

Lydia Mainwaring haunts one portion of it—a long corridor, with bachelors' rooms and ending in a billiard-room. The house was more gloomy than necessary, owing to its half-tenantless state. It was rare that any visitors were admitted to the house, partly from the want of income, partly from the almost ascetic seclusion of its master since the death of the two sons. One custom alone partly relieved the oppressive character of the residence. Gas—not long introduced into country-houses—was kept burning all night in different portions of the building. This was absolutely necessary in case of any night alarm, and made up for the small number of the servants. Jock and I walked through the large gloomy hall.

"This is the heroine of the song," he said. I looked up, and either in imagination or reality saw a striking likeness of the present Lydia Mainwaring. We went up an oaken staircase and passed a long gallery. Then we were received by the master and mistress of the house. Lydia Mainwaring was with them, her eyes more startled and fear-stricken than before. The likeness to the picture again struck me.

Lord Westerham received us in a kind but somewhat reserved manner. Lady Westerham kissed Jock on the forehead. Then she turned to me and said—

"I must bid you welcome, Mr. Mainwaring, though you will enjoy the inheritance of my sons."

Lydia shook hands with us with a look as though she feared a blow.

"Perhaps you will go to your rooms to dress," interrupted Lady Westerham. "They are in the bachelors' wing. Lydia, ring the bell."

Jock seemed half inclined to make some joking observation, but the whole atmosphere was too chilling and oppressive, and we followed the butler to our rooms.

The corridor in which they were situated was entered by a flight of four or five steps. Over the entrance there was a dim gas-light. The same over the door of the billiard-room opposite. It contained twelve rooms, six on either side. These were furnished in the rough style with which bachelors used formerly to be treated.

There was a bed, very little better than a ploughman's with a dimity curtain. Patches of carpet were placed here and there. The wash-handstand was of common painted deal, and the dressing table was covered with an unbleached cloth, on which stood a small, plain looking-glass. The windows had shutters, but only two plain calico curtains; and a battered tin bath stood in one corner.

"My servant will look after Mr. Mainwaring," said Jock to the butler. "Which room would you like, Theo?" he continued.

I mechanically took the first on the left. Jock took the next.

"We must have a fire, Waters," said Jock Campbell to the butler.

"My lady has said nothing about it," answered the butler.

"Well, Waters, I'll take the risk upon myself, and pay you for the coals in case of necessity."

Jock spoke half in jest, but it was clear that the jest was half in earnest.

As our stay continued, it became no easier. Hitherto I had never shot, and Jock initiated me into the mysteries of the art, for which I had contracted a passion. I sometimes thought he seemed to tire himself to please me by staying out as long as possible, and more than once he seemed worn out on our return; but he was so unselfish that he appeared for my sake to be as greedy of the amusement as myself. One evening we were later than usual, and when we returned to dinner he was deadly pale. Lydia looked at him with an anxiety I had never before seen, and her gaze of terror intensified.

We never sat up very late, and that night we were both tired.

"Good night, Theo, my boy," said Jock, cheerfully; "sleep well, and God bless you."

I always had slept well, but at Castle Creasy I slept better than usual after all my exercise and out-of-door life.

But I was restless. Perhaps I had overstrained my nerves or had drunk too much whisky. I slept, but not soundly—that kind of sleep in which the senses are very acute. It must have been about one o'clock when I started up in bed. I had distinctly heard the entrance-door of the passage open. Then there was thuds as though some heavy substance was falling from step to step. Then I heard a heavy sigh and a sweeping sound as though the same heavy load was being dragged slowly along the passage, till it stopped for a moment. I could resist my feelings no longer. I leaped up from my bed and opened the door, and I saw Lydia Mainwaring scared and wan, the perspiration streaming down her cheeks, dragging along the floor the dead body of Jock Campbell. He was dressed in his evening waistcoat and trousers, with a lighter smoking-jacket I had often seen. His smoking-cap had fallen off, and lay near the steps. My eye caught Lydia's. She did not say a word, but lifting her hand with a meaning I never conceived a gesture could express, and gazing at me with her look of terror and entreaty, I felt I knew her prayer. I returned to my room.

