

“Some take a text sublime and fraught with sense,
But quickly fall into impertinence.
On trifles eloquent with great delight
They flourish out on some strange mystic rite ;
But to subdue the passions, or direct,
And all life's moral duties, they neglect.
Most preachers err, except the wiser few,
Thinking established doctrines, therefore, true.
Others, too fond of novelty and schemes,
Amuse the world with airy, idle dreams.
Thus too much faith or too presuming wit
Are rocks where bigots or freethinkers split.
'Tis not enough that what you say is true,
To make us feel it *you* must feel it too.
Show yourself warm, and that will warmth impart
To every hearer's sympathising heart.”

Large-souled is an epithet for whose discovery the English language is indebted to George Eliot, and which, though applicable on occasions to men, is principally used to define a new species of the feminine character. Every portion of humanity has at different epochs of the world's history received its own especial deification—the body in time of the Greeks and Romans, the mind amongst the metaphysicians of the eighteenth century, and the heart in the romantic German school. The present fashion is to extol the soul, a kind of mystical combination of intellect, brain, heart, and sometimes even body, which constitutes a large-souled person. We have the affinities of the soul, the friendships of the soul, the passions of the soul, the longings of the soul. At the feast of reason the soul is served up in many various forms: it is introduced into the soup; it is minced up in the *entrées*; it is presented, whole and well flavoured, as a *pièce de résistance*; it is produced as a frothy compound of surfeity sweetness for dessert. The soul is like those mysterious essences affected by the sorcerers of old, which were compressed into the very smallest vial; but when once the cork was removed, they swelled and swelled until a good-sized room was insufficient to contain them. It is intangible and undefinable, and yet it is very real. Some people have so diminutive a portion of soul that it will scarcely suffice for the ordinary necessities of life; while others overflow with soul to such an extent that they must needs give out of their abundance to their poorer neighbours. The first are the grovelling ordinary members of society, the latter the large-souled creatures. Amongst the initiated there is much jargon used. For instance, American poets are apt to say, 'I care not for your face, the touch of your hand is nothing to me; but let me know your inner self, let me see your naked soul.'

The large-souled woman in her perfection has big melancholy questioning eyes that seem to read your most hidden thoughts ; she has a soft sad voice, and would have been christened in French romances the *femme incomprise*. She is that, but she is something more. Her soul is so large that, though it may have a few small pulsations for husband and children, it beats with a mighty throb of love for all mankind. The regeneration of the universe is her dream ; and in such grand thoughts she can afford to show a magnificent disregard for stitches in time, the purity of collars and cuffs, or the absence of hair-pins. She will lash herself into enthusiasm about the tragedies of life, the sufferings of other large-souled women, or the abominable tyranny of the laws of conventionality. The large-souled woman is a religion to herself. She is not tied down by doctrines of parsons ; her revelation is the desire of her soul, and her creed that right is might. She lays down the broad lines of good and evil as her soul inspires her, and dashes in the details with sweeping and eccentric splashes of colour. She is always on the look-out for congenial beings, and she is cosmopolitan in her tastes. They need not all be young, or pretty, or bright, or rich, or learned, but they *must* be large-souled. They must have no prejudices of caste, or nation, or rank, or religion, or taste. She is stanch and loyal to the friends of her choice, though occasionally strangely indifferent to the wishes and requirements of those who, by the harsh freak of Nature, are her relations, her dependents, or a portion of her daily environment. She does not mind originality, and will occasionally do startling things for the pleasure of seeing the public stare. She will drive in her carriage with a beggar in rags ; or ask queer unkempt men with long hair and dirty nails to dinner ; or seat black chiefs, flaring with diamonds and arrayed in a Joseph's coat of many colours, in the front of her opera-box ; or she will be seen at surgical lectures, or in the Jewish synagogue, or in a reformatory for fallen women ; or she will lecture at a working man's club, or adopt orphans picked from the gutter. She is never unwomanly, though doing all manner of things apparently likely to unsex her. She will explain that all her actions are intended for the culture of her soul. She must read passionate poetry. She must be surrounded by art and luxury to content the longings of her soul. She must taste the delights of love, or her soul will sicken and pine.

The soul appears to be a troublesome if unknown quantity : it is omnivorous and insatiable ; it has longings and burnings and yearnings and thirsts that must be quenched, and needs that must be satisfied, and droopings that must be raised, and troubles that must be comforted. And all these sensations and requirements are not lightly to be gratified ; only the initiated can understand them ; sometimes, it may be, a lifetime must elapse before the large-souled woman finds her element. Husbands, brothers, sisters, or parents constantly misinterpret and ignore her ; but she is secure, like the lady in Charles de Bernard's pretty story, that somewhere in some land her kindred soul is gazing upon the identical star on which she looks with the same unfulfilled yearning of the soul. Recondite psychological questions especially fill her mind ; the strange vagaries, '*où l'amour va se nicher*,' delight her leisure moments ; she is never happier than when reading or listening to some story of a soul that, casting off the trammels of etiquette and the bonds of ordinary law, shone

born him out long ago.

