

shown much sagacity in taking the matter up on the representations which were made to them; but surely they are competent to deal with the offence of the man who concocted the evidence of the girl Smith. The ends of justice will be defeated if that offender is allowed to escape; and incidentally the investigation of his crime may lead to the public obtaining some knowledge of the manner in which it is thought lawful by these private detectives to conduct their business.

SHAKESPEAREAN GHOULS.

SHAKESPEARE, thy muse, like Atlas, holds a heaven
Of literature above our pigmy souls,
The science of its shining stars enrolls
Full many a modern sage, to whom is given
A parasitic fame for having striven
To search the sparkling spaces of thy mind.
Fear not, Great Bard, though infidels unkind
The Maker from his universe have driven
On their poor charts. Forgive such crack-brained spite
"These undevout astronomers are mad,"
And in the bitter curse which thou didst write,
Include them not; although in truth as bad
As body-snatcher is the impious wight
Who delves to earth thy living name from sight.

WILLIAM MCGILL.

LONDON LETTER.

I THINK it is a scent, a scent, and, in a fainter degree, a tune which recall to one's remembrances, quicker than anything else, episodes belonging to those better days when winters were colder and longer, and summers were hotter and pleasanter than they are now. Half-forgotten ridiculous little adventures flash across one's memory, because (perhaps) a tuberose happens to be close to one's hand: a twist of Travellers' Joy and a branch of sweetbriar will make one start as if one had met a ghost instead of a posy, while an air, ground from a barrel organ, has an effect of causing squares and streets to disappear when Arcady, or whatever spot the tune may remind you, takes its place. And I have written this truism in consequence of an odour of syringa (wafted from over the gardens that give onto this lime-fringed Kew Green), which infallibly produces for me, as the fumes of the Arabian Jar produced the Geni, the figure of that kindly clever artist, Mr. Ward, at the back of whose house in Kensington Park used to grow bushes of these beautiful white flowers.

I cannot imagine a more delightful companion than this painter of history-faces, whose excellent reliable memory was stored with all sorts of information always ready to hand, and whose genial manner won for him the affection of young and old: and to this day I remember with peculiar pleasure visits paid to his studio when one could see for oneself some of the great people who were then troubling one's school days. Louise of Prussia and Napoleon, Charles the IX. at the bedside of Coligny (the best of the later pictures) Marie Antoinette and her daughter—dressed in their bravest, high lights very accentuated, eyes and complexions at their brightest, visions, as I then thought, of loveliness. But if I were not discriminating about the art, I was wise enough to feel the sterling qualities of the artist, and am glad to think I have known one at least of that brave old set of painters who were famous in their different ways in the middle of this century. Of Mr. Ward you may read a sympathetic account in Lord Ronald Gower's *Reminiscences*, and those of us who remember the handsome grey-eyed man—contemporary of Landseer, Maclise, Phillip, Creswick, Clarkson Stanfield—endorse every word of the eulogy. Mrs. Oliphant's "Mr. Sanford" in the *Cornhill*, a month or two back, reminds one to a certain extent of Ward's troubled last days; that was inevitable, but the clever, painful story, with its shrewd touches, applies to many another of his comrades. I do not believe that we, the public, are fickle: we are quick to understand the work that appeals to us, and stick to our old favourites, taking interest year after year in those who give us what we best understand. Fashions change to a certain extent in art, but ninety-nine out of a hundred of us care nothing for that, and contentedly crowd round a Village Wedding or a Race Course, a bit of Thames scenery, or an illustration from "The Vicar of Wakefield," undisturbed by any critical remarks whatsoever. But the people who buy pictures are made of different stuff to those who only look at them: they understand, of course, the market value of the canvases, and can tell you to a month when the dealers left off patronizing Brown and took to buying Jones' pieces as fast as he could turn them out; and, in the hands of these patrons, the fate of the ordinary artist lies. Once the stream of gold turns from the studio doors it never retraces its steps, and if from carelessness, or what not, the waters have not been dammed, woe betide the dwellers by those dry, dusty banks. Men, who from having more work than they could get through during those prosperous Manchester years—from, say 1850 to 1875—have since then had to sell their pictures, if they sell them at all, for the smallest of sums, and only by some lucky chance, of which they are fully aware. Make hay while the sun shines, say you, but have you ever known anyone in the front lines, or even in the rank of this army of painters, who has been endowed with prudence? It hardly exists, I think, when the temperament is only as much as tinged with the many-hued magic fluid called Artistic Feeling, and when that charming fairy gift colours every quality I am persuaded that its owner never possesses the excellent old-fashioned cardinal virtue.

