

My wistful kinsfolk, I will not forget
Your simple patois! Oh 't were shame on me
To grow oblivious to my father's speech!

But I will go
With men, even with the angels, slipping so
Into the old vernacular! They will smile
To hear the sweet provincialisms come
With tender thoughts of home.

And God Himself,
When I am praising Him with the great mirth
And radiant ceremonials, will be kind,
That even His Heaven has not rid my mind
Of the quaint customs of my native earth.

We are all brothers! Come, let's rest awhile
In the great kinship. Underneath the trees
Let's be at home once more, with birds and bees
And gnats and soil and stone. With these I must
Acknowledge family ties.

Our Mother, the Dust,
With wistful and investigating eyes
Searches my soul for the old sturdiness,
Valor, simplicity; stout virtues these,
We learned at her dear knees.

Friend, you and I
Once played together in the good old days —
Do you remember? Why, Brother! down what wild ways
We traveled when —

That's right! draw close to me!
Come now — let's tell the tale beneath the old roof-tree.

Anna Hempstead Branch.

LADY ROSE'S DAUGHTER: THE NOVELS OF MR. NORRIS.

It is perhaps fortunate for Mrs. Humphry Ward that her latest romance,¹ *Lady Rose's Daughter*, should have appeared first in numbers; for up to a certain point, near the end of the story, it undoubtedly maintains its prestige as one of the most admirable and delightful of her justly popular works.

Very early, indeed, in the average twelve months' life of the serial, the

¹ *Lady Rose's Daughter*. By Mrs. HUMPHRY WARD. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1903.

more sophisticated of her readers perceived, with sudden animation, that the accomplished author of *Robert Elsmere* and *Eleanor* had hit upon something very like a *nouveauté* in the novelist's trade; and soon the Ladies' Clubs of the remotest provinces of universal Anglo-Saxondom were buzzing with the tidings that *Lady Rose's Daughter* was what the children call "a true story," and that Lady Henry Delafield and Julie Le Breton were simply *Madame du Defand* and *Mademoiselle de Lespinasse*

advanced, in time, by more than a century, and conducted across the Channel from their Parisian home, into the sacred heart of Mayfair.

"Simply," people said — as if it were the easiest thing in the world to do! — and grave debates were held and earnest questions asked as to whether Mrs. Ward were justified in thus availing herself of the written record, only too full and ingenuous, of a veritable situation; and whether she had intended to deceive her public anent the originality of her *donnée*. The general opinion seemed to be that she had proposed in the beginning to carry it off as all her own, but had been arrested by the spectre that confronts us all, at so many turnings, in these days — the General Diffusion of Unimportant Knowledge.

For my own part, I make haste to avow that I was altogether charmed at first by Mrs. Ward's clever idea, and much interested in the masterly manner in which she went on, for a time, to develop and adapt it. This brilliant hybrid between the historical and the society novel seemed in a fair way to outshine all recent feats of literary floriculture; and having myself, at one period, a long while ago, sat awkwardly, though reverently, at the feet of the prince of critics, I perceived, with a thrill, to how splendid a repertory of kindred subjects the *Causeries du Lundi* alone would furnish a complete guide. Indeed the "famous *amoureuse* of the eighteenth century," whom Mrs. Ward herself has the address to cite near the end of her story, and her obligations to whom have now been publicly acknowledged, — the woman of subtle and beautiful intelligence and all the culture of her age, who still is ready, when her hour strikes, to fling herself totally, — mind, body and soul, — without resistance or reserve, into the fire of a consuming personal passion, — this flaming, fascinating, piteous being was, in some sort, the discovery of Sainte-Beuve. He advertised her pathetic let-

ters far and wide; and no one, we may be sure, will ever observe the hectic symptoms of her constitutional malady more delicately, follow its fatal course with truer sympathy, or defend the too often shadowed name of the sufferer with a zeal more chivalric than his. If Mrs. Ward had indeed found the secret of the Frenchman's delicate analysis, — well and good! One only hoped that her antecedent rights in the new *Pays du Tendre* would be respected, and that no sweet girl graduate of 1902 would have undertaken to interpret to the world the soul-rending emotions or reset in the *cadre* of Boston or Chicago the sorrowful destinies of Mademoiselle Aissé or Madame de Krüdener.

