

# Literature Music Art

## WITH THE PHILOSOPHERS

### Montesquieu

All students of political economy should read the writings of Montesquieu, indeed, their knowledge of this science would be far from complete without a degree of familiarity with this famous philosopher to whom modern democracies owe so much that is good in their governments. In America when the new nation was in the process of evolution, Montesquieu's "Spirit of the Laws" was the political guide book. But though this last-named book was his greatest work and the author has been compared favorably with those ancient law-givers, Moses and Solon, his "Persian Letters" is a masterpiece of versatile and witty philosophy, and will be found delightful reading even today, and by those of a far from scientific turn of mind. In them Montesquieu touches upon subjects old, but ever new in their never-failing interest.

For instance, some of us who have been following the progress or the retrogression (however we may class it) of woman suffrage will read with amusement the following, supposed to be written by the correspondent at Paris to his friend in Smyrna. Even in these modern times the opinion of this moralist and political economist ring true and convincing.

"Whether it is better to deprive women of their liberty or to permit it them, is a great question among men; it appears to me that there are good reasons for and against this practice. If the Europeans urge that there is a want of generosity in rendering those persons miserable whom we love, our Asiatics answer that it is meanness in men to renounce the empire which nature has given them over women. If they are told that a great number of women, shut up, are troublesome, they reply that ten women in subjection are less troublesome than one who is refractory.

Another question among the learned is, whether the law of nature subjects the women to the men. No, said a gallant philosopher to me the other day, nature never dictated such a law. The empire we have over them is real tyranny, which they only suffer us to assume because they have more good nature than we, and in consequence more humanity and reason. These advantages, which ought to have given them the superiority had we acted reasonably, have made them lose it because we have not the same advantages. But it is true that the power we have over women is only tyrannical, it is no less so that they have over us a natural empire—that of beauty—which nothing can resist. Our power extends not to all countries; but that of beauty is universal. Wherefore then do we hear of this privilege? Is it because we are the strongest? But this is really unjust. We employ every kind of means to reduce their spirits. Their abilities would be equal with ours, if their education was the same. Let us examine them in those talents which education has not enfeebled, and we shall see if ours are as great. It must be acknowledged, though it is contrary to our custom, that among the most polite people the women have always had the authority over their husbands; it was established among the Egyptians in honor of Isis, and among the Babylonians in honor of Semiramis. It is said of the Romans that they commanded all nations, but obeyed their wives. I say nothing of the Sauromates, who were in perfect slavery to the sex; they were too barbarous to be brought for an example. Thous seest, my dear Ibben, that I have contracted the fashion of this country, where they are fond of defending extraordinary opinions, and reducing everything to a paradox. The prophet has determined the question, and settled the rights of each sex; the women, says he, must honor their husbands, and the men their wives; but the husbands are allowed one degree of honor more."

He writes as follows in regard to the beauty of the women of the seraglio or harems, deploring the confinement which narrows their lives, and dulls their intellects.

"The women of Persia are finer than those of France, but those of this country are prettier. It is difficult not to love the first, and not to be pleased with the latter; the one are more delicate and modest, and the others more gay and airy. What is Persia renders the blood so pure is the regular life the women observe; they neither game nor sit up late, they drink no wine, and do not expose themselves to the open air. It must be allowed that the seraglio is better adapted for health than for pleasure; it is a dull, uniform kind of life, where everything turns upon subjection and duty; their very pleasures are grave, and their pastimes solemn, and they seldom taste them, but as so many tokens of authority and dependence."

## ON RELIGION

### From the "Spirit of Laws"

The different religions of the world do not give to those who profess them equal motives of attachment; this depends greatly on the manner in which they agree with the turn of thought and perceptions of mankind. We are extremely indited to idolatry, and yet have no great inclination for the religion of idolaters; we are not very fond of spiritual ideas, and yet are most attached to those religions which teach us to adore a spiritual being. This proceeds from the satisfaction we find in ourselves as having been so intelligent

as to choose a religion which raises the Deity from that baseness in which he had been placed by others. We look upon idolatry as the religion of an ignorant people; and the religion which has a spiritual being for its object as that of the most enlightened nations. When with a doctrine that gives us the idea of a spiritual supreme being, we can still join those of a sensible nature, and admit them into our worship, we contract a greater attachment to religion; because those motives which we have just mentioned are added to our natural inclinations for the objects of sense. Thus the Catholics, who have more of this kind of worship than the Protestants, are more attached to their religion than the Protestants are to theirs, and more zealous for its propagation.

