



A Dream

With parted lips and wreathed head
Thou comest with the newly dead.
They, strange-eyed, pace the golden way;
Thy step is light, thine eyes are gay.

O pass and never speak to me;
Long since have I forgotten thee—
Long since, and it is better so;
O Love, ere I remember, go.

—Monica Peveril Turnbull.

THE little book, "A Short Day's Work," from which the above poem is taken, came into my hands by chance quite recently, though it was published in London in 1902, a year after the author's death. Monica Turnbull was an English girl, who lived a gracious English life, sheltered, rounded, and content among the green Derbyshire hills; happy in mother and father and the adored younger sister, in the friendly birds and animals for which she had so passionate a tenderness, in her deep sympathy with Nature. That was her life. She had "Duties enough and little cares, And now was quiet, now astir, Till God's hand beckoned un-awares." She and her sister both died within a few weeks of each other, from the effects of the same accident. Dorothea was twenty-one, Monica a year older.

From the critic's point of view, the trouble with the book is that no criticism is really possible. There is a preface, a reticent little biography, signed by initials that are surely those of her mother and father. And after reading that preface, it is as impossible to criticize the book as it is to criticize "Jackanapes," or "They." It simply becomes an assault upon the feelings. The very best of her verse has the delicate precision of black-and-white, a freshness, a wistfulness not unusual to gifted youth, as of a bird's voice singing in the rain. She had the gift of finality of description, and I cannot resist quoting "The Crown Imperial" to illustrate it. But after all it is better to let her songs speak for themselves. Her day's work was so very short she knew nothing of the burden and heat thereof; it is hard to foretell what development Time might have given her limited, exquisite, austere gift; yet I cannot help fancying that where she is gone, R. L. S. was very glad to see her.

The Crown Imperial

Golden from the imperial crown
Seven oval cups hang down.
All the dews of heaven fall
Upon the crown imperial.

Spirits of the undying spring,
Rise and show us of this thing;
Why, when daisies tilt the chin
Gazing Heaven's depths within,
Th' imperial flowers from their birth
Look upon the face of earth.

—Monica Peveril Turnbull.

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OUT on the bowling green, under the big oaks, the sprinkler is going all day long, and the robins sprawl and splatter in the wet grass with an abandon characteristic of the race. When they find a particularly choice little puddle they proclaim it joyfully, and the sparrows get envious. Anyone visiting Toronto for the first time could hardly—in the language of the guide books—fail to be struck with the lavish waste of water that goes on with our gardening, and our extreme economy thereof in the matter of horse-troughs and dog-troughs. The old-fashioned horse-troughs, with their miserable little dribble of water, are scarcely, in number and quality, adequate for a village one-quarter the size of Toronto; and except for a few humane folk may their tribe increase—who place water on their front lawns, no one seems to think of the most com-

mon charity to the dogs. There is scarcely a place, in half-a-dozen miles of baking asphalt, where the friend of man can get a drink on a hot summer day.

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MISS LUCIA—pronounce it Spanish fashion, if you please—is a dear. There are lots of dears in the world, but not many, in this part of it at least, of just her type of dearness. She is small and thin and delicate, and she dresses in soft greyish blue silk. Her indomitable spirit, her paradoxical power of unselfish self-assertion, her humour, have saved her from becoming an Auntie, though sometimes she deceives the unelect. She is very fond of animals; but she has lived in the city all her days, and does not know very much about them. It was in a moment of unusual expansiveness, following tea and buttered cakes, that she confessed that her ambition has always been to know a lot about horses.

Miss Lucia generally refers to any sort of horse as "it," just to be on the safe side. Yet, she says, she cannot let one pass without giving a knowing glance at its legs, just to impress the coachman. This worries her a great deal, and lies very heavily on her soul.

"I know," says little Miss Lucia, "that I am a miserable deceiver, my dear. The legs, I believe, are a very important part of a horse, and so are its feet; and so I look at them critically, not, I hope, for the pleasure of giving people a false impression, but just to make-believe to myself. I always feel very guilty after doing so, but such is my weakness that I have been known to derive a whole lot of guilty satisfaction by staring hard at what I think is called the off fore—though that sounds like golf—of a horse that was being exercised in the park, until the groom got down and looked at it himself. I felt quite proud after that. I would give anything in the world to be able to wear top-boots and spurs and tap them with a riding switch."

She looked upon us all sweetly, and the Lone Man tried to hide a grin in a two-inch tea-cup. But afterwards we heard him sigh, and saw him look at Miss Lucia very gently. He is old and wise, the Lone Man, and perhaps he was thinking of the lifetime of repression that lay behind the little lady's incongruous confession. "It is hard to see," he said suddenly, after a long silence, "what is to be done with the 'desires of our hearts' in any other existence than this one." And he said a lot more, beautifully, whimsically, tenderly, and people listened as they do when the Lone Man talks. But Miss Lucia set her mouth firmly, and I knew that in her devout mind she would not yield her top-boots and spurs for all the wings and haloed fires of all the principalities and powers of the Heavenly Kingdom.