Between Paris and London there is, however, no such disparity, — manners and customs, and human varieties being much the same from age to age in the uppermost social circles and in all the capital seats of a fully ripened civilization. The clever, caustic, imperious old *mondaine*, for example, the wealth of whose long experience invests her, even to decrepitude, with a certain frosty glamour, is a curiously constant type. Thackeray doted on her, and we all admire; and Lady Henry is a no less natural and necessary figure in Bruton Street than was Madame du Deffand at Saint Joseph. If she cannot endure disabling physical infirmity with quite the gay intrepidity of her prototype, that is a mere matter of climate and race, and furnishes one more illustration of her historian's discernment. On the other hand, she would not have been human or credible for an instant, had she been one whit less outraged than was her model by the constructive treachery of a paid companion, of personal distinction and irregular *provenance*, who had taken advantage of her blindness to "corrupt" both the servants and the *habitués* of the household, and make her own social running, at least in part, out of the renown of an historic salon.

The group of highly distinguished

Englishmen who frequent the drawing-room in Bruton Street, — cabinet ministers, famous generals, diplomatists in their sixties and seventies who have given check to the stealthy moves of Russia on the Afghan frontier, or known Byron and Shelley and “seen Harriet,” — all these are beautifully drawn and discriminated by Mrs. Ward. If they have not quite the plain manhood and slippered ease of Trollope's old premiers and parliamentarians, their manners are still of a pluperfect simplicity, and their seemingly unstudied talk is almost always on a level with their fame. There is a pretty touch of patriotic pride in such a rapid sketch as the following, — recognizable of course at a glance, — of the great warrior whom she calls General Fergus: —

“What a frank and soldierly countenance! — a little roughly cut, with a strong mouth slightly underhung, and a dogged chin, — the whole lit by eyes that were the chosen homes of truth, humanity, and will. . . . Few men had done sterner or more daring feats in the field. Yet here he sat, relaxed, courteous, kind, trusting his companion simply, as it was his instinct to trust all women.”

And in this — of the finished public servant, Sir Wilfred Bury, home for a breath of English air, after the hard service of many years in Persia, — and who commands our special respect by his loyalty to the old love, and the old woman, amid a perfect stampede of apostasy to the shrine of the amoureuse: —

“As for him, dried and wilted by long years of cloudless heat, — he drank up the moisture and the mists [of London] with a kind of physical passion — the noises and the lights no less. . . . The question buzzed within him whether he must indeed go back to his exile, either at Teheran or nearer home in some more exalted post. . . . Only a few more years after all: why not spend them here in one's own world, among one's own kind? . . . It was the

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weariness of the governing Englishman, — and it was answered immediately by that other instinct, partly physical, partly moral, which keeps the elderly man of affairs to his task. Idleness? No. That way lies the end. To slacken the rush of life for men of his sort is to call on death . . . the secret pursuer who is not far from any one of us. No, No! Fight on!”

So too the autocratic editor of a great daily journal — the “square-headed, spectacled,” infinitely able Dr. Meredith, who represents D'Alembert in Mrs. Ward's adaptation — is a very real figure; and quite sufficiently so to account for the devoted heroine's infatuation is the handsome and showy but conceited and rather hard young officer, who plays, under the name of Harry Warkworth, the part of the Comte de Guibert.

