

unlucky lad's own father, Mr. Beresford Gavney. Unlucky? No, that is not the word. He is a child of Water as well as of Earth. Any one who has loved both these elements will confess that Tristram, despite many untoward circumstances, lived well if he did not live long. Earth was good to him, Water was good to him, men and women were good to him. Only business, and the inhuman creatures of convention were against him; and the whole of London had to be invoked to ruin—after the manner in which Richard Feverel was ruined—a young man born to play the knight. The writer, who wore last autumn the mask of a most fascinating lady, wears this year the disguise of the manliest of men, George Meredith. Often his voice is hardly to be distinguished from the original, as in the elaborate reflections—in the frequent use of the word "One" ("One sees, One fancies")—when he speaks in the character of "The Sage," who is dragged in as George Meredith drags in a man who keeps diaries, to talk like an oracular chorus—as in the unsuccessful character of Lady Petwyn, who represents mere violence, without the strength which that firm hand would have given her. There are odd colloquialisms here and there. People are "in the hopes of," or they "start to," or they are "relenting the hard silence," or they are "very abashed," or "too eaten up with greed." And there are stranger things than these.

The childhood of Tristram is described with microscopic perfection. He and his sister Marcia stand entirely by themselves; there are no other children like them, none with whom to compare them. To this part of the book the reader returns again and again—it casts a spell over memory. The change we all know and deplore follows. The children turn into boy and girl. The wonder of them is gone; they act as other boys and girls have acted. Marcia indeed almost disappears, and henceforth, although there are women enough and to spare, the book lacks a heroine. After ten blissful chapters "Auntie Dorrie," whom we see with the children's eyes and love with the children's love, is doomed to die in a foreign land, and we are left inconsolable for her loss. "Nan-nan," who is of the