



The Shadow on the Dial

(By Marjorie L.C. Pickthall)

THE wayfarer, the vagabond, the happy tramp, belongs to no era, to no age. In all times there must have been those who fled from the current versions of civilization to seek for things that were better in their eyes, but it is perhaps only in the last hundred years or less that their longings and strivings found a definite recognition and expression in poetic literature. There must have been discontented souls in the Lost Ages who scorned the pile-built dwellings of the lakes and vast reedy rivers, and fled to the caverns of the hills and the dark hearthstones of an older race. There must have been some who turned an idle back on Thebes and templed Philae and all the fashionable gods, and sought freedom behind the last pale desert hills. The laughing sun of golden Greece must have called many a wanderer from beach to isle, from isle to hill-town, from hill-town to city-state of the plain, and so to the olive harvest and the grain-ships bound for sea. When the legions travelled the dim forests and morasses of the nameless north, some dreamer must have followed the glint of their helmets half across his world. The knights errant of a later yet still more shadowy time were but vagabonds in mail, and all Arthur's court went a-tramping when occasion offered, following wandering fires. The Middle Ages had a distinct wayfaring life of their own, like a restless froth upon the wave of the Renaissance, and left us their heritage in the roving friars and knights and beggars of the literature of the earlier nineteenth century. The very type and peer of all was Scott's gallant, who

"Gave his bridle rein a shake
Upon the further shore,
With, Adieu forever more, my love,
Adieu forever more."

Such were Germany's jolly brethren, one of whom typified his kind when he sang,

"A farthing and a sixpence,
And both of them were mine,
The farthing went for water,
The sixpence went for wine."

"The landlord and his daughter
Cry both of them, 'O, woe',
The landlord when I'm coming
And the daughter when I go."

"My shoes are all in pieces,
My shoes are torn, d'ye see,
And yonder in the hedges
The birds are singing free."

But it remained for the newer men, Stevenson, Kipling, and their kin, to sing the song of the calling voices, the mystery of the road, the vision behind the unattained hill, the star of all quests that lights the following feet. They needed, perhaps, the touch of the Celtic visionariness which has so tremendously and silently affected much recent poetry. It remained for them, too, and for Kipling especially, to make the true gypsy songs of the English peoples as they go forth conquering and to conquer; yet ready, a few of them, to yield their empire for the touch of the spray, a couch of new-pulled hemlock, and the starlight in their faces.

One of the most perfect of these songs is John Masfield's "Vagabond," though, as the "Spectator" pointed out, no vagabond would have thought it, perhaps. However, one can love the song, and disregard the "Spectator." Here it is:

"Dunno a heap about the what and why,
Can't says I ever knowed.
Heaven's to me a fair blue stretch of sky,
Earth's jest a dusty road."

Dunno the names of things nor what they are,
Can't says I ever will.
Dunno 'Bout God—He's jest the noddin' star
Atop the windy hill."

Dunno 'Bout Life—it's jest a tramp alone
From wakin' time till doss.
Dunno 'bout Death—it's jest a quiet stone
All over-grey wi' moss."

An' why I live an' why the old world spins
Are things I never knowed.
My mark's the gypsy fires, the lonely inns,
An' jest the dusty road."

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THE call of the road sounds so loudly and so clearly in these days of later Autumn. I hear it more plainly than in our swift and hurried Spring. When the reddened leaves drive across the grass in whispering companies with a rustle as of innumerable small footsteps; when the squirrels run and flicker in the branches, redder than the oak-leaves, swifter than the wind; when the lingering growth of the woods, last asters like a drift of smoke, tall toadstools, green leafage here and there, is all struck down and blackened in a night; when the trailing bittersweet glows with berries, and little brown birds cluster hungrily in the hawthorn bushes, and the pale sky lies like a wall at the height of the road; then I long to go up and away, far away from towns and kenned faces, to follow some pale winding track under the frosty sun and the rising winter stars—"Over the hills and far away."

