

ROUGE ET NOIR.

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A FANTASY.

[Suggested by a picture by Elihu Vedder.]

I.

In a land of twilight and dim shadows,
Lying alone, where no man wandereth ;
Between the gray sand dunes and salt sea meadows,
The pale shades meet some short space after death—
Gibber and flee along the wind-swept place,
Knowing no home—loth dwellers in cold space.

II.

Shadows that fail, and fade, and are no more,
Wailing a dirge like wild winds in the reeds,
Along some lonely, wave-washed, winter shore ;
Shrieking along the way that nowhere leads—
Swiftly they pass, and so are clean forgot,
Meeting but shades, that know each other not.

J. A. R.

ON CONDUCT AND MANNER.

CONCLUDING PAPER.

A few more words are all that need be said on the subject of behaviour in a slight sketch like the present. It may seem probable that very little can be done to teach manners to those who have grown to manhood and womanhood, but this is not altogether true. Certainly there are differences which can hardly ever be eradicated between those who have had the advantages of careful, early training and those who have missed it ; but there is much that may be done even for those who have had the most unfavourable social surroundings in youth, much may be corrected, even if we cannot entirely reform.

At least, this must be the case if what we have said of manners is true, that it is not a mere surface polish, or a mere veneering which hides the real material of which we are made. If it is more than this, if it is the outcome of what we are in ourselves, in mind, character, temper, then, just as the inward disposition may be transformed, so a transformation may be effected in the deportment of the outward man.

And it is with the inward part that we must begin. If we would be courteous, we must have the courteous

mind ; the thoughtfulness for others which bespeaks the unselfish man, the consideration for the interests, and the preferences, and the feelings of those who are about us, which shows that we are capable of self-forgetfulness and a genuine interest in others.

Then, along with this, a man's (and still more, if possible, a woman's manners) should be natural and unaffected. And unfortunately it is generally imagined that it is a very easy, simple thing to be natural, while the reverse of all this is much nearer the truth. Paradoxical as it may seem to one who considers the mere words apart from actual experience, most people are not natural. Children are natural, and old people are generally natural. But between these two extremities of human life only well-bred people are natural. Plenty of people are rough, and bluff, and off-handed, and this passes for nature with others ; and, no doubt, it is the nature, or the outcome of the nature we are thinking about ; but it is not the nature which we should like to be ours.

When we emerge from childhood we become self-conscious and constrained. Then comes a time when the spontaneousness of early youth is no longer quite satisfactory to ourselves, and still less is it acceptable to others. To some men, but not very many, and perhaps some women, it is given to be natural through life, but not to the majority. The average young man, for instance, is not natural ; he is either awkward or affected. He lacks simplicity, he is too conscious of himself. It is only when his awkwardness is clipped, and pruned, and affectation gets beaten out of him by an impatient world, or his own improved sense or taste discovers its absurdity, that he becomes, natural. A man leaves his first nature behind him with his childhood ; it is often a long time before he gains his second nature.

Again, in good behaviour there must be a certain regard for the customs of the society to which we belong. It is easy to rail against conventionality ; and if by conventionality be meant falseness, unreality, the mere parrot-like repetition of other people's words and ways, then let us have done with it as soon as possible. It is an evil and a pestilent thing. Yet it may be desirable to follow custom or even the fashion. And on this general question we are all agreed, although we may use different language in speaking about it. The most unceremonious man, the most flagrant violator of conventional propriety, will be as much offended as the most