEEK REVIEWED

The Heart of a Gypsy

Perhaps in this West of ours we can better appreciate a nature story than less fortunate people who live in older and more crowded communities. The most of us feel that our everyday life is made a much more beautiful thing from the lovely nearness of the hills. There is a kinship between us and the ever-present ocean, and by ever-present is meant that quality which inspires the sense of always being part of the deepest of our thoughts, for our noblest thoughts, whether we admit it or not, are bound to be tinged with the impression we have of our surroundings, and we cannot get far enough away from the ocean to be out of mind of it, either in the silver shimmer of the water itself or the echo of its song in the swaying trees. And with the trees themselves we feel a sort of comradeship, even the least imaginative of us, while the ever-changing beauty of the clouds at sunrise and sunset time, leaving its imprint upon us day after day and night after night, makes us grow, unconsciously perhaps, the happier and the closer to the heart of nature, so that there is a vague and intangible sort of understanding between ourselves and all the elements that go to make up the loveliness of the earth. When we read a story like "The Heart of a Gypsy," while fault may be found with its construction, its too great detail, while the author is not always consistent or rhetorical, and has not quite the proper sense of perspective necessary for very forceful writing, she has drawn such a bewilderingly delightful nature-child as her heroine that our hearts go out in sympathy to the gypsy Meridiana, and we follow her wanderings through the book with unabated interest to the close of the somewhat lengthy story. The doctor, who is rather monotonously "pink and smiling" is apt to be a ludicrous character at times, which rather spoils him for his part as hero, but we confess to liking poor little white-haired, stammering Bunny, who is an admirable foil for her charming adopted sister. The story gathers in interest as it progresses, and at the last the writer's style from being somewhat stilted becomes easier and more natural. Her scenes are vividly portrayed and eloquently described, and while from the first the reader feels that there can be but one end to the story, it comes as a startling climax.

The Story

Meridiana is the adopted child of a clergyman and his wife, and was found in the first instance under a Beech Tree, which tree plays a very graphic part in the young girl's life. Her gypsy blood gives her a strange insight into the workings of Nature, and the Tree seems a living thing to her; she has for it something of the same feeling probably that our primitive British ancestors had for the sacred oaks which they worshipped as gods, only with Meridiana the Beech Tree seems to have qualities almost human. When Cyprian Fielding, the doctor, falls in love with her, she has a difficult conflict with herself before she can make up her mind to place her lover first and the Beech Tree second in her affections. Fielding has a hard time to win her.

"You are as hard as a little green apple," he muttered in a choked voice. "You don't know what love means."

"Oh, I do," chanted Diana reproachfully; "I am very fond of Bunny."

"If Bunny died, would you cry?" he asked suddenly in that naive boyish way that amused his friends whenever it burst through his usually quiet manner.

She paused, and in a strange anxiety Cyprian Fielding waited for the answer, his eyes intent on the twiddling grass between her teeth.

"Yes; I think I should—I am sure of it." "But in the same way as when you see an unusually brilliant sunset?" he persisted almost unhappily.

"It would be the same thing."

"What do you mean?"

Diana looked up into the milky way, and round at the stretches of pink moor melting away into the soft blue of Dunkery Beacon—at the sheep, the gorse, the wild ponies, the women and children, the fluttering larks. Her eyes clouded over with dreams.

"Do you believe in another life?" asked the man in a low voice.

All the dreams in the gypsy's eyes fled as the reflections in a pool at a puff of wind.

"Not in the sense you mean."

"What do you mean?" He leaned forward a little in his anxiety to fathom her strange mind.

"That there is but one life, which is constantly changing, but ever endures. That my blood may help to stain this heather red."

"And you feel no terror at losing your identity—at being merged in the universe?"

"Natural regret—yes, terror—no," replied Diana with childish wonder. "Why should I? I am absolutely at one with Nature as it is."

"And you do not mind that the world's greatest men, with all their intelligence, will do nothing more than mingle with the sun, the rain and the clouds?" he exclaimed incredulously.

"No," said Meridiana; "I do not mind."

And now she was smiling again, and the sunlight shone in her golden eyes, and on her white teeth.

"And you are happy?"

"Life is very sweet. There is always the wind, the clouds and the rain," she chanted softly.

But the gypsy is very human, and in spite of the rebelling of some instincts which she cannot name, her heart finally yields to Fielding.

As though she sought by the touch of Beech Tree to absorb some of its calm to quiet the tumult in her soul, the gypsy stepped with easy certainty over the mossy roots, and leaned sideways against the trunk. The little crevices, inequalities, and threads of dry moss pressed into her warm living cheek, her fingers fluttered over the trunk. Her heart beat suffocatingly, and she was filled with an emotion she scarcely knew from joy or pain.

