

they have absorbed the spirit of the dead and still retain with all its ecstasy of love some odour likewise of the grave, the coffin and the dust wherein they lay a time upon a pallid breast. Others who read them think that when the spirit parted from the clay, she took these lines with her to heaven to be revised by angels and dowered with perennial immortality by the warm breath of gods. But this is only fancy. On her death the poet strove to voice his grief in those sonnets of the Book of Life—sonnets which sometimes seem to sweat a sweat of blood, which glow and palpitate and tremble with the very ecstasy of music and blush and thrill like things of flesh and blood. The lines are dripping with tears and damp with vermillion drops.

His soul remembers yet  
The sunless hours that pass it by  
And still he hears the Night's disconsolate cry  
And feels the branches wringing wet  
Cast on his brow that may not once forget  
Dumb tears from the blind sky.

The dew of death was on his brow some years before he died, and the relentless grip of an insidious disease drove him for peace to poison. Through the clouds of chloral and mists of tears the splendid soul shone like a star, and even as the microbe ate away the ropes of dust that bound the spirit and the flesh, his eyes forever open sought the light that fadeth not forever. Through the long hours of the night when pain denied him sleep he paced with restless step his studio and watched the first faint streaks of dawn fall on the picture that he loved.

Look in my face—my name is Might-Have-Been.  
I am also called—No More—Too Late—Farewell.  
Up to thine ear I hold the dead sea shell."

There is no biography but autobiography, no revelation but self-revelation. Where shall we seek the character of an author? We must seek for it in his writings. The spirit of the author broods over his creations. His presence is visible between the lines. We hear his heart-beats in its melodies. Through the flame-lit aisles of the Inferno stalks the majestic figure of Dante. Milton walks in the Garden of Eden, and Homer dogs the footsteps of Achilles. Behind the fantastic figures which revel in the midnight saturnalia of Walpurgis we see the sphinx-like countenance of Goethe. The sunset falls on Scottish hills and from a lonely cottage on the heather the face of Burns looks up and smiles forever. The skylark soars and Shelley sings. The raven sits on every bust of Pallas and the voice of Poe forever echoes in the ringing and the rolling and the tolling of the bells. The dark clouds brood above the heights of Sinai and the thunderings and the lightnings of some immortal wrath stir the spirit of Isaiah to prophesy. The blessed Damozel leans out of heaven, her lily-white hands are on the golden bars, and her eyes look softly downwards

Like waters hushed at even,  
and that white soul which gazes ever upwards, straining against the prison bars of clay in the dim ecstasy of breathless expectation and the vague wonder of divinest discontent—that is Rossetti.

E. F. Cross.

### Parisian Affairs.

THE death of Prince Lobanoff leaves Russia with one great diplomatist less. Not that his demise was a surprise to those who encountered him at Vichy, whose waters did him much good. No assurance office would ever accept his life. He had a very complicated heart affection. Some years ago he entered as inmate of a private hospital in Paris, and was operated upon for the stone; this disease recently reappeared, and necessitated drinking the severe water of Contrexéville. These ailments and his advanced age explain his sudden death. He was the type-diplomatist of the modern, the scientific school. He advocated peace, like every person of common sense; he proclaimed the unity of the six powers, so long as it did not interfere with his combinations; he reaped the lion's share of the Franco-Russian alliance, and by his energy, tact, foresight and dogged pursuing of definite ends, ever succeeded in grasping the skirts of happy chance. His successor will have a difficult inheritance to administer, since England is clearly adopting the general diplomatic lines of canny and staying Russia. She will nap

no more, and will only take a sixth interest in the syndicate of powers to redress human wrong. There was a time when she and France went singly in quest of the Holy Grail. But where are the snows of Antan?

At first the death of the prince gave a scare to the French, as they expected the visit of their Russian majesties might be postponed. The Czar soon gave the order, "Let the ball proceed," for ministers, like sovereigns, have successors. The event may curtail by a day or two the sojourn of the imperial visitors in the capital, but the end will be attained—the Czar and Czarina will make their bow to Parisians. As for the Franco-Russian alliance, be that gold or gilding, it has had an important influence on the home tranquillization of France, a result generally overlooked. In the population of 38 millions not a single inhabitant would be found to cry, "Vive la Poloque, Monsieur!" But the age of the Floquets is past, and which at best was largely wind-bagism. How the alliance will stand a period of storm and stress, the future alone can respond.

It is a good moment to take stock of the European situation, as some changes must ensue when a great actor quits the stage. Two events are taking place that merit attention; the affectionate effusions between the Austrian and Russian Kaisers, and the betterment of amicable relations between France and England. Albion is ceasing to be *perfidie*, despite that railway king, "Sir" Kitchener. These are the relics of Prince Lobanoff's policy—the isolation of Germany. Circumstances are not wholly unfavourable to the programme, because it aims to smash the triple alliance, and honey catches more flies than vinegar. Austria cajoled, and Montenegro embracing Italy; England in her "splendid isolation" enjoying the staging, these are signs of the times. But Germany has two trump cards; she has one eye upon the Germanized, or eastern, provinces—and the richest, of Russia; and the other upon the absorption of the Austro-Germans, when the Austro-Hungarian mosaic monarchy disintegrates, and prophesied to be coeval with the death of Francis-Joseph. Italy has a pound of flesh to cut out of Austria into the bargain.

Bismarck's policy consisted in setting all the powers at each other and calmly enjoying the diplomatic cockpit. That is now over; the combatants have discovered the trick and are practising it against the originator. Germany must ever keep her hand upon the hilt of her sword out of prudence for France, just as Westerners do when propagating civilization among Orientals; she has to keep a vigilant eye on Bavaria, which is afflicted with "particularism," and would not object to be wooed and won by Austria. The latter, backed by Germany, has to maintain 70,000 splendid cavalry to guard the Balkans against the Cossacks. Russia might offer Salonica to Austria in exchange for her passing Constantinople and some of the Balkan territory to the Muscovite. But Germany, Italy and Britain might ask, "Where do we come in?" Even the change might be too much for France to swallow.

The death of Francis-Joseph—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; the departure of "The Shadow," for the Land of Shadows, the sickening rottenness of the Ottoman Empire, corruption tempered with massacre, may at any moment precipitate the continental cataclysm. The relations between Germany and England are anything but cordial, and every diplomatic incident involving the interests of England—the most recent of Zanzibar, sees the Germans banded in animosity against Britain. The French cannot be blamed for blowing the coals—nor ought the Teutons to become ruffled, if they receive Rolands for their Olivers. In fairly making war to the commercial seven-league-boots advance of Germany, and so rousing France and the United States to follow her lead, England has delivered a bitter blow to Fatherland. Her secrets of success are known, and being made known, and will be followed up. The Anglo-Franco industrial quarrel will be tried with Germany, hilt to hilt. Produce the kind of articles local markets demand; at the lowest prices; ship at best rates of freight; study how goods are made up, presented as it were to give an appetite to the eyes of buyers; be hail-fellow-well-met with the latter—such are almost the Ten Commandments for German commercial triumphs. In France several modest manufacturers of different articles unite to send out consignments under a competent commercial traveller; it would be well could some of themselves undertake the voyage; the master's