The dragging noise still continued till it came opposite Jock's room. I heard it in the room itself. Then there was a pause. Meanwhile I had not gone to bed again, but hastily putting on some clothes, I waited what was to come. In about a quarter of an hour my own door opened, and Lydia beckoned to me silently.

She said but a few words in a whisper so low that, except for the silence round, it would have been inaudible.

"He died in this room," she said. This was all.

The next day Jock Campbell was found lying dead on his bed. Nothing in the room was disturbed. His cap lay near him. His clothes bore no trace of the ghastly journey.

The authorities who investigated the matter reported that he "died by the visitation of God." It was a true verdict, as the heart-disease of which he had spoken to me had killed him.

In the night before his funeral at the hour of his death, I heard the door open once again. Again Lydia walked down the steps, and again came to my room. Together we went and prayed by the side of his coffin.

"Cousin Theo," she said to me, "you know that he loved you as we both loved him. I must never see you again if I can help it. Never seek me; and if we meet, let us do so as strangers. I ask you this favour on his coffin."

I pressed her hand and gave her the promise. Then she kissed the coffin and glided noiselessly from the corridor. I did not see her again.

The next night Lady Westerham sent for me. She said to me hardly—

"The grave has closed over Jock. He is gone. My sons are gone. Doubtless you will enjoy their inheritance. I do not love you, but I am not unjust. Let us never meet again."

Next day I left the house. Calvert M'Tavish was Jock's executor, and his will was as he had announced it. But the letter never reached me. I was nearly twenty-one, and Calvert M'Tavish, my next friend, agreed to my travelling. I had always longed for adventure, and my first journey was to the deserted cities of Central America.

At Guatemala I had heard of the death of Lord Westerham, followed shortly after by that of his wife. The latter had left me her fortune, which was not very large, as her will expressed, "out of pure justice." It was charged with an annuity for Lydia Mainwaring.

I knew I was well off, but nothing more. Out of Jock Campbell's legacy I had put by one half religiously as a reserve against the secret trust, which, as yet, had never been communicated to me.

VI.

I dined as invited, the next day with Sir Esme and Lady Egerton.

There was but one guest beside myself. It was Jock Campbell's sister. She is now my wife. The day after our marriage Lady Egerton enclosed me a letter. It was the secret trust of Jock Campbell.

It ran thus:—

"Dearest Theo,—This is my secret trust. If Lydia Mainwaring is ever in want of money, give her half my legacy to you. She is the one love of my life.

"If you die without heirs, bequeath the sum I have left you to my sister. It is my dying wish that you should marry her. Good-bye, dear young cousin.—Your affectionate cousin, Jock."

LORD BYRON.

The London *Spectator* has the following article: The study of Byron which Mr. Nichol has just completed for Mr. Morley's series of "English Men of Letters," closes with this remark: "We may learn much from him still, when we have ceased to disparage, as our fathers ceased to idolize, a name in which there is so much warning and so much example." Example, of course, is something which it is possible for ordinary men to follow. There is no example in great gifts, in high genius, in rich imagination, nor even in exalted and tender feelings, unless those exalted and tender feelings are turned into specially good channels. Till the last year of his life, what was there of example in Byron? We should have said that, so far as the world can know, in Byron's career the proportion of warning to example was as near as possible thirty-five to one, or deducting his boyhood, when one could not fairly expect an example, as twenty to one! What is there for ordinary men to imitate, before he went to endure his disappointment and disgust in defence of that cause of Greek independence, whose weakness as well as merits he well understood? Of course no one knows the secrets of the heart, and the chances are that a man who could struggle so bravely in adversity during the last year of his life must have occasionally practised some sort of self-sacrifice in his earlier career. But to the reader of his melancholy story where is the trace of it? He can see nothing better on the outside than now and then a little princely giving, which looks almost as much like pride as self-denial, a great deal of cordial and affectionate feeling where it was perfectly natural to Byron to be affectionate and would have been a pain to him to be otherwise, and a large measure of the passionate tenderness which is not only usually consistent with the profoundest selfishness, but, in Byron's case, was certainly conjoined with it. We have no desire at all to underrate Byron's genius. But what there is in that glaring meteoric career to imitate, except the tardy upward step with which it closed, it seems to us impossible to conceive. Mr. Nichol, at all events, has pointed out nothing, except the Greek expedition, which can warrant the very questionable climax in which his study of Byron ends.

