

"J'AI TROP BU LA VIE."

(GEORGE SAND.)

AH! what a wonderful draught!
Now, was it ruby red,
With heart of flame in the glass,
A passionate crimson shed
By the loves on which she fed?

Or with a golden hue
Caught from the grapes that grow
High in the sunshine of Fame?
Thus with an amber glow
Did her life's elixir flow?

Or was it colourless, clear,
White to her mortal eye,
Pure from a mountain stream,
Fresh from a fountain high,
Losing itself in the sky?

Or was it none of these,
Ripe and rare to the taste,
Rose or gold to the eye,
Brought in a beaker chased,
Bearing a rim flower-graced?

But was it muddy and black?
Bending over the brink
Of a foul and stagnant pool,
Loathing the draught, did she drink?
Draining the cup, did she shrink?

What were its dregs to her?
Ah! what a wonderful draught!
Perhaps as the dregs she drained,
Perhaps, as the cup she quaffed,
Her tempting angel laughed.

Ottawa.

SERANUS.

SAUNTERINGS.

THERE are drawing-rooms and drawing-rooms, of course; but the average drawing-room of the average person is filled with her idea of art culture, as it is limited by her purse. Meaningless apartments, furnished by tradition and the dictum of the upholsterer, are rarer than they used to be. The average woman no longer exercises her taste within Berlin wool limits, but gives it all the house room she can afford. Almost every woman of intelligence has felt the impetus to her æsthetic tastes given by the modern processes of art reproduction, and her walls usually testify of the distance and direction in which it has carried her. Men have doubtless been more or less affected by it also, but in women, with their easier susceptibility to matters of taste, and ampler opportunities for displaying it, we see the results of any æsthetic movement always first. The benevolent observer of his species finds much to marvel at as he goes from habitation to habitation, each reflecting a different stage in the progress of its decker and designer. And one of the oddest things that come under his observation is the peculiar bias in women towards the sorrowful in art. This is not attained at once, but somewhere on the journey from the red-and-blue chromo that rewards a subscription to a fashion magazine, and an etching by Moran that represents the profits of a defrauded milliner, the melancholy mania is sure to come; and when it comes it stays. If there is anything more attractive to the average woman picture-buyer than a "Mater Dolorosa," she does not hang it. Weeping Magdalens she takes especial delight in, and the mournful countenance of Dante's "Beatrice," in any pictorial representation whatever, affords her a keen and intense pleasure. There is something about streaming hair and upturned eyes, and countenances abandoned to the more becoming forms of grief, that is irresistible to a woman; why, it is not easy to say. Her own temperament is usually more morbid than a man's, but the tendency is quite the same, if not even more pronounced, in the healthiest, happiest specimen of womanhood, as in any other. It may be that grief, being the easiest and commonest of the depicted emotions, is the most quickly and permanently retained as an art idea. It may be, too, that if, as the philosophers tell us, there is a distinct psychological pleasure in sorrow, women, sorrowing more, have grown to an unconscious appreciation of this paradoxical enjoyment, and instinctively recognise it upon canvas. Whatever the cause, the effect is rather lugubrious, especially when, as of late, it has taken the form of transparencies, and one cannot even look out of the window without encountering the appealing gaze of some disconsolate dishevelled damsel known to history or tradition. Let us draw the line at transparencies.

I DO NOT find myself regretting the last rose of summer half so much as another adjunct of that halcyon season, much less ornamental and not useful at all. I mean the hand-organ man. By the time the first maple yellows, the hand-organ man is evincing a decided preference for the sunny side of the street, the first autumn chill communicates a deadly bronchial difficulty to his only visible means of support; and through a whirling vista of November leaves, we catch a final glimpse of his demoralised figure mutely disappearing, to gladden our eyes and our ears no more till springtime. What becomes of him during the winter has never, I believe, been satisfactorily ascertained. It has yet to be proven that any organ-grinder has ever permitted himself a more lucrative and less anathematised occupation. You never recognise him in the street-car driver, or the hotel porter, or the man who shovels off the sidewalks. His familiar presence never rehabilitates itself. It never even dehabilitates itself and comes around to the back door soliciting old clothes. It is absolutely and utterly gone. I think he follows the sun. Or he hibernates. Or he goes to gaol.

While yet he tarries with us, however, the hand-organ man is the object of a great deal of unjust animadversion. He affords, nevertheless, a beautiful example of the enforced rights of the minority. Did the majority approve him, the hand-organing profession would be like the rest—overcrowded. But he lives and moves and grinds and has his being upon the unfrequent coppers and the scanty tolerance of the few. Long ago, the orthodox and well-regulated and musical part of the community voted him a nuisance and a bore; it is hard to justify a predilection for him. One cannot arouse compassion toward him on the common ground. There is no starving wife and family in the pathetic rear. A hand-organ man is always a bachelor of his art, and supports nobody, I am convinced, but himself and his monkey. But I prize him as one of the few picturesque incidents in our over-practical civilisation. There is nothing idyllic about the organ-grinder, but there is about the idea which he embodies. How soon, I wonder, shall we have a municipal enactment forbidding the purveying of popular airs unless expressly contracted for? Then he is about the only son of *la belle Italie* whom one may regard with trustful sentiment without being startled by a broad Cork brogue from its object, in this age of misrepresentation. And his humility is so genuine—he knows so well what the majority think of him! And his philosophy so unfailing, and his *répertoire* so deliciously adapted to all tastes, and his pertinacity so calm, and his hypocrisy so unruffled! I should like to get his views of life from a hand-organ man! After all, moreover, if he is only far enough down the street, and there are a good many breezes about, the discord for which he expects to be remunerated in legal tender is not so bad. I daresay we should be dissatisfied with the pipings of Pan himself in this hypercritical day, unless Mapleson exploited him, and we had to pay that extortioner two dollars a seat for the privilege of hearing Nature's classicist. For me, I always open the shutters that the strident strains of this modern satyr may float in, bringing with them a magical picture of a sleepy old Southern city, upon whose narrow banquettes these peripatetic musicians sun themselves all the day; a city where the gentle atmosphere hushes and softens the crudest discord, where the fragrance of the sweet olive is a continual benediction, and orange blossoms drop the year round; where nickels abound, and merry groups do congregate, the Paradise of organ-grinders—the dear, impoverished, fascinating old city of New Orleans.

"AND probably General Badeau touches the very heart of the matter—the vital difference between English and American things—when he says that though with us some people may look down upon their fellows, their fellows (who feel that they are only the other fellows) do not look up. As long as this is the fact, we are safe; and till a thoroughly stupid millionaire can inspire social reverence, or anything but a more or less jocular curiosity, in most Americans, we can still hold up our heads."

Mr. Howells is commenting upon General Badeau's "Aristocracy in England." It is the old charge of the demoralising influence of caste; and one might note it without any comment, except a sigh for the tedium of the thing, but for the complacent little chuckle at the end. Mr. Howells is no Pharisee. He is not thanking the Lord, in his interesting periods, that the Americans are not as other men, or even as these Englishmen. He is doubtless stating what he is convinced is the truth about the people of the United States, in order to give force and effect to the truth about the people of England. It has frequently been attested, however, that democratic theory and democratic practice are apt to be irretrievably confounded in the best regulated democratic mind; and it seems to me that Mr. Howells may have lived so long in an atmosphere of liberty, equality, and fraternity as to absorb an extravagant idea of its beneficial effect upon social growth. True, there are no technical aristocrats in the United States. An intense dislike to anything representing social fungi appears