

will not die till that inward Presence dies also, and there sits not at the heart of any man a memory deeper than his joy.

But over all lovers, however wisely they may love, and well, there hangs one shadow which no wisdom can avert. To one or other the shock must come, the separation which will make the survivor's after-life seem something posthumous, and its events like changes in a dream.

Upon Rossetti, as is well known, that shock fell with desolating force. There seems a kind of delicacy in analyzing the poems which reflect the stages of that sorrow. But those who know the utmost anguish of yearning have found in the sonnets entitled "Willow-wood" a voice speaking as from their own hearts.

It is not, the bereaved lover only who finds in a female figure the ideal recipient of his impulses of adoring love. Of how many creeds has this been the inspiring element!—from the painter who invokes upon his canvas a Virgin revealed in sleep, to the philosopher who preaches the worship of Humanity in a woman's likeness, to be at once the Mother and the Beloved of all. Yet this ideal will operate most actively in hearts which can give to that celestial vision a remembered reality, whose "memorial threshold" seems visibly to bridge the passage between the transitory and the supernal world.

City, of thine a single, simple door,  
By some new Power reduplicate, must be  
Even yet my life-porch in eternity,  
Even with one presence filled, as once of yore;  
Or mocking winds whirl round a chaff-strown floor  
Thee and thy years and these my words and me.

And if sometimes this transmuted passion—this religion of beauty spiritualized into a beatific dream—should prompt to quietism rather than to vigorous action; if sometimes we hear in the mourner's utterance a tone as of a man too weak for his destiny—this has its pathos too. For it is a part of the lot of man that the fires which purify should also consume him, and that as the lower things become distasteful the energy which seeks the higher things should fade too often into a sad repose.

Here with her face doth Memory sit,  
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,  
Till other eyes shall look from it—  
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,  
Even than the old gaze tenderer;  
While hopes and aims, long lost with her,  
Stand round her image side by side,  
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died  
About the Holy Sepulcher.

And when the dream and the legend which inspired Rossetti's boyhood with the vision of the Blessed Damozel—which kindled his early manhood into the sweetest Ave that ever saluted "Mary, Virgin, full of grace"—had transformed themselves in his heart into the reality and the recollection; when Love had been made known to him by life itself and death—then the vaguer worship became a concentrated expectancy: one vanished hand seemed to offer the endless welcome, one name to symbolize all heaven, and to be in itself the single hope.

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air  
Between the scripted petals softly blown  
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—  
Ah! let none other alien spell so'er,—  
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—  
Not less nor more, but 'en that word alone.

Enough, perhaps, has been said to show not only how superficial is the view which represents Rossetti as a dangerous sensualist, but also how inadequately we shall understand him if we think to find in him only the commonplaces of passion dressed out in fantastic language and Italianized allegory. There is more to be learned from him than this, though it be too soon, as yet, to discern with exactness his place in the history of our time. Yet we may note that his sensitive and reserved individuality; his life, absorbed in Art, and aloof from—without being below—the circles of politics or fashion; his refinement, created as it were from within, and independent of conventional models, point him out as a member of that new aristocracy of which we have

already spoken, that optimacy of passion and genius (if we may revive an obsolete word to express a new shade of meaning) which is coming into existence as a cosmopolitan of the past. And, further, we may observe in him the reaction of Art against Materialism, which becomes more marked as the dominant tone of science grows more soulless and severe. The instincts which make other men Catholics, Ritualists, Hegelians, have compelled him, too, to seek "the meaning of all things that are" elsewhere than in the behavior of ether or atoms, though he can track his revelation to no source more explicit than the look in a woman's eyes.

But if we ask—and it was one of the questions with which we started—what encouragement the moralist can find in this counter-wave of art and mysticism which meets the materialistic tide, there is no certain or easy answer. The one view of life seems as powerless as the other to supply that antique and manly virtue which civilization tends to undermine by the lessening effort that it exacts of men, the increasing enjoyment which it offers to them. "Time has run back and tethed the age of gold," in the sense that the opulent can now take life as easily as it was taken in paradise; and Rossetti's poems, placed beside Sidney's or Lovelace's seem the expression of a century which is refusing itself into quietism and mellowing into decay.

Yet thus much we may safely affirm, that if we contrast aestheticism with pure hedonism—the pursuit through art with the pursuit of pleasure simply as pleasure—the one has a tendency to quicken and exalt, as the other to deaden and vulgarize, the emotions and appetencies of man. If only the artist can keep clear of the sensual selfishness which, will in its turn, degrade the art which yields to it; if only he can worship beauty with a strong and single heart, his emotional nature will acquire a grace and elevation which are not, indeed, identical with the elevation, virtue, the grace of holiness, but which are none the less a priceless enrichment of the complex life of man. Rossetti could never have summoned us to the clear height of Wordsworth's "Laodamia." Yet who can read the "House of Life" and not feel that the poet has known love as love can be—not an enjoyment only or a triumph, but a worship and a regeneration; love not fleeting, nor changeable; but "far above all passionate winds of welcome and farewell," love offering to the soul no mere excitement and by-play, but "a heavenly solstice, hushed and halcyon;" love whose "hours elect in choral consonance" bear with them nothing that is vain or vulgar, common or unclean. He must have felt as no passing tragedy the long ache of parted pain, "the ground-whirl of the perished leaves of hope," "the sunset's desolate disarray," the fruitless striving "to wrest a bond from night's inveteracy," to behold once alone, "the unforgotten eyes re-risen from the dark death.

Love, as Plato said, is "the interpreter and mediator" between things human and things divine; and it may be to love that we must look to teach the worshiper of beauty that the highest things are also the loveliest, and that the strongest of moral agencies is also the most pervading and keenest joy. Art and religion, which no compression could amalgamate, may by love be expanded and interfused; and thus the poet may not err so wholly who seeks in a woman's eyes the meaning of all things that are; and "the soul's sphere of infinite images" may not be a mere prismatic fringe to reality, but rather those images may be as dark rays made visible by passing through the medium of a mind which is fitted to refract and reflect them.

A faint, a fitful reflex! Whether it be from light of sun or of moon, "sole repercussum aut radiantis imagine lunc"—the glimmer of a vivifying or of a phantom day—may scarcely be for us to know. But never yet has the universe been proved smaller than the conceptions of man, whose furthest, deepest speculation has only found within him yet profounder abysses—without, a more unfathomable heaven.

A story that is good enough to be true is going the rounds about Mark Twain and Sergeant Ballantine. Mark failed to answer a letter of the Sergeant; and, after waiting a reasonable time, the latter was so exasperated at not receiving an answer that he mailed Twain a sheet of paper and a postage-stamp as a gentle reminder. Mr. Clemens wrote back on a postal: "Paper and stamp received. Please send envelope."