

valry allows the sea-rovers to pass the ford at ebb tide unmolested. The battle goes against him, however. The Danes are too strong for them. The brave old man is cut down fighting gallantly, many have already fallen, and the cowards turn and fly. But the house-carles, his hearth-companions, among whom "it liked him best to be," close round his body and are slain to a man, defending it. It is only evincing once more what the English have shown on many a battle-field from Hastings to Isandula, that when all is lost they know how to die.

The greatest treasure of our old literature is the long epic poem of Beowulf, mentioned above. It is the legend of the Dragon-Slayer, which we find in so many mythologies, and consists of two episodes—the freeing of Hart-hall from the man-destroying monster Grendel by the hero Beowulf; and secondly, a battle with a fiery dragon or Worm, in which Beowulf, now grown old, is slain in the moment of victory. The lay begins in true saga style with an account of the hero's ancestry. Scyld Scefing had come as a child over the seas in a mysterious ship. At his death, the old monarch is borne, according to his last directions, to his ring-prowed ship, shining and ready in the haven. His faithful thanes lay the body by the mast, heap war-weeds and armour round him, pile fair jewels from far lands on his breast, hoist his golden standard over his head, loose the sail against the wind, and "let the waves bear their gift to the sea." There is something in this sea-burial that appeals as strongly to the imagination as that other phantom ship which sailed before the visionary eye of Coleridge. I must pass by the various incidents, the midnight wrestle with the monster Grendel in the desolate hall, when he, who had the strength of thirty men, tore out the fiend's right arm; the swimming of Beowulf, and the struggle in the cavern under the mysterious pool, and dwell for a moment on the opening episode of the second part.

In it we see depth opening upon depth, and in that distant time men's minds turned upon a time still more distant. A characteristic tone of melancholy pervades it. The situation is one which must have had its parallel in those early days of strife and bloodshed. A whole tribe has been blotted out in some great battle: the few survivors build the burial mound for their dead friends: then one by one they die or wander off till one alone is left: his last duty is to consign the national hoard to the earth. Again I must resort to a rough prose paraphrase, as I cannot hope to reproduce the irregular music of the verse, which is like the break and fall and rush of billow after billow on the beach. It would make a poem by itself with the title, "The Last Man."

There were many such ancient jewels in that burrow, as a certain man had hid them there with thoughtful mind, the hoard of a noble race, the precious treasures. But death swept them away in by-gone times: and only one man of the nation's war-band who, longest lived, mourned the loss of friend, and wished to tarry, that he might for a little while enjoy the long-lasting treasures. The mound, all ready, stood on the plain, near the sea waves, new by the ness, firm, inaccessible. There in the warden of rings bore a portion hard to carry of the treasure of earls, of beaten gold. Few words spake he.

"Earth! now hold thou, since heroes may not, the treasure of earls. Lo! in thee, aforetime good men got it. Battle-death has swept away, the fearsome life-bale, each one of the men of my people who gave up this life. They saw joyance in hall. No one have I to bear sword or fetch the cup of beaten gold, the precious drinking vessel. Otherwhere is the war-band gone. The hardened helmet inlaid with gold shall let the jewels drop from their settings: they who burnished are fallen asleep, those who should brighten the battle-mask: and likewise the warsark which bided at battle over the clash of the shields, the bite of the swords, it moulders to dust after the fighter who wore it. Nor may the ringed corslet go far and wide after the war-chief as an aid to the hero. There is no more delight of harp nor play of the glee-wood; nor swingeth goodly hawk through hall, nor does swift steed trample the castle-yard. Mighty death hath sent many of the race of men far away. So sad in mind, he mourned in his grief, the one alone after them all, in sorrow lamented by day and night until the wave of death touched him at the heart."

I would like to dwell on the pathos and Hamlet-like gravity of this scene, but time will not permit. A word in closing. I have tried to show that the very beginning of that literature of which we are so justly proud is worthy of what has followed; that it is not to be separated from the rest, and that there is food there for the lover of pure poetry, as well as material for the antiquarian and the student of grammar. In regard to this literature, early and late, as a College and as Canadians our attitude should be this. As a band of students we have a plain duty: To cultivate it ourselves and encourage the study of it in others. As a people, as an English colony, we are the undisputed heirs to all that is best in the civilization of the home-land. It is our duty, as well as our right, to hand on the best of that civilization to coming generations. The grand possibilities of this young land cannot be measured. Scholars hold that the poems of Homer were first sung in Asia Minor before they crossed the Egean to become the glory of the land of Greece: and if we but reverence and study our language somewhat as the Greeks studied and revered theirs, the time may come when the fame of English letters shall leave the old continent to be indissolubly linked with the name of a greater England on this side of the sea. ARCHIBALD MACMURDO, B.A.