The dry little breeze was stirring in the leaves of the Beech Tree again, the river sucked and bubbled, and upstream came the faint splashing of an otter. On a faraway farm yapped a sheep-dog.

But Fielding heard nothing, saw nothing of the night. He heard only Meridiana's soft breathing, saw only in his memory Meridiana's little vivid face, with its sulky child's mouth and its woman's eyes.

"Oh, listen to the night!" cried Di, and she held up one hand in the darkness.

He decided he would catch her in his arms and overpower this stubborn love of nature in a lover's kiss. So deep was the man in the dazing of his plan, that he scarcely followed what she was saying or what he was answering.

"Are you making love?" He had never felt so foolish.

"I was trying—"

"Oh don't!" cried the gypsy; and her voice sounded suddenly harsh.

"I can't love people as they love me; even Bunny. You, all of you, put human being at the top of your list of loves. They come at the end of mine; sometimes off the paper altogether. I am hurting you? But it is so."

"Why don't you love Bunny?" I have my clouds, my animals, my river, my Beech Tree. There is no room for you. But she has nothing—nothing. It isn't fair."

Her voice suddenly broke. She felt very childish and desolate.

"Oh, I have no heart, no soul. It's no use," she cried with a strange, lonely drop in her voice.

The tender womanly strain that ran through his nature yearned to her intolerably.

"Diana—Diana—foolish little you—"

At last it had come. He could struggle no longer. He stooped and crushed her in his arms, expecting in a kind of savage defiance to feel her resist.

But Meridiana felt all resistance suddenly shrivel up within her. She glowed all over with unbearable sweetness. The strange feeling of disloyalty to someone—something—stirred within her for one moment and then died—it was almost fiercely though unconsciously that her lips met his.

Meridiana goes to London to "become civilized" before her marriage, but her inexperience causes her to do many distinctly unconventional things, and she is very unhappy at the confinement. There is another woman in the case who is in love with Cyprian, and one uncomfortable event follows another in quick succession, though Fielding is always the ardent yet patient lover. It would be unfair to the book to try to give a synopsis of what follows. It is sufficient to say that Meridiana runs away and goes back to Exmoor, when the final tragedy of the story is enacted. In a terrible storm the Beech Tree is uprooted.

The end of the Tree means the death of Meridiana. She is very ill and in her semi-delirium she fancies the Tree calls her. She watches her opportunity when the nurse is asleep and steals from her bed. In her nightdress, the storm screaming about her, the rain lashing her face she reaches the river, "The fallen monarch lay helpless there. The once silvery trunk was black and dripping. The huge limbs cried and trembled in the gale like things in pain. . . . Everything in Meridiana's life had been sweeping up to this supreme moment. She had been given much that she might have at last the ineffable joy of surrendering all to him she loved best. She gloried in the very intensity of this feeling that shook her to her innermost being. That Cyprian Fielding himself, the man with the indomitable will, must now yield that hidden force within him to the dying Beech Tree, made her slender body quiver in a trance of ecstasy. . . . Blindly Fielding ran lurching towards the Beech Tree. He could distinguish something white huddled against the pale trunk. Another minute and he had the gypsy in his arms. . . . He crushed her to him and began running unsteadily to the house, his heart bounding, the blood booming in his temples. Meridiana looked up at him with a strange, kindling expression.

"I don't think I can live any more, somehow. The Beech Tree—"

"By God, you shan't speak of that—" he shouted savagely; then his voice suddenly sharpened into an agony of fear.

"Di, Di, my little Hind, my eager Beautiful, my everything most dear—"

The book is written by Rosamond Napier, published by Macmillan & Co., Toronto, Can.

FRANK LISZT

Franz Liszt was born at Raidery, Hungary, October 22, 1811. He began his musical studies in his sixth year, and when nine years old his rendition of a difficult concerto was so admirable that his father took him upon a concert tour in the course of which the lad's genius gained the admiration and patronage of the Hungarian nobility. He resumed his studies in Vienna under Czerny in 1821. He



FRANZ LISZT
THE FAMOUS
HUNGARIAN PIANIST
AND COMPOSER

was taken by his father to Paris in 1824, where two years later he produced an operetta. He was at this time only fourteen years of age.

Two years later his father died and the boy of sixteen settled down as a piano teacher.

He was very successful and obtained great social prominence, largely through his wonderful improvisations. The appearance of Paganini in 1831 inspired him with the ambition to become as great an artist on the piano as the other was on the violin. Notwithstanding his irregular life, his popularity increased phenomenally.