## THE NEW FASHIONS AND THE OLD

It is not so long ago that the very word "vulgar" was eschewed by members of refined society. The very fact that a thing was vulgar or possessed characteristics which might be thus qualified was sufficient to know the discussion of the subject at all. In the light of a past fashion it is remarkable to note what a member of everyday happenings may be classed under this opprobrious epithet now. Far from hesitating to use the word, we find it is the only one we can employ to describe a larger majority of the novels written, a large majority of the plays staged, an overpoweringly large majority of modern songs, and dare we say it—most of the costumes that fashion dictates as the proper apparel for womanhood.

As long, however, as we members of the white race are quite convinced of our superiority over all other peoples, it will probably afford us a little amusement anyway to read the following from an article by Mr. Harold Begbie, and, if we do not agree with the author, we can deplore his lack of taste and old-fashionedness, and congratulate ourselves on our own modernity.

"Perhaps the day may come when the problem of vulgarity will seriously engage the philosophers of Europe, and the significant absence of this displeasing characteristic in the East attract the general notice of mankind," he writes. "Bad manners and ugly treatment may strike the severe moralist as trivial offences, but I will challenge him to set up in church or chapel a painted window of an angel in a hobble-skirt or a saint shouldering his way with Rooseveltian strenuosity through a crowd of pushful cherubim, all of them armed with the conquering big stick of self-assertion."

### Vulgarity no Small Matter

"No, vulgarity is not a small matter. It is the total expression of a soul's quality, and certainly it is one of the most disfiguring defects of civilization. A sinner may be lovable; a cad never. Vulgarity is the sham and brummagem of human nature, something unreal to the gods, and hateful to the refined. And the more civilization advances, the more affected, pretentious, unreal, and insincere become the sophisticated nations of mankind."

"Never once, north or south, east or west, in city or village, from Bombay to Madras, and from Tutoicrin to Simla, never once have I detected the very smallest smirch of vulgarity either in manners or in dress."

### A Nobility of Manner

"That dreadful and aggressive vulgarity which everywhere distresses the traveler in England is nowhere to be discovered in India. Such things as the brutality of a mob's Bank Holiday, the snobbishness and arrogance of middle-class plutocracy, the horseplay and rowdyism of university students, the shouting and screaming absurdities of fashion—these things are foreign to India. You may meet a man who believes in thirty million gods, and is convinced that the world is flat, and who considers himself polluted by the very shadow of a European; but he will have charm of manner, and make a picture either in the unhandled jungle or on the platform of a railway terminus. You may see a woman who can neither read nor write, who offers food to idols, and believes that her god or devil rides round the village at night on a plaster horse or a mud elephant; but she will be modest and gracious in her manner, and her dress will be as beautiful as the flowers of the field or the marbles of the Pearl Mosque. It does not matter how savage and heathen, how immoral and base, how ignorant and stupid—these races of India, every one of them, have a nobility in their manner and a loveliness in their raiment."

### The People at Home

"Many a time on my journey I have compared them with people at home. Outside a theatre or a chapel, what flaming hats and blazing blouses hurt the gaze! In an hotel or railway station, what ill-manners and odious pretentiousness wound the mind! A man in England may know more than Newton, and have the courtesy of a sty; a woman may worship the one true God and wear a hat that darkens the rainbow. Indeed, vulgarity would seem to be the product of civilization; for in the outlying hamlets of England you will find a seamliness in costume and a graciousness of manner which are only of rare occurrence in the beautiful streets of Oxford or in the glittering drawing-rooms of London. And in India, among the millions of uncivilized heathen, many of them frightfully immoral, and nearly all of them utterly and

almost sublimely ignorant, you will never find affection or rowdyism, and never encounter hideousness or absurdity in dress.