The remarkable French women of the eighteenth century, Madame Geoffrin, Madame Du Deffand, Ninon de Lenclos, were without prejudices, but they were also without sympathies. Excepting in their own particular sphere, they did not concern themselves much about the hopes and aspirations of others. The 'people' was the 'people,' nothing more. *Vox populi, vox Dei*, is purely an outcome of revolutionary principles. The large-souled woman is correct, in a measure. She takes a larger, a wider, a noble view of life and its duties. The great doctrine of universal brotherhood has its pythonesses, but their utterances, like those of the oracle at Delphi, are usually capable of several interpretations. Only so far as we sympathise can we understand. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. The large-souled woman rightly believes that sympathy is the great motive-power of civilisation. It is this conviction which produces men and women like Elizabeth Fry, John Howard, or Florence Nightingale. The most painstaking benevolence unaccompanied by sympathy will leave the criminal hard, the prodigal unreclaimed, the barbarian rude. But the large-souled woman forgets in her admiration for this universal sympathy that she is worshipping the power of doing, and not the deed. She has erected her soul, this thermometer of good works, into a fetish, and like all idols it has proved itself of clay. In her extreme culture of the soul, which is a *means*, the flowering of the redemption of humanity, which is the *end*, becomes forgotten. The large-souled woman is so full of herself, of her needs, of her eclecticism, of her ambitions, that the good of mankind, and especially the happiness of her own little belongings, are repeatedly ignored. She may be loved and lovable, clever and well-meaning; but she constantly defeats her own aims, and forces her friends to long, like Dr. Johnson, that the possession of a large soul were not only difficult, but impossible. Vices and virtues, when carried to excess, so closely resemble each other that a very little exaggeration will convert large hearts into narrow minds. It is this which causes the large-souled woman so often to appear, in the eyes of the world, when she is not mischievous, at least absurd.—*The World*.

A Discourse by the Rev. A. J. Bray at Zion Church, Montreal, October 13, 1878.

The civilised community the world over is divided into church-goers and non-church-goers. It would not be fair and just to say that the dividing line decides also between the religious and the irreligious, for that is quite a different thing. There are many men and women of profound piety who do not go to church; and there are those who attend church with great regularity whose piety, or even morals, no one would go bond for.

Church-goers are composed, speaking generally, of the more respectable portion of the community—that is, the middle class; for it is evident that as a rule the very poor and the very rich, the very ignorant and the very cultured, do not go to church at all. The church flourishes best in the temperate zone; at either pole her influence is not great. Why this is so I shall leave for more careful enquiry next Sunday night. To-night I want to analyse and classify the multitudes who go, and give what I apprehend is the reason or motive.

And first of all I would mark off those who go from mere curiosity. When I have been travelling in countries almost wholly Roman Catholic, I have gone to church on the Sunday invariably; and I have gone from no hunger of soul, from no desire for communion through the service, but just to hear the fine music and see the way in which things were done. And there are hosts of church-goers who are impelled by no other conscious motive. It is a cheap entertainment, costing as a rule the smallest coin the law of the realm will allow to be minted, and it need not cost even that. They can have a good cushioned seat, hear fairly good music, and a discourse of intellectual or rhetorical merit; they demand all those things—a good seat, not in the gallery, but downstairs where they can see well and hear well, and then they are willing to listen to good music and a good sermon. They are not very critical generally, the effort is too great for them; but after it is over they dash off a judgment in a masterful sort of way. They patronise the music, they patronise the minister, and when in gracious mood they will condescend to patronise Providence Himself. They never think of the infinite meaning that lies in the service; they never look for light to shine from the preacher's words; they never allow their reason to follow his reasoning, or their fancy to catch the fire of his imagination, or the heart to receive a pure emotion, or the soul to bend and sway before his eloquence as corn in the summer wind; but they look and listen as they would to a play, judging the preacher by the same rules as they would judge an actor. They say, "He has reasoned well," but they are not convinced; or, "He is in earnest," but they have not come within the circle of the radiating heat of the preacher's heart. A few of those I am describing will consent to use their intellectual powers; they are flattered with the preacher's compliment to their reasoning force, and they will follow him in his arguments, watch him with approval as he skilfully works his way from premises to conclusion; but the great majority of them prefer to enjoy the pleasure of imagination. It is easier, it is more real while it lasts, and the sooner forgotten. If theatres and places of general amusement were to be opened on Sundays, this class would largely be lost to the church, for the counter attraction would be too powerful. In Roman Catholic countries they know this, and only ask the people to attend church in the morning—the theatres and gardens and museums are opened in the evening. In Protestant countries they know this, but meet the dangerous