He never married, although he left three children by the Countess d'Agout, one of whom became the wife of Wagner. In 1849 he became kappelmeister to the Grand Duke of Weimar, retaining that post until 1861. In 1865 he took orders in the Roman Catholic church and was thenceforth known as Abbe Liszt.

It is said of him that as a pianist he has never been equalled. His compositions were numerous. In them he showed an indisposition to be governed by recognized forms. He may be said to have created a new school in music, which aims more at the expression of the emotions than the observance of conventional formulas. It was he who introduced Wagner to the world, and it was in the midst of a Wagnerian festival at Bayreuth in 1886 that he died.

THE HABIT OF POSING

Laughter is as essential to life as the sunshine, and the majority of people, women especially, do not realize this fact to their lasting unhappiness. If there is one evil more than another for which modern novelists are responsible it is the bringing to the fore of the so-called problems, more particularly the problems of married life, dilating upon them, enlarging upon them, giving them a significance which they do not possess; treating them as though they were matters of grave import, when nine times out of ten the difficulties that lead to divorce or tragedy of some kind in the books, are simple affairs that might be easily adjusted by any sensible husband and wife, if the participants would only face the issue for what it was worth, though of course in that case there would be no story to tell, no problem to discuss. The reader of such books, if for instance, she be a married woman, attracted by the romantic setting and elaboration of what is nothing more than a tempest in a teacup, and having experienced the same domestic vexations, fondly pictures herself in the same position as the much-written-of heroine in the novel, and speedily adopts the position of "poseur" and imagines the life she is living is in no sense less vitally interesting than the standpoint of the morbid literary disector, than the life portrayed between the pages of the problem novel, and she speedily brings about a series of scenes and climaxes, often disastrous in their results.

Now the most of us lead commonplace sort of existences fortunately, with tragedy very far removed from us. We have our sorrows and our disappointments, but they are balanced by our hopes and our joys, and if we would allow ourselves we should probably be contented enough. For real griefs God sends us compensations sometime, but there is no

recompence for trouble which we deliberately bring upon ourselves, by making a tragedy out of what is at best a comedy, and more often a farce, which we can laugh away at its beginning, but if we allow it to grow an endless amount of tears will not help us to forget.

How many of us spend our time in posing as being something we are not and can never hope to be. The simple-minded pretend to be wise; the domesticated woman, sane and wholesome at heart effects helplessness and frivolity. A man of lovable qualities adopts a pessimistic attitude; the studious man is outwardly flippant; a callow unsophisticated youth plays the part of a cynic grown bitter through experience; a young girl totally ignorant of the ways of the world prides herself on her air of being thoroughly blasé. Most of us are actors, not in the sense that Marcus Aurelius meant when he bade us be faithful to whatever part the Master had given us to play on the stage of life, but actors in a small sense, in our everyday attitude before our friends, and very often before ourselves, for with many of us it has grown to be second nature, this posing as something we are not. So when vexing things happen we magnify them out of all proportion to suit whatever pose we have adopted, and we shed tears, figuratively, if not literally, over woes that if we had the common sense to face with our eyes open to their real significance would at most cause but a passing frown or sigh.

Someone recently wrote an article upon "our over-developed sense of humor," and while the author was undoubtedly right in the view he took, for most of us in our attitude of flippant laugh at many things which should be held too sacred for ordinary discussion at all, and make light of those things which require grave consideration, at the same time we take our own individual selves far too seriously, making mountains out of molehills, and tragedies out of comedies. The sense of humor has been aptly described as the "saving sense." If we would only permit it to do so it might save us many a sorrow. Half of our griefs are imaginary, and if we would take an introspective view, and see our real selves and the attitude that we adopt when we are making ourselves miserable, the ludicrous falseness of our position would in nine cases out of ten arouse our risible faculties, and bring the honest laughter than which there is nothing that is a more potent banisher of sorrow.

WITH THE PHILOSOPHERS

Thomas Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle was born in 1795, and was one of the greatest modern philosophers. His life seems to have been a peculiarly sad one and his misery was no doubt due to a very large extent to "that hag Dyspepsia," from which disease he suffered continually. Great though the intellect may be, unless our physical health be good, we can for the most part only theorize about the triumph of mind over matter, and dyspepsia is likely to produce an excessively morbid sensibility almost in spite of the will of the sufferer. Carlyle studied at first for the ministry; later he took up the study of law for a short time. He then became a teacher, and in 1826 married Jane Welsh, and retired to a farm in Craigenputtock, where he began to write his essays. His domestic life was as unhappy as his single life had been. He died in 1881. His greatest work is probably his "History of the French Revolution," though his "Sartor Resartus" is a book with which the most of us are familiar and contains some of the noblest passages in any of his works. The following is from "Past and Present":

Labor

For there is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in idleness alone there is perpetual despair. Work, never so mammoth, mean, is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations which are truth.