Only one figure among those who go to Bruton Street principally for Julie's sake strikes us as out of place in that gracefully Frenchified *galère*; but he, unluckily, is the man to whom the beau rôle of all is assigned. He corresponds to no one in the real story. He is Lady Henry's nephew, and his name is Jacob. He is an aristocratic ascetic, an earnest philanthropist, a creedless mystic; and there are but two bad lives between him and the inevitable dukedom. He taxes the reader's patience not a little by his mild obstinacy in a kind of remote virtue; nor can we ever bring ourselves fully to believe in his fanciful objection to a great inheritance. The truth is that Jacob Delafield belongs to Mrs. Ward's earlier period, — to the days before she had abandoned the novel of tendency for the novel of manners. He is an obvious survival from the school of Robert Elsmere and David Grieve, and his permanent address would be London E. He would assuredly not long have remained, even if he had once inadvertently fallen under the spell of the exotic, exalted, impenitent and *impayable* Julie! He would hardly have asked

her a second time to be his wife, still less a third; while she, had she been all that Mrs. Ward would have us believe, would either have surrendered at the first blush, — if any! — through sheer despair of a painful and humiliating position, or she would literally have died sooner than accept him in the end.

On the other hand, it is perfectly in character for this brilliant heroine to have lavished the treasure of her temperament on a conspicuously unworthy, not to say vulgar object. The woman of feeling who is too clever by even less than half, who halts between instinct and reason, almost always chooses ill. It was a mistake, I think, to have made Lady Rose's daughter of English descent on both sides. She ought, at least, to have had a French father; and since her parents never appear upon the scene, it might easily have been managed. I doubt if there is an instance on record of an authentic *amoureuse* without a strong dash of Latin, or possibly Slavic blood. The rosy little German romanticist of the early nineteenth century does not count. Her case was ever a comparatively light one. But it is no mere figure of speech to describe the living *amoureuse* as one foredoomed to tragedy. "When lovely woman stoops to folly." The victim has inhaled flame, and she must die. The woman of high station who loves *éperdument* has risked her all upon a hapless throw. Like Mademoiselle de Lespinasse herself, and the whole of her sad sisterhood, she remains *perdue* to the hedonistic world, however that world's verdict may be reversed by the *quia multum amavit* of a more august tribunal. Were there any reasonable hope of her escape into the safe and prosperous ways of life, any remaining chance at its plums and coronets, she never would have melted the cynic's heart in Sainte-Beuve, or moved him to so compassionate a defense.

Let it be admitted that the story of Julie Le Breton's adventures in England is movingly and even convincingly told

up to the time when she follows her lover to France. It falls away from this point with startling rapidity. The moment Mrs. Ward abandons the guidance of historic precedent her art fails her. It passes even her skill to strike a successful bargain with Fate, and plausibly to substitute a conventionally happy ending for the operation of a ruthless law. The "rescue" of Julie by Jacob; his decorous third wooing of her amid the Italian lakes, and their hurried marriage in Florence; her very transient sorrow over Warkworth's death in Africa and complete subsequent conversion to serious views at her husband's hands, — through a series of catechisings and instructions as perfunctory as those furnished by a great priest to a great princess, who must change her religion for political reasons before marrying; in fine, the incredibly obliging suicide of the reigning Duke of Chudleigh and the ease with which the wedded pair dismiss all scruples about accepting their vast inheritance, — there is a bland and self-righteous kind of Philistinism about all this that leaves one very cold. Let it but be compared with the stern pathos of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse's own end, in the comparatively humble rooms where she had reigned so long; sheltered in her swift decline by the fatherly constancy of D'Alembert!

It is a besetting foible of Mrs. Ward's to imagine that the only fit compensation for a young woman of beauty and refinement, who has had a hard fight with fortune in her early days, is to marry her to the prince and give her money to burn. The regulation ending of the nursery fairy-tale is endeared by old association and always tickles the fancy. The objection to it in a study of contemporary life is that *queste cose*, as the Italians say, *non si fanno*. It is not the Roses and Marcellas and Julies of life who are elected to these over-coveted honors, but those who can replenish the exhausted coffers of the magnate;

and I find that my own sympathies, as I close this clever but disappointing book, return definitively to fierce old Lady Henry, forced to drop her fine curtsy of the *ancien régime* to the lithe adventuress who has outwitted a mighty clan, and to hail her as queen-consort of the head of the Delafield family!