Oddly enough, Mr. Nichol remarks very carelessly on the one point in Byron's career at which, as it seems to us, he had a chance of tak-

ing a turn that might have ended in a good "example." Speaking of his speeches in the house of lords, Mr. Nichol says: "They are clever, but evidently set performances, and leave us no ground to suppose that the poet's abandonment of a parliamentary career was a serious loss to the nation." That they were set performances is nothing to the purpose. All Byron's greatest works were set performances. Childe Harold was a set performance. Don Juan was a set performance, if ever there was one. So even was the Vision of Judgment. Of course his speeches were set performances. One of the greatest features of Byron's genius is his power of giving a picturesque force to his own personality. No doubt, his expedition to Greece itself, though involving real self-sacrifice and really high motives, was a "set performance." As Mr. Arnold finely puts it, his whole career was taken up in exhibiting to the world the "pageant of his bleeding heart." He never for an instant forgot, and never would have forgot, that there was something exalted and dramatic about the Greek enterprise—and so, indeed, there was; but if we are to cavil at the best of Byron's actions as set performances, we shall have nothing left to approve. There is nothing inconsistent with a high purpose in a "set performance" though, of course, where virtue comes unconsciously out of a man instead of self-consciously, we all admire the tone of character more. Still, "there is one glory of the sun and another of the moon and another of the stars, and one star differeth from another star in glory." There is a glory of self-consciousness as well as a glory of unconsciousness, and Byron can claim only the former. In the finest of his poetical efforts—in the noblest lyric which he ever wrote, "The Isles of Greece"—nothing is grander than the personal pose of the poet, who, though he professes to disguise himself as a Greek, is evidently himself the leading figure in his own song:

"The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persian's grave,
I could not deem myself a slave."

"A king sat on the rocky brow,
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships by thousands lay below,
And men in nations—all were his;
He counted them at break of day,
And when the sun set—where were they?"

"And where are they? And where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now.
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?"

"Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face:
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear."

And if these fine verses, as in all that was great that Byron ever wrote, the grandeur of his imaginative self-consciousness is of the very essence of the situation, why should the same sort of attitude of mind have been any hindrance—or rather why should it not have been the greatest possible assistance—to the effectiveness of his parliamentary efforts, had he but prolonged them? To our mind, there is the ring of true power in Lord Byron's first speech—a speech delivered in 1812 against the blood-thirsty bill brought in against the Nottingham stocking-frame breakers. As Lord Byron's manner was, he introduced it with fixing attention upon himself, with a good deal of dignity, and a certain picturesque melancholy: "As a person in some degree connected with the suffering county, though a stranger not only to this house in general, but to almost every individual whose attention I presume to solicit, I must claim some portion of your lordships' indulgence." And the substance of his speech was as strong as his peroration was eloquent, and even now the House of Lords might ponder, not exactly the letter, but the spirit of Lord Byron's concluding taunt, when we find them so eager to pass Irish bills suspending personal liberty, and so eager to reject Irish bills suspending for a few months any one of the rights of property: "When a proposal is made to emancipate or relieve, you hesitate, you deliberate for years; you temporize and tamper with the minds of men; but a death bill must be passed off-hand, without a thought of the consequences."

We dwell on the political vigor of Lord Byron's mind, because, unlike Mr. Nichol, we believe that here was the point at which he might have escaped from that deteriorating and ruinous self-absorption in his own passions, to which after his separation from his wife he voluntarily gave himself up. As it seems to us, Lord Byron, alike by his vivid and proud imagination, and by his strong intellect, was fitted to have become a considerable power in the Liberal party of that day; and if he had been so, would have at least cut himself off from some of the worst of his temptations, would have opened for himself a door of partial escape from the tumult of his idle passions. There have been many men in England whose lives, in private concerns of little worth, have been redeemed from triviality, or worse than triviality, by the large grasp which their minds have taken of political ends. As it seems to us, the last portion of his life was redeemed by this ennobling influence. And before he left Italy his sympathy with the Italian patriots had begun to rouse in him a higher chord of feeling than any which had ever before gained a practical influence over his life. Even in his poetry he