The latest gospel in this world is, know thy work and do it. "Know thyself": long enough has that poor self of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to know it I believe. Think it not thy business this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual; know what thou canst work at and work at it like a Hercules. That will be thy better plan. Destiny on the whole has no other way of cultivating us except by work. A formless chaos, once set in revolving, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself by mere force of gravity into strata, sperial courses; it is no longer a chaos, but a round compacted world. What would become of the earth did she cease to revolve? . . . Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel, old as the prophet Ezekiel, and much older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel, reduced to make dishes, or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking. Even such a Potter were Destiny with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work or spin. Of an idle unevolving man, the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake or knead nothing but a botch; let her spend on him what expensive coloring, what gilding and enamelling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered

amorphous botch; a mere enameled vessel of dishonor. Let the idle think of this. Blessed is he who hath found his work, let him ask no other blessedness.

From "Heroes and Hero-Worship"

Looking round on the noisy inanity of the world, words with little meaning, actions with little worth, one loves to reflect on the great Empire of Silence. The noble, silent men, scattered here and there, each in his own department; silently thinking, silently working; whom no morning newspaper makes mention of. They are the salt of the earth. A country that has none or few of these is in a bad way. Like a forest which had no roots; which had all turned into leaves and boughs; which must soon wither and be no forest. Woe for us if we had nothing but what we can show or speak. Silence, the great Empire of Silence, higher than the stars, deeper than the kingdom of Death. It alone is great; all else is small. I hope we English will long maintain our grand talent "poor le silence." Let others that cannot be seen without standing on barrel-heads, to spout and to be seen of all the market-place, cultivate speech exclusively—become a most green forest without roots. So Solomon says: "There is a time to speak; but also a time to keep silence."

And now by way of counterpoise to this of silence, let me say that there are two kinds of ambition: one wholly blamable, the other laudable and inevitable. . . . the selfish wish to shine over others, let it be accounted poor and miserable. "Seekest thou great things, seek them not," this is most true. And yet I say, there is an irrepressible tendency in every man to develop himself according to the magnitude which Nature has made him of; to speak out, to act out, what Nature has laid in him. This is proper, fit, inevitable; nay, it is a duty and even the summaries of duties for man. The meaning of life here on earth might be defined as consisting in this: To unfold yourself, to work what thing you have the faculty for. It is a necessity for the human being, the first law of our existence. Coleridge beautifully remarks that the infant learns to speak by this necessity it feels. We will say therefore: To decide about ambition whether it is bad or not—you have two things to take into view. Not the coveting of the place alone, but the fitness for the man of the place withal: that is the question. . . . Nature, I say, has provided amply that the silent great man shall strive to speak withal.

MR. FRASER'S "PEBBLES AND SHELLS"

Mr. Donald Fraser has just issued a little book of verses which his many friends will welcome very gladly. Some of the poems have appeared before in Canadian and American periodicals, Mr. Fraser having begun sometime ago to make a reputation for himself as a writer of verse. His poems deal with various subjects, love, religion, patriotism, his children's poems being among the best. The first number in the book, in which the writer declares his mission, we reproduce in full:

My Mission

When I would launch my fragile craft
On Thought's vast boundless sea,
The waves upcurl in awful swirl
Of mystic revelry,
And overwhelm my puny bark,
And well-nigh smother me.

And so I e'en content myself,
And wander on the marge
Of that grand tide I may not ride,
And scan its sky-rim large;
Of follow with my fancy's eye
Another's outbound barge.

Anon I gather from the strand
A pretty pebble clear,
A sea-flower or sounding shell,
Then send them far and near
In hopes that some the magic main
Through them might see and hear.

The Poet

The Sage enquires with bended head
To find the truth of things;
The Harper, too, in search of light,
Upsoars on dreamy wings;
But with serene, unclouded brow,
The poet sees, and sings.

MR. DAVID BISPHAM ON "MAKING UP"

My idea in "making up" for a part in grand opera has always been to sink myself entirely, and present, as well as lay in my power, such a portrait as the author and composer might have had in mind.

This is to be derived from the context of words and music, and is scarcely to be explained. An inner sense guides me and should guide everyone on the stage. Costume merely, does not denote a character.

"Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother," Hamlet says. A blond wig, or moustachios, a red shirt, or suit of mail may be worn, the actor may "paint an inch thick and yet forever be himself and never 'the part.'"

To my way of thinking all should be true to make the illusion complete. Some actors and many singers, however, lack just this special qualification in their art, though perhaps possessing everything else that is requisite to carry off the situation to the utmost advantage.

We should remember that we are living
(Continued on Page Nine)