It seems odd indeed to turn from the staid elegance and essential artificiality of the novel of patrician manners (which hath its perennial charms, no less, for the savage republican breast, and which Mrs. Ward manages about as well, after all, as any other living writer) to the two most impressive and memorable works of fiction recently published in America; I mean *The Octopus* and *The Pit*¹ by the late lamented Frank Norris. The very names of these books are boldly sensational, chosen deliberately, as it would seem, to attract the democracy of the reading world. Their action takes place far down, — at the very roots of organized society. They deal with the most primitive, humble, and universal of human needs, — the production of that daily bread which is the staff of man's life in the body. How the grain on which our common sustenance depends is planted in hope and harvested in fear, only to be exploited far away, at great commercial centres, by speculators who supply or deny it, for their own selfish gain, to the multitudes who toil at the base of the social pyramid, — such was the broad theme which Mr. Norris proposed to himself in his *Epic of the Wheat*.

For a good while after the first appearance of *The Octopus*, not much was said aloud about the book. It was a thing painful to read and disquieting to remember; moreover, it was confessedly but the fragment of a more comprehensive scheme. I am not sure that *The Octopus* can in any proper sense of the term be called a romance. It is a vi-

sion, a revelation, an eruption of the subliminal verities, a peep into the red crater over which we lightly walk. It is also, in some sense, a manifesto and a prophecy. It has no central plot, although it quivers from end to end with the throes of human tragedy, like the soil of a volcanic region, in an unquiet time. I may record my own impression — based on some personal acquaintance with the scene of the drama — that the tremendous indictment which it brings against one among the monster monopolies at whose aggrandizement we all tremble, is absolutely just; and that there is no case of cruelest oppression, no phase of the mournful and manifold ruin so passionately portrayed that has not its grim parallel in contemporary experience. But the San Joaquin valley is, after all, only a small corner of earth, — a secluded spot fenced in by mountain walls, — and it seemed that allowance ought to be made for the fact that Mr. Norris had dreamed an epic, and had in him, beyond a doubt, the makings of no mean poet. For all his unflinching grasp of ugly fact, his candor of spirit, and the controlled quietude of his prevailing tone, one felt that the first number of his trilogy had been conceived upon heroic lines, and invested with a more or less colored atmosphere. Moreover, the final catastrophe of the tale, so daringly imagined, so novel in its horror, and yet so fit, — the doom of the coarse villain, who was, after all, but the instrument of a securely defended syndicate of iniquity, — appeared to exemplify a justice more poetic than probable.

But when, after the silence of a year or two, Mr. Norris took up his pen again in *The Pit*, and resumed his gallant crusade, one saw, at a glance, how the youthful paladin had altered and matured. He had dropped the dithyrambic note, and in this which was destined to remain the last word of his grave parable he speaks as a seer no longer, but as a man of the Western world, —

¹ *The Octopus: A Story of California. The Pit: A Story of Chicago.* By FRANK NORRIS. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

alert, collected, fearless, and with powers fully ripe.

The Pit is the Chicago wheat-pit; and the sometime dreamer of the far Californian valley with its fathomless fecundity and the daze of its perpetual sunshine holds his own without effort amid the din of our biggest market-place, and evinces a nervous grasp of its most complex affairs. And it is not the victim of the monopolist for whom he is pleading now so much as for the monopolist himself whom he warns of his own soul's peril.

The Pit is a better constructed and more efficiently handled narrative than its predecessor, but it is also more like other books. The love story that runs through it seems a deplorably common one, until we come, at the very end, to the unexpectedly sane and hopeful resolution of the trite intrigue. The actors in the piece are all rather vulgar, — at best but half taught and superficially civilized. Nevertheless — and it is to my mind one of Mr. Norris's chief points of distinction as a writer — there is nothing vulgar in his manner of portraying them. He does not gloat or smack his lips — as how few of our native novelists can wholly refrain from doing! — over the inordinate splendors of their new found luxury. He reports the faulty grammar of their loose though graphic speech quite simply, — with no airs of patronizing apology, or affected appeal to remote academic tribunals. These are his own kindred whom he sees attacked by a strange madness, and in peril of a deeper than the wheat-pit through their overmastering greed for anyhow-gotten riches. What matters it how they dress or talk if only they

be rescued and rehabilitated? The solemnity of the issues involved and his own concentrated moral conviction make all questions of mere taste appear trivial in the author's eyes; and he moves through the lake-side palaces of Chicago with a detachment as complete and a *ton* as admirable as were ever Mrs. Ward's in any ducal mansion of them all!

For to those piercing young eyes of the great writer we have lost it was given for one moment, before their light went out, to see this teeming and formless American life of ours "steadily" and to "see it whole." It lay bare to his brief clairvoyance with all its vast resources and capacities in flux, its immense potentiality for both good and evil; above all with those heavy obligations to the race and the future, attaching to the focal place from which it can move no more, in the intricately woven web of the world's unified fate. The vision faded and the *Illuminé* passed on, even before he could render intelligible to his countrymen the whole of what he saw. But his broken message remains full of import, and it is idle to indulge in unavailing regret over the part that was never spoken.

A fitting motto for the unfinished trilogy might be found in those ringing lines, familiar to us all of the elder generation, — the manliest perhaps ever penned by the cloistered sage from whom the author of *Lady Rose's Daughter* derived by natural inheritance her first, and her best inspiration: —

"Charge once more then, and be dumb!
Let thy comrades when they come,
When the forts of folly fall
Find thy body by the wall."

Harriet Waters Preston.

THE TWO APPLES.

WHEN the morning of the sixteenth day broke out from the gray battlements to the east'ard, only two live men remained on the raft which more than two weeks before had left the splintered side of the barkentine; besides, there was one dead man, and his body counted three out of a dozen who had clung to the raft until ten starved to death because they could not live on red apples and brine.

Zadoc roused as much as a man can when every morning he wakens less and less until some day he does not waken at all. Jeems lay staring toward the sun as at a stranger's face.

"Turn out, Jeems," said Zadoc, when he had worked some life back into his thickening tongue, "till we put him over."

They rolled the body into the sea with no words or ceremonials to mark the end, except that Jeems, when some part of the splash stung his face, struck off the drops with trembling, horrified hands.

"Two apples left," said Zadoc, not in any tentative sounding of possibilities, but with finality forced home by a fact so plain and near as to render evasion needless.

"One for to-day," said Jeems, "the — the other one for to-morrow."

"The *last* one for to-morrow!" returned Zadoc, bold as ever. "Let us wait as long as we can before breakfast!"

The raft drifted many hours, following the sun around the fatal, empty bowl. Jeems broke that vast silence:

"Zadoc, I must eat something. My head is — you know — my head!"

"So does mine," said Zadoc. "Cut the first apple in two."

It takes so little to satisfy, when one is starving, and that little goes so very fast! When Zadoc put his furred teeth into half the first apple, it was as if he

had not tasted such since he left Cape Cod a dozen years before. His mind, strained with a long, unrealized hope, forgot the timbers on which his bent muscles clung, and went back to an orchard he had known, — where such apples always grew. The cool air from the shadows underneath the tree-rows seemed interlaid with waves of heat and the loved odors of the sunlit seaside farm, — that long slope from the meadow land up, up and up beneath the slant uncertain fence to where the white top-sides of the house were vividly set off in green, — till Zadoc came to himself and understood that the smell was only the damp breath of the Atlantic, and the heat the plunging agony which flowed from his own tense heart. The first apple was gone.

The two men's eyes conversed in brief. Then Zadoc said: —

"I'm going to sleep again, if it *is* sleep. Anyway, I'm tired. Can you stay up awhile?"

"It's my trick," consented Jeems.

Neither spoke of the approaching end, but when they had sat staring at each other a time, — for mad men's minds move with but a mock agility, Zadoc said: —

"Put the second apple under the tin cup in the middle of the raft, and keep it there."

When the apple was safe, Zadoc held out his right hand.

"Until I wake, Jeems!" he said.

"It is safe there," was the answer, and Zadoc lay down on the soggy timbers satisfied with faith in the honor of his starving mate.

To Jeems, who watched, the sea looked as never in his life before. For years he had enslaved it. As a tough Mount Desert fisher boy he had bound it to his childish will, and in many later years afloat had thrown back its innu-