hardly ever touches so high a point as where he claims for a nation the liberty and the dignity which, by his own abuse of them, he had almost learned to despise for the individual. Except in his poetry of mere description, except in that strange power which he showed of so mingling himself with the scenes he painted that you hardly knew whether it is the gloomy fire within or the dashing cloud without, the dismantled wreck of himself or the foundering wreck on the ocean that he describes, excepting on such themes as these, the highest poetry he wrote has in it the true political spirit, the power of feeling with great nations and great histories, and feeling with them, in the manner which gives to politicians the breath of life. So it is in "Childe Harold;" so in the noble fragments of his greatest, though most cynical work, "Don Juan;" and so even pure satires like "The Vision of Judgment." The very core of that bitter poem is in the sympathy it shows with the political fate of men committed to such care as that of poor old George III.—the "old man with an old soul, and both extremely blind." Satan's charge against him is the charge of a true politician:

"Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form.
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean called him king, through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time,
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime."

"Tis true, he was a tool from first to last,
(I have the workmen safe; but as a tool,
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amassed
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsars' school
Take the worst pupil and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumbered with the slain."

The whole of the accusation brought against this poor old man with a poor old soul, and the ample concessions made as to his private virtues, are, though clad in a satirical form, the productions of a sagacious political insight. Nor will you find anything in Byron's poems that touches on the welfare of nations that does not indicate the same kind of power. Fully as we admit the vast difficulty that it would have been to Byron, with temptations such as those by which he was surrounded, and passions such as those which he had inherited, to give himself heart and soul to the one useful pursuit open to him—a pursuit which he evidently respected—politics. We do think that in abandoning politics, when he had made so successful a start, he closed the chief safety-valve by which the superheated steam of his excitable nature might have discharged itself with benefit to his country as well as something like salvation to himself. Mr. Nichol seems to us not to do justice at all to Byron's power of throwing himself into the collective life of nations, and to have overlooked the tonic which this gave to a nature all but destroyed by preying upon itself. And yet here was a region in which Byron's magnificent egotism, so far from being wholly suppressed, would have aided his influence. Aristocratic Liberals, especially in those days, had need of such an egotism to make their influence duly felt. He who burst into tears when first greeted at school with the title of "lord," and who in later years could not sit for his portrait without "assuming a countenance that did not belong to him," could never have suppressed himself altogether. But in parliamentary politics a little touch of the theatrical, especially if governed by Byron's strong good sense, is apt to be a very useful ingredient indeed. Politics was just the field in which to have turned that theatrical self-consciousness of his to good account. Byron's "example," up to the last year of his life, seems to us as near to one of pure evil, as the example even of a being full as he was of power and fascination could by any possibility have been. But if there was a turning-point at which it might have been made a power of good, it was when he neglected Sheridan's advice to cultivate his parliamentary powers, and yielded, as he himself said, to the disturbing influence of "dissipation, shyness, haughty and reserved opinions," so shutting himself out from the field of real work which might possibly have gained a hold both on his imagination and whatever there was in him of conscience or disinterested devotion. There are men in whom virtue, if it springs up at all, starts from the political side, and we suspect Byron to have been one of them.

"My dear," said a sentimental maiden to her lover, "of what do these autumnal tints, this glowing baldric of the sky, this blazing garniture of the dying year, remind you?" "Pancakes!" he promptly answered. And then she realized for the first time that two hearts did not beat as one.

Not in the pageantry of war,
Not in the round of pleasure merry.
Did Chevalier Leon de Roc
Encounter his adversary:
'Twas in her mother's sitting-room,
And he had popped the question wary.
And she had promptly answered No—
'Twas there he met his adverse Sarah.

YOU CAN BE HAPPY.

If you will stop all your extravagant and wrong notions in doctoring yourself and families with extensive doctors or humbug cure-all, that do harm always, and use only nature's simple remedies for all your ailments—you will be wise, well and happy, and save great expense. The greatest remedy for this, the great, wise and good will tell you, is Hop Bitters—believe it. See "Proverbs" in another column.