



NOTES



'As is the Race of Leaves'

What a lesson the old words of Homer contain! "As is the race of leaves so that of men." Strength, beauty, glory, pass and die as completely as last year's snow. The message of the Greek bard finds an echo in a line written centuries later by one Francois Villon, who was a great rascal as well as a great poet. Who can ever forget the sad refrain of that old ballade of his:

Où sont les neiges d'antan?

In a strange story, called *Ebb and Flow*, Dunsany reminds us that cities pass just as surely, and, measured by eternity, just as quickly as men's lives and women's loveliness. The tale is about a man who on account of a great crime was buried in the mud by the side of the river in London, where in time the tide had its will with his bones, tearing them out of their slimy grave, carrying them away out to sea and casting them on the shores of wonderful lauds, only in time to snatch them again and bear them back into the Thames. They were found now and then and decently interred, only to be mysteriously brought back again to the river. "And some more centuries pass over the ebb and flow and over the loneliness of things forgotten.

At last the barges went no more, and there were fewer lights; shaped timbers no longer floated down the fairway, and there came instead old wind-uprooted trees in all their natural simplicity. At last I was aware that somewhere near me a blade of grass was growing, and the moss began to appear over the dead houses. One day some thistledown went drifting over the river.

For some years I watched these signs attentively, until I became certain that London was passing away. Then I hoped once more, and all along the bank of the river there was anger among the lost things that anything should dare to hope upon the forsaken mud. Gradually the horrible houses crumbled, until the poor dead things that never had had life got decent burial among the weeds and moss. At last the may appeared and the convolvulus. Finally, the wild rose stood up over mounds that had been wharves and warehouses. Then I knew that the cause of nature had triumphed and London had passed away."

Dead Cities

The most pathetic thing in the world is a dead city. London is bigger but it is not half as much alive as were some cities in whose streets to-day only the lizard or the tourist is alive. The moon that rises and veils in silver the broken columns and the ruined temples of Pompeii saw a richer and a fuller life here than London ever knew. The hot sun that burns on the grass-grown quays of Ostia drove into the cool shadows men whose names are written larger in history than any men London has known. And Dunsany's dream of a ruined and moss-covered London will one day come true, though Lon-

doners believe it as little as did the Romans who came to dry the humors of the body by bathing in the Midland Sea at Ostia, or the merchants and the sailors who made the throbbing streets of Pompeii as wicked as sin could make them. Over Pompeii stands in eternal warning the lofty cone of Vesuvius, its tall head smoking, its fires banked, and ever ready to deal forth more destruction; and under its shadow Naples lies in the sunshine as lazy as the creaming waves that lap her limbs. And who shall say how long the anger of the mountain will spare the city and how long before Naples too will be a sister in sorrow sitting amid the vines and hiding dead men's and women's bones in her heart just like Herculaneum and Pompeii beside her? What a lesson and a warning it is to look down on the three cities: two already destroyed by Vesuvius in its wrath; the third at its mercy at any moment. But the loneliest of all dead cities is Ostia, once the busy port of Imperial Rome and now a wilderness of ruin over which the grass and the briar have spread a merciful covering. Out of the ruins arise the old church and the old fortress which bore the brunt of hard blows in the warring days of Julius the soldier Pope, and hard by runs the river hurrying always to the sea and sighing among the reeds that now wave where once the sweeping oars of triremes churned the water. Nero revelled here; those quays shook with the tramp of armies embarking for Africa or returning victorious. And bells rang, and flags flew, and people cheered from the houses over which we stumble now. And a last memory: here too Augustine walked with his mother Monica during the last peaceful days of her holy life. *Où sont les neiges d'antan!* And who shall pretend that we have here an abiding city?

Bishop Wilberforce

A correspondent to an English periodical recalls the following good story about the famous Anglican prelate, who was so irreverently nicknamed "Soapy Sam." A talkative and inquisitive lady in a railway carriage, "who wanted to know, you know," about everything, observing that the train was approaching Winchester, exclaimed, "That reminds me; the bishop of this place is called 'Soapy Sam'—I wonder why." Turning to a clerical-looking passenger, she said, "You are a clergyman, I think; perhaps you can tell me." "Certainly," replied he. "It is because he is always in hot water, but he always comes out with clean hands." The train then stopped and the speaker stepped out. Immediately all in the carriage, except the lady, burst out laughing. "Well," she said, "it was interesting to get that information; but why laugh about it?" "Why," said they, "it was Soapy Sam himself you asked about it!"

A Rebuke

How Huxley publicly rebuked the same prelate and taught him a lesson in manners, is related by the scientist's son. The clash

occurred at the Oxford meeting of the British Association, in 1860. The Bishop rose in response to calls from the audience and "spoke for full half an hour with inimitable spirit, emptiness, and unfairness," wrote Hooker. "He ridiculed Darwin badly and Huxley savagely; but all in such dulcet tones, so persuasive a manner, and in such well-turned periods, that I, who had been inclined to blame the President for allowing a discussion that could serve no scientific purpose, now forgave him from the bottom of my heart. . . . In a light scoffing tone, florid and fluent, he assured us that was nothing in the idea of evolution; rock-pigeons were what rock-pigeons had always been. Then, turning to his antagonist with a smiling insolence, he begged to know was it through his grandfather or his grandmother that he claimed his descent from a monkey."

The Bishop sat down, but Huxley, though directly attacked, did not rise until the meeting called for him. Then he "slowly and deliberately arose; a slight, tall figure, stern and pale, very quiet and very grave." He began with a general statement in defence of Darwin's theory. "I am here only in the interests of science, and I have not heard anything which can prejudice the case of my august client. . . . But if the question were to be treated, not as a matter for the calm investigation of science, but as a matter of sentiment, and if I were asked whether I should choose to be descended from the poor animal of low intelligence and stooping gait who grins and chatters as we pass, or from a man endowed with great ability and a splendid position, who should use these gifts to discredit and crush humble seekers after truth, I must hesitate what answer to make. . . ."

The effect was electrical. When he finished one half of the audience burst into a storm of cheers; the other was thunderstruck by the sacrilegious recoil of the Bishop's weapon upon his own head; a lady fainted and had to be carried out.

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DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Congratulations to Mr. A. J. Dowling, an ex-pupil of the Christian Brothers' School, Dunedin, who last week was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court by Mr. Justice Sim.

His Lordship Bishop Whyte was on episcopal visitation in the Gore parish over the week-end, and on Sunday administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to 150 candidates at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Gore. His Lordship was assisted at the ceremony by the Very Rev. Father O'Donnell and Father Lennon. On Monday morning his Lordship proceeded to Clinton, where he imparted the Sacrament of Confirmation to nine candidates.

To show their gratitude and sympathy with the relatives of the late Mrs. Tarleton and Mrs. Jackson, children from St. Vincent's Orphanage assisted at the Requiem Masses celebrated in St. Joseph's Cathedral for the repose of the souls of the deceased ladies. The

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