### THE DAY-DREAM SHIP.

SWIFT the sails are spread and silent,  
And the harbour lights burn low,  
When the Dream-ship goes a-sailing  
To the Land of Long Ago.

Would you know of that fair country?  
Love lived there one summer day.  
With his foolish tears and kisses,  
But the Dream-ship may not stay.

On she glides—the stream is narrow;  
Trouble-trees arch overhead,  
Dropping shadows o'er the mist-land,  
Where one Hope has hid its dead.

On! the river's pulse grows faster;  
Rapids! yet the banks are fair;  
Here are rocks, and wrecks, and crying;  
Oh, dream pilot, care! beware!

Toronto.

ALME.

### LONDON LETTER.

NOTES BY THE WAY: UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

ALL day long we had been wandering from one small village to another, losing ourselves continually among the downs and woods so much alike. Sometimes a cart piled high with brown bracken came by with a jingle of harness. Then we made a point of asking our way, but might as well have enquired of the squirrels among the trees or of the moths flitting ahead of us along the paths, for it is impossible to make sense of the Hampshire dialect. Or we would interrogate the solitary stranger tramping alone who would with all possible care sketch out the route, most of which information was forgotten before we had gone five paces. Every now and then the shrill tooting of a horn could be heard, proclaiming the passage on the highway of a waggonette crowded with sightseers bent on visiting the principal places of interest (which include, so the way-bill prints in large capitals, The Exterior of Miss Braddon's Country Residence) in this wonderful New Forest of ours. And we declared our pity for those poor deluded folk yonder, driven in herds along the straight Roman roads to their destination with no knowledge of the thousand attractions to be found among the winding paths that lead far away from the noise and the dust and the melancholy milestones. Time was banished completely from our recollection. Under the trees nothing reminded us of that silent figure, for his footsteps were inaudible on the grass and moss, and among the ferns. So continually we turned aside for a nothing. The call of a wood-pigeon was enough, or the desire of a handful of blue gentian—and in consequence it was late before we struck the right way and kept it, later still before we heard the sound of Lyndhurst bells.

Such a bright little place, half small town and half village, is the capital of Hampshire. Its fine modern church is built on a hill, so that its spire may be seen and its bells heard as far as possible. The inn in the long street was at first crowded about with carriages of all sorts, and sizes, empty of their tourist occupants who were wandering listlessly enough among the graves in the churchyard, or staring at Leighton's fresco at the back of the altar. Why is sight-seeing so depressing an occupation to the majority of people? I protest I heard these good people sigh as they loitered in the aisles, and vainly tried to take an interest in the President's rather commonplace rendering of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. They only cheered up as they climbed to their places in the waggonettes, and the poor weary horses turned their patient heads towards home. Then they took a parting glance at us and our dusty boots, wondering (I think) how we had reached Lyndhurst, and why we were staying behind; and so, round the turn. We lost sight one after another of the crowded, dingy carriages, and soon the forest-town was left to itself and to us.

It was then that resting near to the gay little village, with the spreading trees all round, and the rooks clamouring above our heads, we sat on a gate—like the characters in that delightful article in this month's *Cornhill*—and read with great pleasure and amusement the new number of Miss Duncan's weekly account in the *Ladies' Pictorial* of her tour round the world. It chanced to be the description of a visit paid to the home of the Mikado. Did we read it? I cannot tell, for I seemed to hold in my hand not a cumbersome double-columned paper, where between the pages lurked gorgeous fashion-plates or little paragraphs of social news, but a quaint looking-glass in which real figures from the far-away spoke and laughed and moved among real scenes. There stood the Palace with its brown shining moat and curved-tiled roof, and sentry-guarded entrance, through which we could see the saloons hung with silk and tapestry. The traveller took us with her into the innermost recesses of the queer carved building, for by the magic of her art we could step right into the mirror, as in the fairy tale (do you remember?) one could jump across the gold frame into the picture; and we lingered by her side as she bade us look at the little Japanese lady tottering ahead, at the officials in their carpet slippers, at the marvellous decoration of the many-coloured rooms. It was something of a shock to leave this Aladdin's palace for the prosaic Hampshire meadow with the cattle bells jingling across the fields, and it was a journey we put off as long as we could. It is not often one is allowed to

