

everything to books. There he found his figures which he worked up in the Macaulayan workshop."

Rectus: "Not original. Oh come. Was there ever a more original idea than that of his New Zealander on a broken arch of London Bridge sketching the ruins of St. Paul's? What a passage that is in which he sketches the power of the Roman Catholic Church over the human mind. I call it a great piece of writing. Nor," he says (I used to have the whole passage by heart), "do we see any sign that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the Governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot in Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Rectus is an orator, and this passage he recited with so much force that all excepting Glaucus cheered. But he merely sneered and said: "The New Zealander is what you admire—well, it is a plagiary."

"A plagiary?" asked *Helpsam*.

"A plagiary," cried *Gwendolen*.

Madame Lalage: "Come, Professor Glaucus, this is too bad. I never met with anything of the kind."

Glaucus: "I see it is well that I have the proof here," and taking a small brief bag which contained a few books and papers he drew forth a pocket volume, which proved to be "Volney's Ruins." "Here," he said, "it is in the second chapter. Oh! if Robert Montgomery had only known! How might he not have avenged himself. Now listen—you will find the sentence on page 25 of the translation published by Gaylord (Boston) in 1835: 'Who knows if on the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the Zuyder-Zee, where now, in the tumult of so many enjoyments, the heart and the eye suffice not for the multitude of sensations; who knows if some traveller, like myself, shall not one day sit on their silent ruins and weep in solitude over the ashes of their inhabitants and the memory of their greatness?'"

Helpsam: "No plagiary—Macaulay clearly got the germ of his idea there—but it is still all Macaulay's own."

Glaucus: "All Macaulay's own! So is the stolen coat which the thief gets slightly altered to fit him or replaces a tweed by a velvet collar for disguise."

Madame Lalage: "I think Macaulay should have put a note indicating that passage in Volney. He clearly was indebted to it."

Gwendolen: "But is there such a thing as originality? Are not all literary men thieves?"

Hale: "There is a period in a nation's life when it produces a great original literature. After that imitation and stealing set in."

McKnom: "Plagiarism like any other sin comes back on us. It is a curious thing that in modern times some preachers and even a great thinker as well as a great poet—Lord Tennyson—have shrunk from the idea of a hell. But if man is immortal—if there is a future life there must be a hell. Plato in the 'Phædo' says that the wicked would be too well off if their evil deeds came to an end with death, and in the 'Republic,' speaking of a tyrant long dead, the answer to an enquiry for him is: 'He has not come forth from hell; he is not likely to come forth.'"

Gwendolen: "Does not that make God very cruel?"

Glaucus: "I must confess if I am to go to heaven I should like to feel I was bound for a place where the company would be select."

McKnom: "Plato had a fine, tender, noble nature. But come to two who had more pity in their hearts for men than all religious leaders and teachers—our Lord and Buddha—yet they have presented the strongest pictures of the miseries of those who have led wicked lives here: outer darkness; wailing and gnashing of teeth; Dives wrapt in flame and calling miserably and in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. No man can think profoundly of the far-reaching consequences of sin for ourselves and others without being on philosophical grounds at one with the New Testament on this head. It is not merely the shadow of Mediaevalism we see in Dante's 'Inferno'; he was a profound thinker and saw how this was; perhaps felt it in his own life as most of us if we reflect at all must do. In the eastern books you find just as dreadful conceptions of the future state of the wicked. We read in the 'Sutta Nipata' of a certain monk Kokaliya, condemned for speaking evil of his brethren to the Paduma hell. In this inferno the wicked are beaten with iron hammers; boiled in iron pots in a mixture of blood and refuse; fed on red-hot iron balls; plunged into the accursed river, Vetarani, flowing with waves of sharp-edged razors. The sinners' torments last five hundred and twelve thousand million times as long as it would take to clear away a large load of tiny seed at the rate of one seed in a hundred years. This is as near eternity as one would care to go."

Irene: "Mr. McKnom you make me shudder."

McKnom: "Well: Grant the fact and it is not much more inexplicable than a toothache; or the *auto de fe* of a moth who is attracted irresistibly to a lamp."

Gwendolen: "It is quite a revelation to me that men have reasoned out the necessity of a hell. I confess I thought it was a pure matter of revelation."