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TO pass from the love of the earth to one who was most singularly an earth-lover, there is an excellent edition of the "Little Flowers" of St. Francis and "The Mirror of Perfection," issued in Everyman's Library. Of all characters of the middle ages, Francis of Assisi, that little poor man of God, is perhaps most fascinating to the modern mind, however the modern taste may be revolted by some of the wonders that the adoration of his followers built about his beloved name. There remains for us, whatever our taste in saintly legends, the life of a man whose very breath was love of all things created, a man of a perfect courage, of a gallant spirit, of a truly lovely and lovable tenderness and humour; and a dash of shrewd Italian common sense, to leaven what might otherwise have been too little of life. Whether there really was a wicked wolf of Gubbio that St. Francis converted I don't know, though I am quite ready to accept the fact; whether he was indeed seen of the brethren adorned with fairest stars I don't know, but it does not matter. I know him as the man who would not have the convent garden filled wholly with pot-herbs—"But to leave some part of it to produce green herbs, which in their time should produce flowers for the friars for the love of Him Who is called the flower of the field." Whether he could indeed bear the sear of hot iron without feeling pain I don't know, though it is likely enough; but he wrote "The Praise of created things"—"Be Thou praised, my Lord, of sister Moon and the stars, in the heaven hast Thou formed them, clear and precious and comely. Be Thou praised, my Lord, of brother Wind, and of the air, and of the cloud, and of fair and all weather. . . . Be Thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Water, which is much useful and humble and precious and pure. . . . Be Thou praised, my Lord, of our sister Mother earth, which sustains us and hath us in rule. . . . Be Thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Bodily Death". . . . "It is a far cry," writes Okey, in his introduction, "to the early nineteenth century, when the great Hallam could contemptuously dismiss the most potent spiritual force of the Middle Ages as 'a harmless enthusiast, pious and sincere, but hardly of sane mind. . . .'" And Francis was no sad ascetic. He was a laughing saint, and would have no sour faces about him. He recognized the irrepressible happiness of Christianity, which has been almost forgotten in those countries affected by the Reformation. He saw the goodness and happiness of the birds and beasts and flowers and flames and waters he loved with a strange mystic intensity, seeing therein either higher or deeper than our modern learning. And when the last Sister came

to him, "Our Sister the Death of the Body," he met her with laughter and a song.

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IT was the Prior Gregory who had no love for the gracious works of God in this His world, says an old chronicle. The Prior Gregory, of some forgotten monastery on the sunny borderlands of France, was a very holy man of whom all the usual miracles were told and some new ones. He was so holy that he drove the birds away from the convent gardens for fear their vain songs would distract the younger brethren of the novitiate from their prayers; he would have no flowers near, for that their gaudy hues were of the world and not fitting for gray friars to gaze upon; and no doubt if he could have blotted out the splendour of dawn he would have done so. But one day he saw a woman walking in the garden, and he hurried to turn her out and lay penance on the lay-brother who had let her slip past the warded gate. Yet when he approached he might in no wise speak to her, and fell on his knees, being sore afraid. Then the woman turned upon him, smiling as though she loved him motherly, but sadly, as though he had given her grief. "I find no flowers in thy garden, Gregory," she said. The prior's tongue was loosened. "There is more room for vegetables," he stammered, "flowers are vain and foolish things, lady, and doubtless the Evil One grew them first for the confounding of Messire Adam." But the Lady smiled again sadly, and stooped above the ordered hedges, where a careless under-gardener had allowed one briar to bloom. She gathered a pale rose from the briar and laid her hands around it, as the prior Gregory might hold the Pyx.

"What doest thou with the flower, Lady?" asked Gregory again.

"I take it back with me to Paradise," she said, "for in the very garden of the Lord there is nothing fairer."

Then she passed in a soft wind and a silence, and Gregory knew that he had seen a vision. And thereafter he grew flowers after the order of Saint Francis and Our Lady.

Suffrage and Dress

MRS. CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN, the noted lecturer, also editor, owner and publisher of *Forerunner*, New York, lectured recently to Toronto suffragists—and rather astonished them by demonstrating that she was just as clever as a milliner or dressmaker as she is with tongue or typewriter.

The ladies noted that she wore a very beautiful garment over her dress, and they wondered how it was made. It was of gay colours and a rather quaint pattern, and fitted to perfection. Imagine their surprise when the information was supplied by a friend of Mrs. Gilman's that the garment had been made from two 25 cent scarfs—not much in themselves, but when draped as the brainy wearer alone could drape them, they were wonderful.

Mrs. Gilman also makes her own hats, and the chief piece of trimming in one of them that aroused much favourable comment among her friends was a ribbon of a golden hue that she took from a box of chocolates sent her as a gift.

Mr. James L. Hughes, Chief Public School Inspector for Toronto, who has been for years a friend of the lady editor-lecturer, asserts that she is the brainiest woman in the world.

About Debutantes

A debutante is of necessity attractive, fascinating. Her insouciance, her girlish thrills or her affected boredom are alike appealing, and are treated with affectionate understanding by matrons who have not forgotten how to be young. Bearing out this truth there is a story told by a well-known matron who encouraged her only son's attentions to a charming Bud. The lady, her husband and son called to take little Miss Deb to a large ball. The son got out leaving his mother and father (who was quite an invalid, and very much pampered), sitting on the back seat of the carriage. As he proudly handed a mass of billowy frills into the bosom of the family, as it were, the girl, not expecting any one but the mother to be there, sat down upon the old gentleman's ematiated knees. After a moment's painful pause she managed to gasp,

"Oh, excuse me! You looked like—at least I mean you felt like—or rather—I mistook you for the buffalo robe!"

But every one forgave her, because she was a debutante.