visit foreign places in this happy fashion, untroubled by statistics, heights of mountains, depths of rivers, told exactly what we wanted to know, shown the very sights we wished to see; and we appreciated our good fortune to the full. With every literary quality—with imagination, gaiety, the art of telling a story, observation, thought—it is easy to predict for the writer you have sent us from Canada a successful future. If it is an astonishment to come upon the adventures of *Orthodoxia* and her friend (adventures that surely will again be told in book-form) among fashion and furniture and cookery articles, none of which require a great amount of skill to concoct, or a great strain on the intellect to read, it is also an immense pleasure. Miss Duncan has much to answer for, for we spent a whole golden hour this October afternoon discussing, on the gate, the merits of her *Social Departure*, when we ought to have been tramping on the road to the Rufus Stone: and I think if she had chanced to pass by this quiet country place as we were making the welkin ring with our recollections of the interviewer, the company at the garden party, the dishes at the dinner, she would not have found herself *de trop*.

It was sometime after we left Lyndhurst that we came of a sudden to a clearing at the foot of a hill, and were told we had at last reached the heart of the forest, and were standing on the lawn at which the charcoal-burners' rude cart was laden with the body of Rufus the King. Above the slope were some empty carriages, and toiling up towards them as we were going down was a belated string of tourists, two or three of whom were holding cocoanuts won at the spot where Tyrrell's arrow glanced against the tree. And cocoanuts pervaded the place. The oak itself having died (an inscription on an iron pillar says it was alive in 1810) some other interest was promptly provided, taking the form of a neat gypsy-faced woman willing to sell photographs of the surrounding scenery, and a picturesque Maclise-like man in a brown fustian and a red waistcoat who presided over the bowling-alley, and gave out the indigestible prizes. Nearly everyone had a shot. They walked straight to the bowls, played, and then looked on a little, afterwards returning up the hill, well content with their expedition. No one cared for the trees or for the photographs of the trees. No one would have stayed a moment at a place they had driven miles to see if it hadn't been for the cocoanuts. "Is this *all!*" their faces said plainly as they came towards the clearing, but as soon as they caught sight of the man in brown fustian their expressions changed; and his little entertainment was the one touch of nature in this sylvan scene that made us all kin.

My companion had troubled me more or less all day by supplying her tourist information about all the New Forest, but here in the sunset-light, with her eyes fixed on the cocoanuts she forgot her office of cicerone and left me to wander as I pleased among the thickets and lonely wood-paths that surrounded the Rufus Stone. It is difficult to remember all the inspiring conversation one hears, but I know that at Ringwood we had come across the poor craven shade of King Monmouth who, after the Sedge-moor defeat wrote piteous letters from that dull little countrytown to the brotherly power on the throne. We had seen the house (near a farm) from which Dame Alice Lisle had been dragged to be burnt, and the churchyard at Effingham where her body is at rest; I had had the field pointed out, called Monmouth's close to this day, where at last they captured the miserable soldier-hero, disguised as a shepherd, with the royal George in his pocket. But out of earshot of my companion I threw history to the winds and lent a willing attention to the delightful talk of a lad I chanced to meet on the look-out for snakes, and whose earthly hopes I discovered were bounded for the present by the wished-for possession of a reed-warbler's nest. Here, where Sir Walter Scott has often strolled with Mr. Rose of Gundamore, here where one still seemed to catch some echo of the delicate tones of Caroline Bowles as she answers Southey's strings of questions, I was told of some of the lesser marvels of a world with which my small friend is so familiar, a world unseen by me. He had read little besides natural history books and cared evidently for nothing else, and he told me with eyes wide open, and as if they were matters of the highest importance (like the production of a new book or a new play) that the short-eared owls come from Norway the first full moon in October to spend the winter, and that this year he meant to watch for them; that once he had seen a pure white wagtail; that sand grouse, which have padded feet like camels, have been shot by Muddeford and a bee-eater, all beautiful colours, had been caught at Iford. "I want to go to the Mediterranean one day, and see the cranes fly across from Africa with the small birds on their backs. I know a man who has been and who says the little ones sing the whole time—that's how they pay their carrier. I shall travel when I grow up" he said, valiantly. "I shall see everything in the world, all the new birds and all the new flowers."

When I strolled back I found the tourists gone, and the cocoanuts packed up for the night, and in the half light there was my companion slowly wandering up the hill on her homeward way. When I repeated something of what my friend in the woods had told me, and how he intended to go the world over when he grew up—"Those who want to travel never do" I was answered irritably; "I would give anything to see Japan; it's the one place I want to see, and I know I shall die without going there."

"*Tout le monde a sa carcassonne,*" I answered, which speech gave to my discontented friend that precise amount of comfort, and no more, which one generally derives from quotations. WALTER POWELL.