Last autumn in the Saltaire picture gallery I came upon the great

Lexicographer (very like him whom Sir Joshua painted, only more so) sitting at dinner with ugly Wilkes and self-satisfied Boswell, and other of our friends, over a dish of roast veal. We all know the scene; have we not been of the party a score of times? Though the canvas was unsigned, I recognized it for a Ward as one recognizes writing with which one is familiar, though the signature may not be attached; and, looking at the brilliant lights, dexterously-painted velvet coats, silk stockings, silver swords, and shining eyes, at all the tricks and mannerisms I knew so well, I seemed again to hear the painter's delightful talk—stories and mimicry of good old Lord Northwick, descriptions of Bulwer Lytton and Knebworth, tales of student days at Rome—and again I listened to the laugh and quick answer to some idle joke. I think it was Dr. Johnson who said that the size of a man's understanding might always be justly measured by his mirth: he could not have failed to have formed a high estimate of Ward's wit and parts, had he met the artist before repeated disappointments unnerved him.

Mr. Ward died at Windsor eight or nine years ago; but here, in the sun on Kew Green, with the smell of syringa round about, it seems as if he must still be living in the well remembered London villa, cheerful, courageous, hopeful; certain that the dealers would again flock to his painting room, as in the days of *The South Sea Bubble* and *The Landing of William of Orange*, quite sure and certain that the depression was only temporary. Alas, those good times never did return; though one is none the worse for hoping, I take it.

In the centre of this charming old green is the village church, and as I look over the low wall that divides the cricket players from the crosses and flowers, halting verse and pathetic epitaphs with which we decorate our dead, I can see the grave of Gainsborough, who lies by the side of his friend Kirby, the architect, and not far from Zoffany and Meyer: and I am again reminded of Ward, for it was he who restored the tomb of Sir Joshua's rival, and set a tablet to his memory on the south wall of the quaint Queen Anne chapel. As a favour, I am shown in the mausoleum, at the back of the altar, the velvet and gilt coffin of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. A golden crown is on the bed cushion; about are heaped wreaths of immortelles. This son of George III. has been dead thirty-seven years, but his wife, whose wedding Queen Charlotte attended, is still alive, and listens contentedly to the music of the band playing outside her windows in St. James's Palace—and listening in the cool fragrance of the aisles, the verger tells me this or that, points out the organ and the Royal pew; but I hear without heeding, for the strong smell of paints and turpentine is in my memory, overpowering the flowers, and Ward's quiet hearty tone drowns the voice of my guide.

Do you know the red brick palace past the gates that face this green? Once, not long ago, some one unlocked the great front doors for me, and I was privileged to wander up and down the corridors, into the dismantled rooms, where soft to your tread fine Turkey carpets line the floor, and girandoles (the twinkling lights are but just put out) branch from the walls, and into the corners are pushed, against the narrow, dim looking-glass, pieces of old furniture—a card table or a straight-backed armchair. I declare I could hear the king's hoarse voice, as he talked, talked to his doctors in that dark saloon, and I saw the pages on their stools in the passages, and heard the rustle of the ladies' silk gowns, as they went to and from the anxious, sad Queen and the crying Princesses. Against the windows of the powdering closet wood pigeons cooed just as their ancestors did when little Amelia threw crumbs to them over her nursery bars, and the evening shadows fell on the sundial, and the leaves and grass were exactly of the same quality of green as when the company lingered on the lawns here after supper, a hundred years ago. Yesterday the bells tinkled (you can see the names now of each: "Princess Augusta's Room," says one inscription; "The King's Library," says another), and the teacups clinked, and the children laughed over their games, and Her Majesty wept when certain documents were brought her from town which told her it was imperative a Regent should be appointed. Then Fielding was read under these trees (*pace* Mr. Stevenson) and *Eveline*, Mr. Richardson's moral works, and Dr. Browning's *Travels in Germany*. To-day on the bench under the limes lie the letters of Dorothy Osborne—of course, you, too, are her devoted friend and humble servant. Everyone is quoting her sensible, humorous words, envying Mr. Temple his first perusal of them—and we Cockneys are free to peer with curious eyes at this sacred Royal home, now empty and forlorn, on which the attention of the English people once was fixed. Stand if you will in the avenue that leads to the river, and watch the craft bound for Richmond or Greenwich; follow the grass-grown paths within the enclosure, and you come to the Tea-house, hung with Hogarths and furnished with chairs and cushions, embroidered by those who are dead and gone long since. Across the Brentford Ferry clangs the bell, tolling for that Hero who belongs not to Germany alone, but to all the world, whom death has just now claimed. "*Et in Arcadia ego*" is painted on a tomb in a Poussin landscape on the Louvre walls. If you go to the cottage yonder among the elms, where the fine folk played at simplicity, or to the Palace surrounded by smiling gardens, that dismal sound still strikes upon your ears; and even Dorothy's company, and her natural, unaffected talk (by the side of which her editor, a son of the late Sergeant Parry, by the way, shows to disadvantage) fail to turn the mind from the sad, sad thoughts that crowd into one's memory at the episode in the history of our times, for which the bells ring through this peaceful afternoon.

Did it require Laurence Oliphant, I wonder, to write from the summit of Mount Carmel with an inspired pen (at least, he says it is inspired, and he ought to know), did it require Mr. Oliphant, I say, to convince us that there is, in very truth, that Hereafter which, from our childhood, we have been taught to respect, that abode, where, in the beautiful Bible language, all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and where shall be no