### The Charm of the Women

"Far away in the Himalayas I have seen women from Tibet bending under loads of granite corded to their backs, who greeted the traveler with a most charming smile, and delighted him with the beauty of their faded dress. On mountain paths, miles from railway and civilization, I have met men from Cashmere, stumbling 12 to 14 feet long, who have backed to the edge of the precipice and saluted with a most pleasing gracefulness to the traveler, who drew a pleasure from the concordant colors of their tattered rags. The woman with an ornament like a padlock in her nose, with bangles like curtain-rings on her ankles, and with silver rings on her dusty toes, will charm you with the blue and gold, the red and yellow, the purple and grey, or the brown and green of her old and tarnished garments; while in the carriage of her head and the proud movement of her arms you will be conscious of a natural dignity such as ennobles the human race, and such as you will seldom remark in the factory girl or the Mormon ladies of our smart society. It is curious, and worth reflection, that the Eurasian man or woman is very often overbearing in manner and discordant in costume. The native, however ignorant or base, however ugly and forbidding, is always agreeable in manner and picturesque in appearance."

### What is Asian Charm?

"I have asked myself a score of times, and without getting any sufficing answer from the gods, what is the nature of this Asian charm, and what is the cause of European vulgarity. Why should the London housemaid be less pleasing than the Burmese village maiden, or the undergraduate of Glasgow practice a more uncouth behaviour than the sweeper of a Dak bungalow? At times I have thought that the difference lies in the opposing attitudes of the two peoples towards existence; that whereas England is fresh and buoyant and coltish with conquering Optimism, India is old and quiet and composed in a resigned and immemorial Pessimism. As children are noisy and riotous and careless, so are the people of a democratic and awakened England; and as old men are subdued and gentle and wishful, so are the people of an aristocratic and long-disillusioned India. But this solution is not sufficient."

### Materialism and Spirituality

"Is the difference between East and West the difference between Materialism and Spirituality? Is it the Materialism of Europe that is the strenuous father of vulgarity, and the Spirituality of the East that is the gentle mother of her graciousness? Indians believe, however wrongly and heathenishly, in the Invisible; they are more certain of the untouchable spirit world than of the tangible material world, they are constantly on their knees, their thoughts are constantly lifted up to the heavens, they are constantly receptive to the influences of beings higher, or, at any rate, mightier, than themselves. It would seem that any faith—however ridiculous, even however sensual and vile—bestows a certain grace on the believer, a grace which manifests itself in charm of manner, dignity of bearing, and perfect taste in the matter of raiment. Whereas no faith at all, however intellectually strong and morally superior to the unbeliever, is apt to make for hardness of manner, brutality of conduct and a most disordering style of costume."

## TOPICS OF THE HOUR

"And by her gait the goddess stood revealed." So says the old ignoble translation of a beautiful line in Virgil, and even the translation expresses something of the magnificence of a stately woman's walk. No doubt it is rare. Goddesses, and even queens, are not many in this imperfect world. It is not without reason that the poets are more often praising the lightness and dainty grace of a woman's gait than its stateliness or dignity. Still, we had dared to assume that in this age of physical culture and games women, and men too, had some ease and comeliness in their movements.

But it is dangerous nowadays to feel complacent about anything. Someone or other is sure to take swift occasion to announce that the world is evil as a whole, and particularly vicious in the very point which you had selected as a source of humble satisfaction. So here is Mr. Cecil Sharp announcing that "our pastimes of today have produced a slouching gait, and the majority of young people have lost all sense of beauty in their bearing." Whereof you are desired to believe no more than you find agreeable.

For a little consideration and a little examination will make this lament sound hollow. Whether the gait of the majority is more slouching now than it was a century or three centuries ago must be in the main matter of speculation. We lack evidence. For the usual sources of information—pictures and books—here fail us. But there are hints to be found in the conditions of today. Where do you find the most slouching gait? Probably no one would deny that the agricultural laborer has that distinction. Small blame to him. Plodding over plow-land in heavy and bad boots does not encourage a graceful walk. Exposure to all sorts and kinds of weather does not make for easy, lissom limbs. But all these condi-

tions were the same in the brave days of old. In fine, the most slouching gait is found in the class which has changed its habits of life least. We may therefore very well doubt whether the England of Queen Bess or Farmer George was one whit more graceful than the England of 1911.

Not that anyone would pretend to think the bearing and gait of our "street-bred people" all that could be desired. There is plenty of slouching and shuffling to offend the eye. But the worst of it—you need but walk through the meaner streets of any town to make sure—the worst of it is perpetrated by the people of worst physique. The evil comes not of pastimes, but of the lack of pastimes. The boys and girls who are healthy, who have the vigor to play games, are well enough. It is the poor, anaemic drudges, the loafers who offend the eye. After all, grace is chiefly a matter of health and strength, and as we have good reason to believe that health was never so common as in this age, we need not believe that our ancestors managed to exist more beautifully.

Why do we punish children? To hear some of our modern sentimentalists you might imagine it was through sheer joy in brutality or stupidity even worse than brutality, the simple fact that a child and even an adult offender, may grow wise enough to give thanks for punishment having escaped their observation. Mrs. Barnett has recently defined the objects of punishment in two sentences worth volumes of windy sentimentalism on the question: "Sorrow for having done wrong and a determination not to do wrong again." In happy families, as she points out, the fear of "making mother sad" will serve for a vast deal of punishment. But for the families numbered by hundreds in schools and institutions she has a very interesting suggestion: "The children should be allowed to select their own punishment, and act as their own judges. Teachers are to declare the moral code, but 'the discovery of wrongdoing and the punishment of the delinquent' are to be entrusted to the children."

This is said to have been successful in the United States. But as to how it would work in detail we profess ignorance. Probably it sounds much more of an innovation than it is. After all, the discipline of a healthy public school depends not so much on the masters as the boys. What the feeling of the boys will pass as decent behavior is much more potent than any thunderbolts from above. But between this moral suasion, however purely physical some of its methods may be, and the public punishment of a bully or a cheat by his fellows there seems to be a great gulf.

## THE ART OF WILD GARDENING

The cult of wild gardening is apt to run into the same kind of excesses as the pursuit of the simple life. In a recreation against the complexities of civilization, the devotees of simple living soon find themselves upon the confines of savage discomfort; and in the same way the substitution of wild plants for cultivated species in a garden may easily make the garden look poverty-stricken, but cannot make it natural. A garden, rightly regarded, is an extension of the civilized comfort of the house over a certain area of surrounding soil. Only the very simplest livers attempt to go back to nature so thoroughly as to dispense with such elementary appliances of civilization as clothing to shield them from the weather and a roof of some sort over their heads at night. It is as paradoxical to treat gardens as unredeemed areas of the wilderness as it would be to live under a hut of branches and subsist exclusively on roots and berries. The object of a flower garden is to provide us with beautiful plants which will not grow untended in our climate, just as a kitchen garden is meant to supply us with ampler and more satisfying fare than our native blackberries and acorns. It is beside the point to say that nature is more beautiful than art, and that wild flowers are more attractive than any of the artificial creations of the nurseryman. Nature and horticulture have each a place of their own, where they can be enjoyed without interfering in the least with each other's claims. The taste which cannot admire the polyanthus in the March garden, as well as the wild primrose in the lanes and copses, is not more cultivated for this exclusiveness of taste, but merely narrower. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon! and whether we admire most the wild sweetness of the dog rose or the maturer splendor of many of its garden derivatives, there is no reason to deny to either of them its own place and charm. But the note of a garden is as essentially one of cultivation and tendance as nature is spontaneous and wild; and it is as much a mistake to introduce wild flowers among mown lawns and cultivated beds as it would be to mingle the Gloire de Dijon with the white convolvulus of the summer hedgegrow, or heliotrope with the scabious on autumn hills.