Hale: "I for one could never believe in it. Those are fine stanzas in 'In Memoriam' commencing

The wish that of the living whole
No life may fall beyond the grave
Derives it not from what we have
The likeliest God within the soul?"

McKnom: "Clearly not—and that it is not is as we see in subsequent verses forced on Tennyson."

Helpsam: "Those are noble stanzas," and he recited them for us to our great delight. The way he brought out the line

Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies

brought a multitudinous vision of heroic worshippers before you; you heard their hymns; but the echo from the cold walls of the past sounded like a wailing mockery."

Hale: "Suppose after all death is a siesta with the blessing of an eternal seal, what great harm is done? But future is no future. I protest against eternal torments."

McKnom: "What would you do in another world with the Pagan dwellers in Alexandria at the time when Neo-Platonism on the one hand and Christianity on the other were seeking—in the moments they could spare from the duel between themselves—to reform its fearful state. Most of them were not fit for earth. How then make them fit for heaven?"

Helpsam: "But suppose the spirit passes into a wholly new state where all the old temptations are seen no more—would not the experience here of the evil of transgressing law suggest and secure a new departure?"

McKnom: "Does not an old man enter a state where he is emancipated from the temptations of youth. Yet what do we find in the case of those whose youth has been 'stormy,' as the euphemism runs? They mumble over the memories of crimes they can no longer commit and gloat with impotent leers, showing their false teeth, over vices and stories respecting vices which are no longer for them." *McKnom* had grown unwontedly earnest and *Glaucus* laughing said: "He is, I believe, thinking of 'Old Q.' Surely in this decorous age there is nothing to inspire such indignation."

Irene turned a little aside, but *Gwendolen* asked: "Who was 'Old Q.'?"

Helpsam: "A wicked old nobleman who in the infant days of the present century frequented Piccadilly. An emaciated old scapegrace, he used to sit in a balcony ogling with his glass-eye every pretty girl that passed. But the stories told of him are not for ears polite. He was a survival from a somewhat wicked generation."

McKnom: "I was not thinking of him, but he furnishes an apt illustration. The heart of the profligate Earl of March still beat beneath the gaunt ribs and withered hide of the Duke of Queensbury. He was the product of an age of licentiousness and scepticism. The scepticism was of a different form to ours, but the natural fruit of both is the same. To my mind there is no such argument for the truth of religion as the wreck which we see its absence in the individual or the nation produce. The fact is man's passions are so fierce, so vast, that only an anchor in eternity can hold him, and no man can read Plato without seeing that he felt the need of some tremendous stay, if men were to be all they should be."

Helpsam: "The wise philosopher and the heartless worldling come to the same conclusion. Do you remember those lines of Lord Hervey in his satire after the manner of Persius—lines in which he describes his own hateful character:—

Mankind, I know their motives and their art,
Their vice their own, their virtue but a part,
Till played so oft that all the cheat can tell,
And dangerous only when 'tis acted well."

Gwendolen: "I have never read Plato, but I intend to study him now."

Irene: "You will be a regular blue-stocking. You are blue enough now, but crammed with Plato you will be ultra marine."

Helpsam: "But don't you know what the great critic Jeffrey said to Mrs. Hamilton. He said it did not matter how blue were the stockings if the petticoat was long enough to hide them."

Glaucus: "I want to ask Mr. McKnom a question: How would the study of Plato help to mitigate or remove the evils under which we suffer here in Canada? For you remember you said we needed to study him."

McKnom: "The grossest materialism dominates the Canadian imagination. Canadians think themselves small because they are only five millions and the United States have sixty. But if it had six hundred millions it is only truly great so far as it contains men of wisdom, of virtue, of high intellectual power. We see the noblest mind of antiquity conceiving a republic where men were to live the highest life possible, and this republic would number comparatively few. We see him always looking away from the loose dirt of earth or the solid dirt of gold to character, to mind, to virtue, nobleness, obedience, fortitude, goodness."

Irene: "But, sir, Christianity does it?"

