

dawn; yet for the artist it is better to serve in such a heaven than reign over any hell of realism or sentimentality; it is better that one son of the morning shall see your foot-prints in the dew, before the sun has scorched them away, and note that in measure of your feeble strength you also climbed, than that you shall be numbered for ever with those content to herd the valley sheep.

Such was the nature of my endeavour, and while the body of professional critics condemned and echoed a public aversion, there remained the kindred spirits, for whose sake, and my own, I am glad to have fulfilled this task.

While granting the justice of many strictures levelled against my work; while confessing that too often have I been broken on my medium, as Ixion on the wheel; yet there is one general charge I would question. It has been brought against me repeatedly, in lectures and reviews, that I make my scenery as important as the people who move through it, and often delay action for the purpose of describing the theatre of action. But there are no canons upon such a contention, and I submit that the artist, not the critic, must determine the relative perspective of place and people. If I deem a forest or river, a wild space, a hill-top, or the changing apparitions of inanimate nature as vital as the adventures of men and women, and as much a part of the material which I handle, then to these things must be apportioned the significance I desire for them. If I choose to make a river a protagonist, or lift a forest, in its unknowable attributes, into a presence more portentous than the human beings who move within it, none has the right to deny me. That far greater artists have not seen fit to take this course is not to condemn it; at any rate, during my own brief journey through the thorny paths of art, I have found that the "landscape with figures" lies as much within my range as it does within that of the painter. A few understand this, but many resent it and express their resentment without courtesy.

To me, then, the phenomena of man's environment are as interesting as man himself; I can conceive possible fiction enriched with a far closer understanding of unconscious life than we have yet attained; when our intellect shall gauge the brain of the tiger and penetrate the bark of the tree, so that the artist may look out of the brute's eyes and from the tree's leaves, not with human values—a thing