Wild gardening finds its true place in the outer fringes of the garden, where art meets nature. Most well-grown gardens have some belt of trees or shrubbery forming a kind of debateable ground between the carefully tended area within and the fields outside. Here wild gardening is legitimately at home; for it need not strain, with almost inevitable failure, to intimate unschooled nature in artificial surroundings, but can devise many beautiful ef-

fects in which art and nature merge into each other. In large gardens, ground suitable for wild gardening is often not confined to the outskirts. There are tracts of rough lawn and trees, deviding the more carefully tended parts of the garden, which give space for the same effects without trenching on the cultivated domain. At this time of year typical effects of skillful wild gardening in such a piece of ground can be seen in the intermingling of almond blossom with the flowers of the black-thorn and sallow, and of wild primroses and anemones with garden daffodils and squills. In autumn the same kind of combination is produced by the red Virginian creeper and the white seed-plumes of the wild clematis intertwining on the same stump or rough arch. Many plants of simple and natural growth which are not wild in this country are particularly suitable for this form of wild gardening, and often show to better advantage than in tended beds.—London Times.

## MUSICAL NOTES

### Ambitious Mr. Hammerstein

Like another Columbus, Mr. Oscar Hammerstein has been on a voyage of discovery. And he is now rubbing his hands and whistling cheerful little tunes in satisfaction with the result. In November he is going to open the "finest opera house in the world"—address, Kingsway, London—and under his banner therein will appear "twenty-two of the greatest singers in the world." Who are these stars of the operatic firmament? Mr. Hammerstein declines to tell. But that the plucky American impresario is in deadly earnest there can be no a tittle of doubt. Listen to this: "I have," he told a New York interviewer, "completed my French ensemble. I have all the Italian singers that I expect to need, save three or four, and I am daily expecting to hear that they have signed with me. I also have under contract several noted Spanish singers, and may engage more. I discovered all these people for myself. When I was searching for my singers I made up my mind that not one person would get a contract out of me who had ever sung in Covent Garden, or anywhere in London. Not one of my 22 has been guilty of this offence. Yet they are, in my opinion, the world's greatest singers. Every one is a star, and everyone is my own discovery." All which will undoubtedly pique curiosity.

Mr. Hammerstein grew quite facetious at the idea that London knew nothing of his workings in the dark, and believed him powerless to carry out his big and ambitious project. "London said I could not get ground for an opera house. I went out one night with a crowbar and a dark lantern, and when I got back I had the ground I wanted. Then they said I would not build. But I broke ground and am building now. We will be working on the roof of my London house by May 1. Then they thought the failure of the Beecham opera enterprise would discourage me. How little they know me! But now they are beginning to take me seriously. My private mail shows me that they are getting a little nervous about me. They have bought up all my old singers. But they are welcome to them. I could have had most of them long ago had I wished." The manager added that he had twelve new operas up his sleeve, and was having ten operas "painted" in Paris and ten in New York, all for use in London.

"Instructive as well as amusing is Mr. Hammerstein's description of his methods of work. One pictures him in a palatial office, with three private secretaries, a small army of typewriters, 50 telephones, and a regiment of messenger boys. Not a bit of it. For here you have the Manhattan's ex-manager's own evidence on the subject. "I do it all alone," he says. "I sit here in this little caboose of mine and smoke my cigar and think of things. When I think that a thing is good I go out and do it. I haven't got a telephone, and haven't got a typewriter." (Think of it, ye strenuous ones of the twentieth century!) "I have no secretary and no clerk. I have agents in every part of Europe, though, and each one of them is on the end of a cable line, and there is not a day that I do not I do not send from 20 to 30 despatches out. I don't call a messenger. I just put on my hat and walk across to the Hotel Knickerbocker and send my own cable. Then I come back and think some more. And all the while people pass and see me at a desk puffing at a cigar and apparently doing nothing." As Major Bagstock would have said, "Devilish sly."

## THE YOUNG IDEA

In a certain school in the south of Ireland a schoolboy of tender years is said to have produced the following essay on the camel: "The cannibal is a sheep of the desert. It is called a backteria because it has a hump on its back. The cannibal is very patient, and will lie down and die without a groan, but when it is angry it gets its back up, which is called tanking the hump. The shepherds of cannibals is called Arabs. When the cannibal goes on a journey it drinks as much as it can to last for many days. Such animals are called acquiducks. Those that cannot carry enough are called inebrates."