It is a devastating picture she leaves one with. But I think the Lone Man would tell us that the Kingdom itself was once said to be of such as she.

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THIS is the story of the mare of Lutf Ali, as they used to tell it among the wandering horsemen of the plains.

Lutf Ali, the son of a driver of asses, a loader of firewood; upon his father's shoulders were the scars of the sticks of the running footmen who went before the carriages of the great, and upon his feet the scars of the stones. But Lutf Ali rode himself in the carriages, and his feet were shod with scented leather, and all fortune and all wealth were his, so that he had nothing left of which he might say, "I desire it." For he was a great vizier, and led the armies of the king.

One day he was watching his workmen dig a new canal in the garden of his summer palace, where the shadows of the sycamores lay black upon the white gravel, and the roses bloomed so late that men said the Spring wandered into the gardens of Lutf and fell asleep there. One of the workmen found a jar buried in the earth, and when Lutf opened the seal thereof, he found within a djinn, who in gratitude gave him a gift. Wise men say that the man who takes gifts from the djinn is as one who drinks wine from the cup of his enemy.

For the djinn took a flame of fire, the shadow

of a leaf that moved in the wind, a cloud of the sky, and the breath of the wind that blows from the snow. These he moulded with a little dust, and gave to Lutf Ali in gratitude for his release. And lo, the dust and the flame, the wind and the shadow were a red mare; she was fierce as the flame, tireless as the wind, quiet as the cloud in the sky. And this virtue also went with her. When the snows of Demavend were white in the moon and the bulbul called among the orchards of apricots, Lutf Ali had but to kiss the mare upon the white star of her forehead, and she became a dancing-girl, who danced like a leaf in the wind, was tameless as a shadow, swifter than a cloud, and fiercer than any fire. Such were the words of the djinn.

Wise men say that whosoever takes gifts from the djinn is as one who slays himself with a sword covered with roses.

Lutf Ali called his red mare Shah-Susana, and her fame was on the lips of men. When Lutf mounted her it was as if a red flame ran through his blood; and when she smelled the battle and screamed aloud, men were as slain with fear before the sword came.

"There is none so great as Lutf Ali," said they, "and the wrath of Allah is in the red mare."

Lutf Ali held the red mare more dear than all his possessions. At dawn he would go to her and lay his hand upon her head and say, "How is it with thee, O Golden Fire? How is it with thee, Shah-Susana?" And at evening he would give her sweet water with his own hands, and her corn was strewn with the petals of golden roses, and the fringes of her bridle were of gold.

But if Lutf Ali went to lay his lips upon the face of the mare, she bent her head and her wild eyes were softened with tears; so her master yielded to her will. He had a thousand fair dancing girls, but there was but one Shah-Susana.

Month by month Lutf Ali waxed greater and more great because of Shah-Susana. He led his armies to battle, and returned with slaves and hostages. He overthrew cities and laid before the king all the spoils of conquered people. And he grew hard of heart and proud.

Now the king made a great feast in the gardens of the royal city and Lutf Ali, the poor ass-driver's son, lay at his right hand, and the king would have Shah-Susana led before him by a golden bridle, and all the princes praised her.

Then the king spoke to Lutf. "We have heard, O my friend," said he, stroking his beard, "that there is still an enchantment upon the mare, so that at the touch of thy lips she would become a dancing-girl more lovely than a young cypress tree. But though there are many wonders hid in the hand of Allah, this is hard to believe."

Then the heart of Lutf Ali swelled with pride, and he bowed before the king. "Behold," he said, "the moon is full, and the orchards are in bloom along all the rivers of the land. Let my lord the king watch and believe. As the spirit said, so will I do."

When the red mare heard him she shook the grooms from her head and reared erect, and the fire of her eyes was like the fringe of a storm; when Lutf Ali laid his hand upon her she trembled and screamed aloud, and her cry was as the cry of the storm-wind in the passes, and the heart of the king was shaken. But Lutf Ali laughed the laugh of a boaster, and he kissed the mare upon her forehead. And she was no longer a red mare, but a girl who laughed in the face of the king, and danced like the shadow of a leaf with feet that were like flames of gold and beat the hearts of men into the dust.

In her beauty it was as if the years of our days were not, and the sun and the moon were one, and the princes paid no heed to dawn or evening nor noon, and the great vizier was deaf to the voices asking justice at his gates. They saw nought but the feet of the girl who danced in the gardens, cold as a swift cloud, fleet as the wind, and fierce as a burning fire.

Presently a great cry rose among the people, but none heard. And men brought word that the conquered cities were revolting, but none heard. And pestilence walked among the orchards even unto the walls of the king's home, but none heeded.

Then the enemies of the land gathered themselves together, their captains and their horsemen, and they came down upon the king's city and entered in and possessed it, and none warred with them. And they came to the king's gates and broke them down, and the princes and the king and Lutf Ali were slain as they fled.

And of Shah-Susana they heard no more than a cry that went past them on the wind. So says the old story. But there seems to be a moral in it somewhere.