McKnom: "My dear young lady, Christ does it; Paul does it; but does modern Christianity do it? Plato would fix the mind on it, and Paul, certainly the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had studied Plato. Indeed throughout the whole New Testament, especially the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistles to Timothy we smell the attic honey, though the Greek would have made Pericles shudder and Alcibiades curl his lip. Paul does it. But does modern Christian-

ity do it? Plato would fix the mind on the necessity for high character and high intelligence in politics, and would thus qualify the influence of words and conventions which palpably tend to a minimum of ability in the representation. It might then occur to our people that arrangements should be made which would enable men to devote their whole time to fruitful thinking and reading on political subjects.

Look at the United States and you will see that the democracy is a foe to mental largeness—to individual greatness—and individual greatness is a great salt to the life of a nation. Even in De Tocqueville's time the evil had manifested itself in the States. He speaks of "the singular paucity of distinguished political characters" there in his day. And where are they at this hour? Blaine is the first man amongst them. He was capable of becoming a statesman; he has only developed into a huge wire-puller. The blighting influence has stunted Butterworth and Edmunds. Whatever else may be necessary it is clear that neither mental power nor learning, the capacity to think or the capacity for expression, is a requisite in order to reach a high place. Now I think here in Canada some plan might be devised whereby (this is suggested to me by the "Republic") we could have men chosen to devote their whole time and thought to the state."

Glaucus laughed and said: "In twelve months it would be the prey of jobbery and intrigue and influence. No; if you should bring forth so rare a bird as a man of true political, true public spirit, and if he have not independent means, there is nothing for it but that he should ruin himself for the country. It is the law of self-sacrifice, and he will have the beautiful consolation of knowing he has broken himself on the wheel of his country's service for a grateful people who won't remember him three days after he has died of starvation," and he laughed as though at some intensely humorous idea. The laugh was contagious, and we all joined in. When the little wave of inexplicable mirth had subsided, *Helpsam* who had risen recited the first few lines in a mock solemn manner, but he soon grew earnest—electric:—

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing, and then they die—
Perish! and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves
In the moonlit solitudes mild,
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone!

McKnom: "Yes, but they are related elsewhere. What a ridiculous thing it would be if we were thinking of the dead, not of the living! Their hate, their love, their deeds, in a word their characters have gone with them, and blessed are they if those characters are of a texture for happy wearing through eternal years."

Here the Captain came and asked us to join him at the most interesting of all meals.

The next day we left. After a drive of sixty miles we camped on the borders of a lake. An Indian family camped not far off, and the squaws riding manfashion; the curious way they have of carrying tents and other things on two long poles bound like demoralized shafts to the sides of the ponies and the far-reaching ends on the ground; the painted faces and general picturesqueness greatly interested those to whom it was all new. We had a North-West sunset. We watched the sun amid clouds of splendour slowly going below the horizon. Smaller and smaller he got. At last he gave us a Titanic wink and disappeared.

As we dozed off to sleep we heard the horses, who were tied to buckboards and waggon, champing the golden grain, and the frogs sung their monotonous song.

As we journeyed on the next day Miss *Gwendolen* asked *Rectus* how it was he kept so joyous amid the cares of business and politics. *Rectus* turned round radiant with health, with the sense of joy that movement in pure air always gives, and said: "The cruel skies and brazen glare of the democracy touch not me, because however I may toil over blue-books, statistics, Jesuits' Estates Acts, the tariff, my roots are deep."

Glaucus: "In Foster's financial statements." We all laughed, and *Rectus* laughing too went on—"No, sir, in the living springs of literature."

In vain the pallid skies refuse to share
Their dew; the lily feels no thirst, no dread;
Unharm'd she lifts her queenly head,
She drinks of living waters and keeps fair."

Gwendolen: "Fancy comparing himself to a lily."

Helpsam: "It was well he did not say 'keeps pale,' or the absurdity would have been too great."

We laughed, for *Rectus*, like the rest of us, was fearfully sunburnt.

Thus chatting as we wheeled along we arrived in Regina by dinner time.

The next day, when bidding them good-bye, I glanced from *Gwendolen* to *Rectus* and from *Helpsam* to *Irene*, and then looked at *Madame Lalage*, and—I will not dwell upon my own griefs—the conviction deepened in my mind that an earthlier and more potent Eros than Plato's was at work somewhere in that little crowd of delightful friends.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN,