

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

In Black and White

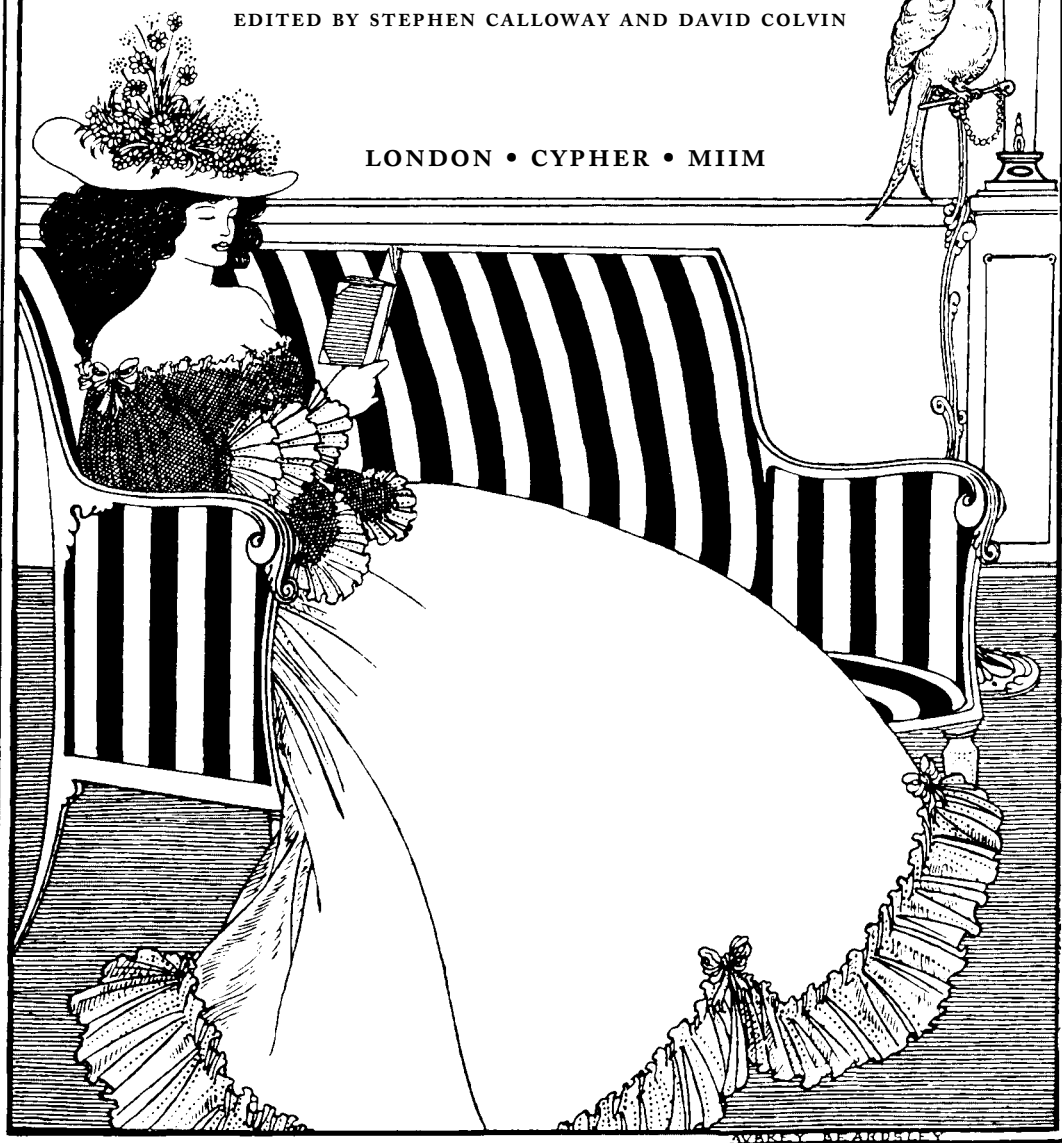
In Black and White

THE LITERARY REMAINS OF AUBREY BEARDSLEY

INCLUDING "UNDER THE HILL" "THE BALLAD OF A BARBER"
"THE THREE MUSICIANS" "TABLE TALK" AND OTHER WRITINGS
IN PROSE AND VERSE

EDITED BY STEPHEN CALLOWAY AND DAVID COLVIN

LONDON • CYPHER • MIIM



AUBREY BEARDSLEY

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

TODAY, a century after his tragically early death, we find, mirrored precisely in the exquisite black-and-white drawings made by Aubrey Beardsley, the very quintessence of *fin-de-siècle* sensibility, with its unparalleled flowering of subtly equivocal symbolism, its highly-charged eroticism, its obsession with sensuous ornament and, not least, its precious, self-consciously perverse and decadent æstheticism.

Born in 1872, at the age of only seven Beardsley was diagnosed as consumptive, and thereafter knew always that his life would in all probability be a short one. Like others of that 'Nineties milieu, characterised by W. B. Yeats as "the Tragic

Generation", Aubrey lived his life in a hurry, eager to win great acclaim or, at the least, to seize a certain fervid notoriety as the long, complaisant nineteenth century drew inexorably to its close.

J. M. Dent's edition of *Le Morte Darthur* of Sir Thomas Malory was the major commission which allowed Beardsley, while barely out of his 'teens, to launch himself as a professional artist ; for the book he made more than three hundred designs in a little over a year, and created one of the most staggeringly ambitious illustrated books of any period. When a selection of those pictures appeared in the first number of the new artistic periodical *The Studio* in 1893, accompanied by a highly laudatory article in praise of his work, Aubrey, still just twenty, was propelled to the celebrity he so desired. Commission after commission followed, and his illustrations, title-pages, book-plates and poster designs made Beardsley

one of the the most fashionable and sought-after artists of his day. But it was the erotically charged and startlingly original japoneseque pictures which he made to illustrate *Salome*, Oscar Wilde's weird masterpiece of poetic drama, which brought Beardsley his true notoriety.

His hectic career and febrile fame would last a mere five years from that 1893 début, but during that brief span Beardsley created many hundreds of extraordinary drawings, both for celebrated and less famous texts. In a good number of ephemeral books of the day—works which would by now have been long forgotten had not their pages and bindings been adorned with his extraordinary decorations—it was undoubtedly Beardsley's genius which lent to such authors their momentary *réclame*, and these beautiful, original, highly-wrought volumes, published for the most part in strictly limited editions, are among the most numinous artifacts of an

era which raised the ideal of "the Book Beautiful" to a new status as an art-form in itself.

As a child, Beardsley had shown considerable musical promise and love of art, but, even then, he also developed a precocious interest in literature, reading voraciously and exploring a vibrant world of the imagination through an almost obsessive love of books. From an early age he acquired a taste for poetry, and showed a marked inclination to be a professional writer, a desire which was almost fulfilled at the age of seventeen when his short story, "A Confession Album", written during a long convalescence in 1889, was published. Perhaps fortunately for his career as an illustrator, the success was not followed up, at least for the time being.

Beardsley's interests, however, always embraced both word and image; as a schoolboy he had experimented with writing comic verse, and from time to time thereafter he tried to express certain

of his thoughts, often more seriously, in poetry. In his prose, in for example such pieces as his clever essay on *The Art of the Hoarding*, in his later magisterial and incisive study of the character of Ben Jonson's Volpone, or in his often sparkingly facetious letters, we become instantly aware both of the keen ear of a very considerable literary stylist and of that oft-remarked sharpness of wit which had entertained his immediate circle, and allowed him to trade *mots* on equal terms with Oscar Wilde.

For a while, writing had remained for the rising young illustrator no more than a minor amusement, but in Aubrey's final years his very real desire to be seen as not merely as an artist, but a serious writer of both poetry and prose as well, became an ever more urgent necessity. Indeed, on at least one occasion, near the end of his life, Beardsley gave his profession as "Man of Letters"; and, just as once he had carried at all

times his “well-travelled portfolio”—the elegantly-tooled French folder of black maroquin into which he customarily placed his current drawings—so later he kept always by him the manuscript book in which he liked to work, endlessly elaborating the filigree sentences of his “romantic novel” or honing his hard—almost Augustan—versifications with a lapidary intensity.

Beardsley’s own literary masterpiece was his brilliant, witty and intensely erotic rococo fantasy the “romantic novel” *Under the Hill*, which remains one of the most extraordinary and intense literary and artistic achievements of the decade. In 1894, after a performance of Wagner’s opera *Tannhäuser* at Covent Garden, he had finally found a major literary project which really interested him, and with very little trouble persuaded John Lane, the publisher of *The Yellow Book*, to agree to issue a new version of the story, to be entitled *The Story of*

Venus and Tannhäuser, which would be both written and “pictured” by Beardsley.

Entranced by his new project, it began more and more to occupy his thoughts; but after Oscar Wilde’s spectacular fall in the Spring of 1895, and with newspapers calling for the “heads of the five hundred noblemen and men-of-the-world who share his turpitude and corrupt youth”, Beardsley’s plans collapsed. Fearful of the effect of this ugly moral backlash on his thriving business, John Lane allowed himself to be terrorised by his more “respectable” authors into disavowing Beardsley and dismissing him from his position as art editor of *The Yellow Book*. Already alarmed at the dangerous reputation of ambiguous sexuality that his young and irresponsible illustrator enjoyed courting, Lane also tacitly allowed *Venus and Tannhäuser* to drop.

At this difficult moment Beardsley, like many of the Æsthetes, left England for France, where, in a

self-imposed but by no means unenjoyable exile in Dieppe, he came into contact with such dissolute expatriate artists and writers as the writer and sybarite Ernest Dowson, the dipsomaniac fan-painter Charles Conder, and the self-styled English apostle of the French Decadence, the poet Arthur Symons. It was in Symons's company that Beardsley first met that larger-than-life character Leonard Smithers : a dealer in dubious old books, photographs and pictures, publisher of clandestine editions and "curiosa", he was, according to Oscar Wilde, the "most learned erotomane in Europe".

Given Smithers's habitual boast that he would publish "what all the others are afraid to touch", it is hardly surprising that the two men became the firmest of friends, and when Beardsley offered him the rights over *Venus and Tannhäuser*, the scurrilous publisher jumped at the chance : not only was the work completely to his taste, but it was the very

sort of thing which Smithers hoped would convert his, at best, dubious notoriety into a more literary, and so more lasting, sort of fame. In a half-hearted attempt to avoid the wrath of John Lane, who protected his copyrights with a jealous passion, *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser* was renamed *Under the Hill*—a schoolboy pun on the *mons veneris*—and the major characters were hastily rechristened.

In the event, no more than the first few chapters of the work were actually published during Aubrey's life-time, and the convoluted history of its publication is described in more detail in the notes which follow the text. They appeared, along with his two major poems, "The Ballad of a Barber" and "The Three Musicians", in the pages of *The Savoy*, the literary magazine which Smithers, Symons and Beardsley had founded late in 1895 as a rival to the now hated *Yellow Book*. Beardsley, due to his increasingly serious ill-health, and also, per-

haps, as the result of a subconscious desire to continue playing for ever with both text and pictures, continued to prevaricate ; he would, indeed, never complete his ambitious project.

Damned to some degree by the praise of Wilde, but in large part because of his interest in erotica, history has not been kind to Smithers's reputation. Between them, he and Beardsley produced a mighty handful of the most decadently luxurious illustrated books of the era ; he fostered and encouraged Beardsley's literary ambitions ; and it is certainly the case that, without Smithers's friendship, moral support and, most importantly, ever-generous financial help, Aubrey's last days would have been more difficult and infinitely more frustrating. Furthermore by encouraging Beardsley to go on with his work, both writing and drawing, and more especially by tolerating, with almost saintly patience, the artist's ever-increasing

inability to maintain concentration and finish any project, Smithers provided Aubrey with one real reason to live during his last, pain-drenched months. The journalist Haldane MacFall, who knew both men and was aware of Smithers's noble rôle, wrote with more sympathy than is usually accorded to the publisher :

It was to this dandified adventurer that Beardsley was wholly to owe the great opportunity of his life to achieve his supreme master-work [the suite of designs for *Lysistrata*]. Had it not been for Smithers, it is absolutely certain that Beardsley would have died with the full song that was in him unsung.

Aubrey Beardsley was never in a real sense a "popular" artist in his own time. His work—whether literary or graphic—was always just *too* astonishing, too deliberately unusual and too enigmatic to make him that ; and, at the same time, his carefully-nurtured artistic pose was too subversive

to win easy approval, too arrogant to seek to please. Like those French writers, artists and dandies of the Decadence whom he so greatly admired and sought to emulate, Aubrey revelled, almost too much, in his ability to *épater les bourgeois*.

Beardsley's was, certainly, an art of outrage, but it must be remembered that his work shocked as much by its utterly innovative style as by its deliberately uncompromising and often sexually explicit content. As a result, the critical reception of his work was always in black and white ; he lived all the years of his brief career in the heady atmosphere of continually alternating, but always totally exaggerated, praise or blame.

After his death the world was astoundingly quick to recognise Aubrey Beardsley as a key figure in the creation of a new sensibility in English, and, indeed, European cultural life. For Julius Meier-Graefe, the great German æsthete and critic who came to England specifically to

meet him, Aubrey was the most startling figure of what, with a curiously Nietzschean echo, he termed the generation of “Superboys” of the 1890s. In *Modern Art*, his vast tombstone of a book, Meier-Graefe observed that

of a hundred important artists born within so many years, a certain number are indispensable... because they affect their age and because they are symbolical of ourselves. To have seen every one of [Beardsley's] fragments is a more urgent necessity than to know a single picture by Burne-Jones or Watts.

It was, however, Oscar Wilde who penned the most generous and perceptive of all the many tributes at Beardsley's death :

Superbly premature as the the flowering of his genius was, still he had immense development, and had not sounded his last stop. There were great possibilities always in the cavern of his soul, and there is something macabre and tragic in the fact that one who added another terror to life should have died at the age of a flower.

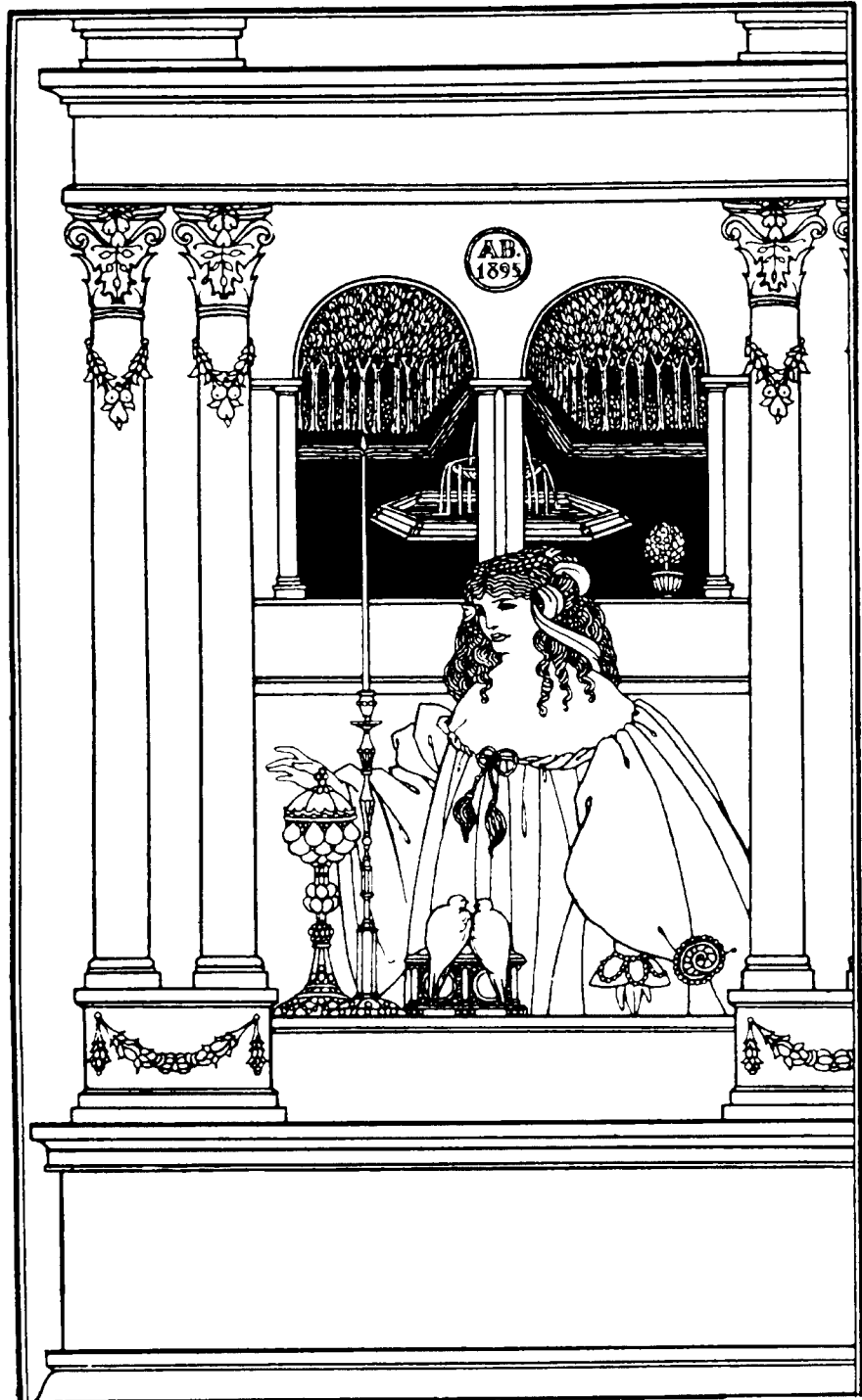
NOTE ON THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

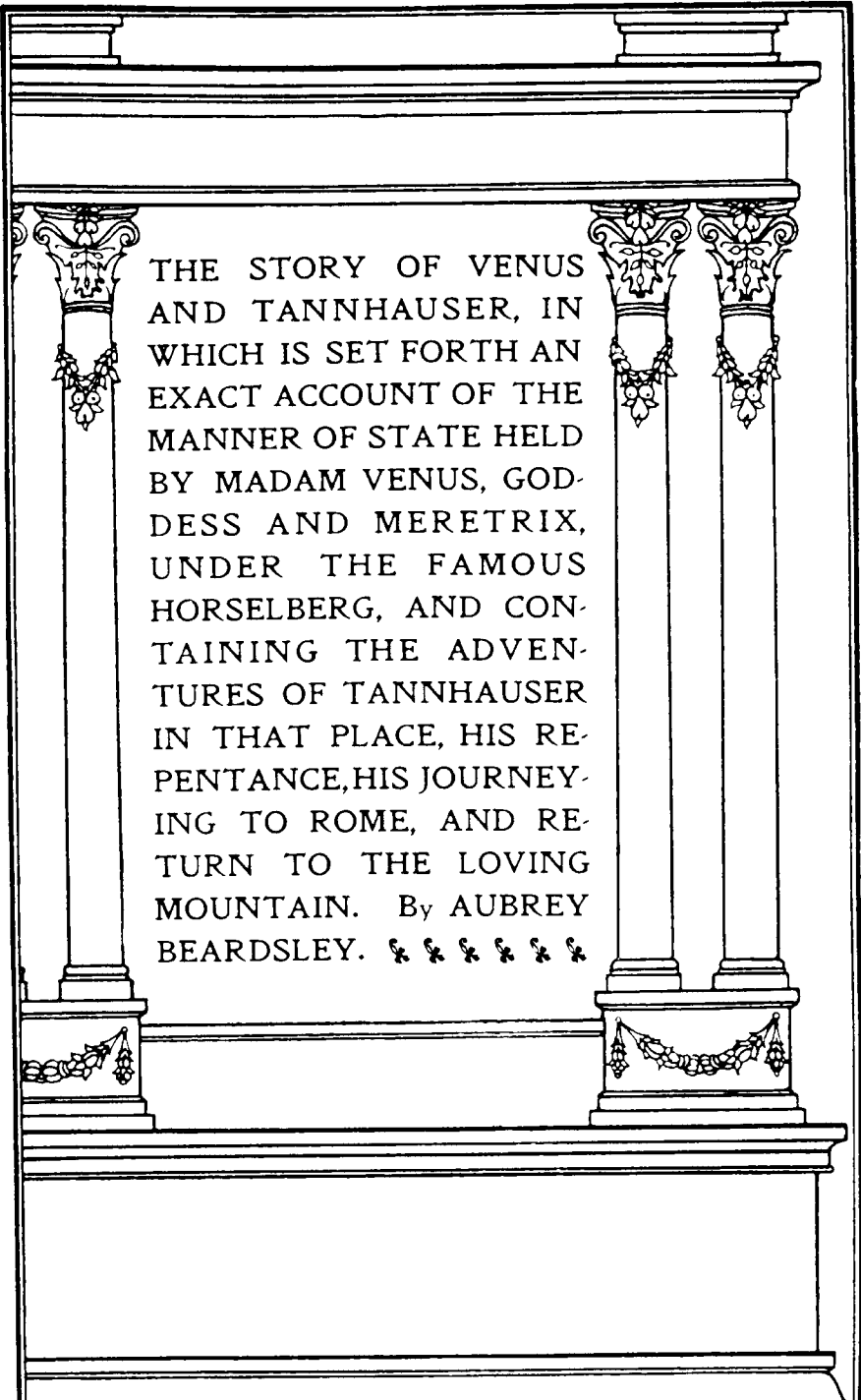
In this volume we have brought together all of Aubrey Beardsley's mature published writings, reunited for the first time with all the relevant illustrations, together with the lion's share of his "juvenilia" which, though sometimes lacking the intensity of his later work, is never without charm, and sometimes has real interest.

With a single exception, the illustrations have been taken from the best available impressions of the original line-blocks. In the case of "Enter Herodias", however, since the original line-block was damaged, and since the censored version is now a much rarer image, the version we reproduce has been taken from John Lane's 1907 large-format *Portfolio of Drawings for Salome*.

UNDER THE HILL

A ROMANTIC NOVEL



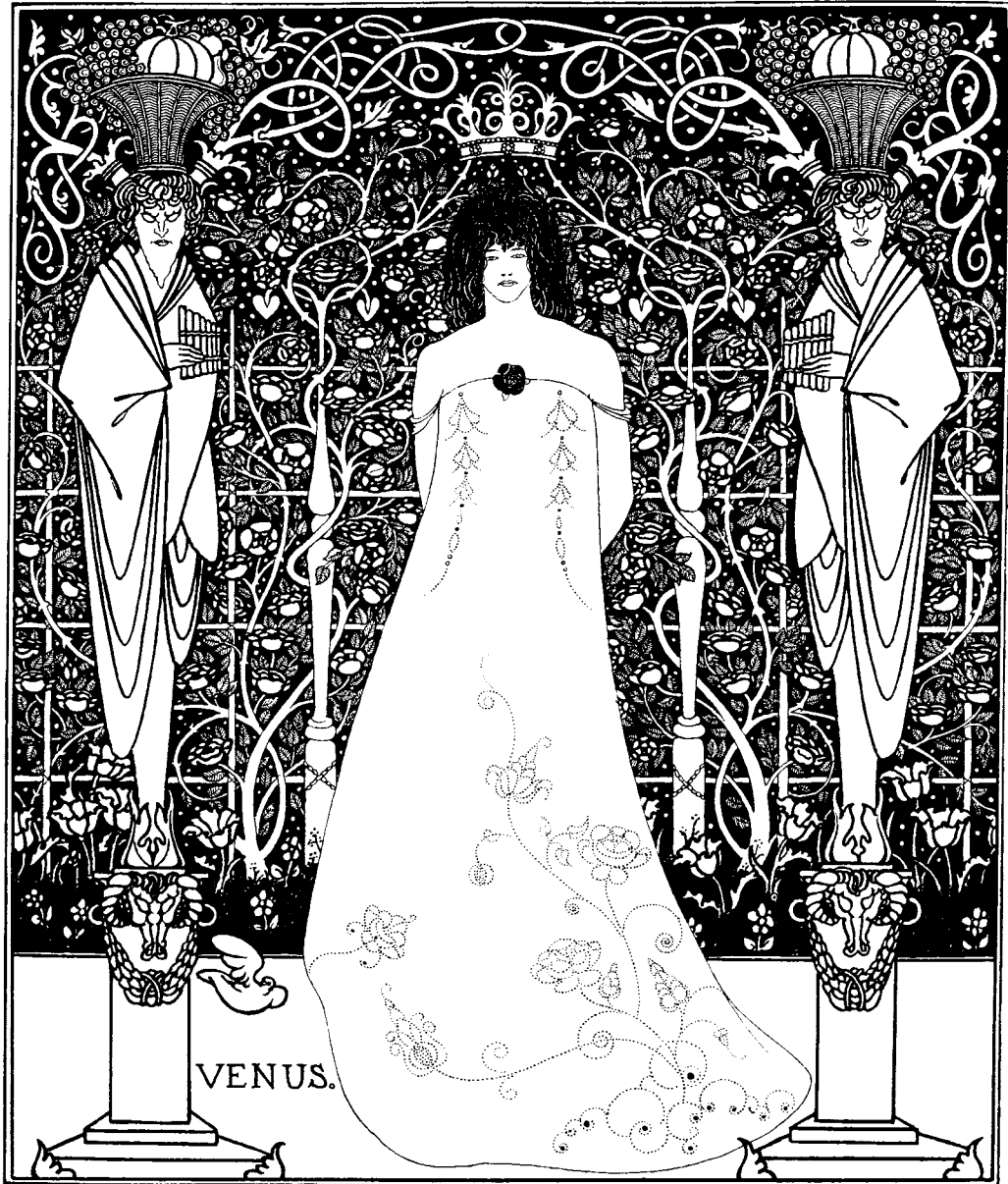


THE STORY OF VENUS
AND TANNHAUSER, IN
WHICH IS SET FORTH AN
EXACT ACCOUNT OF THE
MANNER OF STATE HELD
BY MADAM VENUS, GOD-
DESS AND MERETRIX,
UNDER THE FAMOUS
HORSELBERG, AND CON-
TAINING THE ADVEN-
TURES OF TANNHAUSER
IN THAT PLACE, HIS RE-
PENTANCE, HIS JOURNEY-
ING TO ROME, AND RE-
TURN TO THE LOVING
MOUNTAIN. By AUBREY
BEARDSLEY. ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

TO
THE MOST EMINENT AND REVEREND PRINCE
GIULIO POLDO PEZZOLI

CARDINAL OF THE HOLY ROMAN CHURCH
TITULAR BISHOP OF S. MARIA IN TRASTEVERE
ARCHBISHOP OF OSTIA AND VELLETRI
NUNCIO TO THE HOLY SEE
IN
NICARAGUA AND PATAGONIA
A FATHER TO THE POOR
A REFORMER OF ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE
A PATTERN OF LEARNING
WISDOM AND HOLINESS OF LIFE
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH DUE REVERENCE
BY HIS HUMBLE SERVITOR
A SCRIVENER AND LIMNER OF WORLDLY THINGS
WHO MADE THIS BOOK

AUBREY BEARDSLEY



VENUS BETWEEN
TERMINAL GODS

TO
THE MOST EMINENT AND REVEREND PRINCE
GIULIO POLDO PEZZOLI

MOST EMINENT PRINCE,

I KNOW NOT by what mischance the writing of epistles dedicatory has fallen into disuse, whether through the vanity of authors or the humility of patrons. But the practice seems to me so very beautiful and becoming that I have ventured to make an essay in the modest art, and lay with formalities my first book at your feet. I have, it must be confessed, many fears lest I shall be arraigned of presumption in choosing so exalted

a name as your own to place at the beginning of this history ; but I hope that such a censure will not be too lightly passed upon me, for if I am guilty it is but of a most natural pride that the accidents of my life should allow me to sail the little pinnacle of my wit under your protection.

But though I can clear myself of such a charge, I am still minded to use the tongue of apology, for with what face can I offer you a book treating of so vain and fantastical a thing as Love ? I know that in the judgment of many the amorous passion is accounted a shameful thing and ridiculous ; indeed it must be confessed that more blushes have risen for Love's sake than for any other cause, and that lovers are an eternal laughing-stock. Still, as the book will be found to contain matter of deeper import than mere venery, inasmuch as it treats of the great contrition of its chiefest character, and of canonical things in its chapters, I am not without

hopes that your Eminence will pardon my writing of the Hill of Venus, for which extravagance let my youth excuse me.

Then I must crave your forgiveness for addressing you in a language other than the Roman, but my small freedom in Latinity forbids me to wander beyond the idiom of my vernacular. I would not for the world that your delicate Southern ear should be offended by a barbarous assault of rude and Gothic words ; but methinks no language is rude that can boast polite writers, and not a few such have flourished in this country in times past, bringing our common speech to very great perfection. In the present age, alas ! our pens are ravished by unlettered authors and unmannered critics, that make a havoc rather than a building, a wilderness rather than a garden. But, alack ! what boots it to drop tears upon the preterit ?

'Tis not of our own shortcomings though,

but of your own great merits that I should speak, else I should be forgetful of the duties I have drawn upon myself in electing to address you in a dedication. 'Tis of your noble virtues (though all the world know of 'em), your taste and wit, your care for letters, and very real regard for the arts, that I must be the proclaimer.

Though it be true that all men have sufficient wit to pass a judgment on this or that, and not a few sufficient impudence to print the same (the last being commonly accounted critics), I have ever held that the critical faculty is more rare than the inventive. 'Tis a faculty your Eminence possesses in so great a degree that your praise or blame is something oracular, your utterance infallible as great genius or as a beautiful woman. Your mind, I know, rejoicing in fine distinctions and subtle procedures of thought, beautifully discursive rather than hastily contributed, has found in criticism its

happiest exercise. 'Tis a pity that so perfect a Mæcenas should have no Horace to befriend, no *Georgics* to accept ; for the offices and function of patron or critic must of necessity be lessened in an age of little men and little work. In past times 'twas nothing derogatory for great princes and men of State to extend their loves and favour to poets, for thereby they received as much honour as they conferred. Did not Prince Festus with pride take the masterwork of Julian into his protection, and was not the *Æneis* a pretty thing to offer Cæsar ?

Learning without appreciation is a thing of naught, but I know not which is greatest in you—your love of the arts, or your knowledge of 'em. What wonder then that I am studious to please you, and desirous of your protection ? How deeply thankful I am for your past affections you know well, your great kindness and liberality having far outdone my slight merits and small

accomplishment that seemed scarce to warrant any favour. Alas ! 'tis a slight offering I make you now, but if after glancing into its pages (say of an evening upon your terrace) you should deem it worthy of the remotest place in your princely library, the knowledge that it rested there would be reward sufficient for my labours, and a crowning happiness to my pleasure in the writing of this slender book.

The humble and obedient
servant of your Eminence,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY



THE ABBE

UNDER THE HILL

A ROMANTIC NOVEL

CHAPTER I

HOW THE CHEVALIER TANNHÄUSER ENTERED INTO THE HILL OF VENUS

THE CHEVALIER TANNHÄUSER, having lighted off his horse, stood doubtfully for a moment beneath the ombre gateway of the Venusberg, troubled with an exquisite fear lest a day's travel should have too cruelly undone the laboured niceness of his dress. His hand, slim and gracious as La Marquise du Deffand's in the drawing by Carmontelle, played nervously about the gold hair that fell

upon his shoulders like a finely-curved peruke, and from point to point of a precise toilet the fingers wandered, quelling the little mutinies of cravat and ruffle.

It was taper-time ; when the tired earth puts on its cloak of mists and shadows, when the enchanted woods are stirred with light footfalls and slender voices of the fairies, when all the air is full of delicate influences, and even the beaux, seated at their dressing-tables, dream a little.

A delicious moment, thought Tannhäuser, to slip into exile.

The place where he stood waved drowsily with strange flowers, heavy with perfume, dripping with odours. Gloomy and nameless weeds not to be found in Mentzelius. Huge moths, so richly winged they must have banqueted upon tapestries and royal stuffs, slept on the pillars that flanked either side of the gateway, and the eyes

of all the moths remained open and were burning and bursting with a mesh of veins. The pillars were fashioned in some pale stone and rose up like hymns in the praise of pleasure, for from cap to base, each one was carved with loving sculptures, showing such a cunning invention and such a curious knowledge, that Tannhäuser lingered not a little in reviewing them. They surpassed all that Japan has ever pictured from her *maisons vertes*, all that was ever painted in the cool bathrooms of Cardinal La Motte, and even outdid the astonishing illustrations to Jones's *Nursery Numbers*.

"A pretty portal," murmured the Chevalier, correcting his sash.

As he spoke, a faint sound of singing was breathed out from the mountain, faint music as strange and distant as sea-legends that are heard in shells.

"The Vespers of Venus, I take it," said Tannhäuser, and struck a few chords of accompaniment, ever so lightly, upon his little lute. Softly across the spell-bound threshold the song floated and wreathed itself about the subtle columns, till the moths were touched with passion and moved quaintly in their sleep. One of them was awakened by the intenser notes of the Chevalier's lute-strings, and fluttered into the cave. Tannhäuser felt it was his cue for entry.

"Adieu," he exclaimed with an inclusive gesture, "and goodbye, Madonna," as the cold circle of the moon began to show, beautiful and full of enchantments. There was a shadow of sentiment in his voice as he spoke the words.

"Would to heaven," he sighed, "I might receive the assurance of a looking-glass before I make my debut ! However, as she is a goddess, I doubt not her eyes are a little sated with perfection,

and may not be displeased to see it crowned with a tiny fault.”

A wild rose had caught upon the trimmings of his ruff, and in the first flush of displeasure he would have struck it brusquely away and most severely punished the offending flower. But the ruffled mood lasted only a moment, for there was something so deliciously incongruous in the hardy petal's invasion of so delicate a thing that Tannhäuser withheld the finger of resentment, and vowed that the wild rose should stay where it had clung—a passport, as it were, from the upper to the lower world.

“The very excess and violence of the fault,” he said, “will be its excuse”; and, undoing a tangle in the tassel of his stick, stepped into the shadowy corridor that ran into the bosom of the wan hill—stepped with the admirable aplomb and unwrinkled suavity of Don John.



THE TOILET OF VENUS

CHAPTER II

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH VENUS WAS COIFFED AND PREPARED FOR SUPPER

BEFORE A TOILET that shone like the altar of Notre Dame des Victoires, Venus was seated in a little dressing-gown of black and heliotrope. The coiffeur Cosmé was caring for her scented chevelure, and with tiny silver tongs, warm from the caresses of the flame, made delicious intelligent curls that fell as lightly as a breath about her forehead and over her eyebrows, and clustered like tendrils round her neck. Her three favourite girls, Pappelarde, Blanchemains and Loreyne, waited immediately upon her with perfume and powder in delicate flacons and frail cassolettes, and held in porcelain jars the

ravishing paints prepared by Chateline for those cheeks and lips that had grown a little pale with anguish of exile. Her three favourite boys, Claude, Clair and Sarrasine, stood amorously about with salver, fan and napkin. Millamant held a slight tray of slippers, Minette some tender gloves, La Popelinière—mistress of the robes—was ready with a frock of yellow and yellow. La Zambellina bore the jewels, Florizel some flowers, Amadour a box of various pins, and Vadius a box of sweets. Her doves, ever in attendance, walked about the room that was panelled with the gallant paintings of Jean Baptiste Dorat, and some dwarfs and doubtful creatures sat here and there lolling out their tongues, pinching each other, and behaving oddly enough. Sometimes Venus gave them little smiles.

As the toilet was in progress, Priapusa, the fat manicure and fardeuse, strode in and seated herself by the side of the dressing-table, greeting

Venus with an intimate nod. She wore a gown of white watered silk with gold lace trimmings and a velvet necklet of false vermillion. Her hair hung in bandeaux over her ears, passing into a huge chignon at the back of her head, and the hat, wide-brimmed and hung with a valance of pink muslin, was floral with red roses.

Priapusa's voice was full of salacious unction ; she had terrible little gestures with the hands, strange movements with the shoulders, a short respiration that made surprising wrinkles in her bodice, a corrupt skin, large horny eyes, a parrot's nose, a small loose mouth, great flaccid cheeks, and chin after chin. She was a wise person, and Venus loved her more than any of her servants, and had a hundred pet names for her, such as Dear Toad, Pretty Pol, Cock-robin, Dearest Lip, Touchstone, Little Cough-drop, Bijou, Buttons, Dear Heart, Dick-dock, Mrs. Manly,

Little Nipper, Cochon-de-lait, Naughty-naughty, Blessèd Thing, and Trump.

The talk that passed between Priapusa and her mistress was of that excellent kind that passes between old friends, a perfect understanding giving to scraps of phrases their full meaning, and to the merest reference a point. Naturally Tannhäuser, the newcomer, was discussed a little. Venus had not seen him yet, and asked a score of questions on his account that were delightfully to the point.

Priapusa told the story of his arrival, his curious wandering in the gardens, and calm satisfaction with all he saw there, his impromptu affection for a slender girl upon the first terrace, of the crowd of frocks that gathered round and pelted him with roses, of the graceful way he defended himself with his mask, and of the queer reverence he made to the God of all gardens,

kissing that deity with a pilgrim's devotion. Just now Tannhäuser was at the baths, and was creating a favourable impression.

The report and the coiffing were completed at the same moment.

"Cosmé," said Venus, "you have been quite sweet and quite brilliant. You have surpassed yourself tonight."

"Madam flatters me," replied the antique old thing, with a girlish giggle under his black satin mask. "'Gad, Madam ; sometimes I believe I have no talent in the world, but tonight I must confess to a touch of the vain mood."

It would pain me horribly to tell you about the painting of her face ; suffice it that the sorrowful work was accomplished frankly, magnificently, and without a shadow of deception.

Venus slipped away the dressing-gown, and rose before the mirror in a flutter of frilled

things. She was adorably tall and slender. Her neck and shoulders were wonderfully drawn, and the little malicious breasts were full of the irritation of loveliness that can never be entirely comprehended, or ever enjoyed to the utmost. Her arms and hands were loosely, but delicately articulated, and her legs were divinely long. From the hip to the knee, twenty-two inches ; from the knee to the heel, twenty-two inches, as befitted a Goddess.

I should like to speak more particularly about her, for generalities are not of the slightest service in a description. But I am afraid that an enforced silence here and there would leave such numerous gaps in the picture that it had better not be begun at all than left unfinished.

Priapusa grew quite lyric over the dear little person, and pecked at her arms with kisses.

“Dear Tongue, you must really behave yourself,”

said Venus, and called Millamant to bring her the slippers.

The tray was freighted with the most exquisite and shapely pantoufles, sufficient to make Cluny a place of naught. There were shoes of grey and black and brown suède, of white silk and rose satin, and velvet and sarcenet ; there were some of sea-green sewn with cherry blossoms, some of red with willow branches, and some of grey with bright-winged birds. There were heels of silver, of ivory and of gilt ; there were buckles of very precious stones set in most strange and esoteric devices ; there were ribands tied and twisted into cunning forms ; there were buttons so beautiful that the buttonholes might have no pleasure till they closed upon them ; there were soles of delicate leathers scented with maréchale, and linings of soft stuffs scented with the juice of July flowers. But Venus, finding none of them to her mind, called for a

discarded pair of blood-red maroquine, diapered with pearls. They looked very distinguished over her white silk stockings.

As the tray was being carried away, the capricious Florizel snatched as usual a slipper from it, and fitted the foot over his penis, and made the necessary movements. That was Florizel's little caprice. Meantime, La Popelinière stepped forward with the frock.

"I shan't wear one tonight," said Venus. Then she slipped on her gloves.

When the toilet was at an end all her doves clustered round her feet, loving to frôler her ankles with their plumes, and the dwarfs clapped their hands, and put their fingers between their lips and whistled. Never before had Venus been so radiant and compelling. Spiridion, in the corner, looked up from his game of Spellicans and trembled. Claude and Clair, pale with pleasure,

stroked and touched her with their delicate hands, and wrinkled her stockings with their nervous lips, and smoothed them with their thin fingers ; and Sarrasine undid her garters and kissed them inside and put them on again, pressing her thighs with his mouth. The dwarfs grew very daring, I can tell you. There was almost a *mêlée*. They illustrated pages 72 and 73 of Delvau's Dictionary.

In the middle of it all, Pranzmangel announced that supper was ready upon the fifth terrace. "Ah !" cried Venus, "I'm famished !"

CHAPTER III

HOW VENUS SUPPED AND THEREAFTER WAS MIGHTILY AMUSED BY THE CURIOUS PRANKS OF HER ENTOURAGE

SHE WAS QUITE DELIGHTED with Tannhäuser, and, of course, he sat next her at supper.

The terrace, made beautiful with a thousand vain and fantastical devices, and set with a hundred tables and four hundred couches, presented a truly splendid appearance. In the middle was a huge bronze fountain with three basins. From the first rose a many-breasted dragon and four little Loves mounted upon swans, and each Love was furnished with a bow and arrow. Two of them that faced the monster seemed to recoil in fear, two that

were behind made bold enough to aim their shafts at him. From the verge of the second sprang a circle of slim golden columns that supported silver doves with tails and wings spread out. The third, held by a group of grotesquely attenuated satyrs, was centred with a thin pipe hung with masks and roses, and capped with children's heads.

From the mouths of the dragon and the Loves, from the swans' eyes, from the breasts of the doves, from the satyrs' horns and lips, from the masks at many points, and from the children's curls, the water played profusely, cutting strange arabesques and subtle figures.

The terrace was lit entirely by candles. There were four thousand of them, not numbering those upon the tables. The candlesticks were of a countless variety, and smiled with moulded cochonneries. Some were twenty feet high, and bore single candles that flared like fragrant torches

over the feast, and guttered till the wax stood round the tops in tall lances. Some, hung with dainty petticoats of shining lustres, had a whole bevy of tapers upon them devised in circles, in pyramids, in squares, in cuneiforms, in single lines regimentally and in crescents.

Then, on quaint pedestals and Terminal Gods and gracious pilasters of every sort, were shell-like vases of excessive fruits and flowers that hung about and burst over the edges and could never be restrained. The orange-trees and myrtles, looped with vermilion sashes, stood in frail porcelain pots, and the rose-trees were wound and twisted with superb invention over trellis and standard. Upon one side of the terrace a long gilded stage for the comedians was curtained off with Pagonian tapestries, and in front of it the music-stands were placed. The tables arranged between the fountain and the flight of steps to the sixth terrace were all

circular, covered with white damask, and strewn with irises, roses, kingcups, colombines, daffodils, carnations and lilies ; and the couches, high with soft cushions and spread with more stuffs than could be named, had fans thrown upon them, and little amorous surprise packets.

Beyond the escalier stretched the gardens, which were designed so elaborately and with so much splendour that the architect of the Fêtes d'Armailhacq could have found in them no matter for cavil, and the still lakes strewn with profuse barges full of gay flowers and wax marionettes, the alleys of tall trees, the arcades and cascades, the pavilions, the grottoes and the garden-gods—all took a strange tinge of revelry from the glare of the light that fell upon them from the feast.

The frockless Venus and Tannhäuser, with Priapusa and Claude and Clair, and Farcy, the chief comedian, sat at the same table. Tannhäuser, who

had doffed his travelling suit, wore long black silk stockings, a pair of pretty garters, a very elegant ruffled shirt, slippers and a wonderful dressing gown. Claude and Clair wore nothing at all, delicious privilege of immaturity, and Farcy was in ordinary evening clothes. As for the rest of the company, it boasted some very noticeable dresses, and whole tables of quite delightful coiffures. There were spotted veils that seemed to stain the skin with some exquisite and august disease, fans with eye-slits in them, through which their bearers peeped and peered ; fans painted with figures and covered with the sonnets of Sporion and the short stories of Scaramouche ; and fans of big, living moths stuck upon mounts of silver sticks. There were masks of green velvet that make the face look trebly powdered ; masks of the heads of birds, of apes, of serpents, of dolphins, of men and women, of little embryos and of cats ; masks like the faces of

gods ; masks of coloured glass, and masks of thin talc and of india-rubber. There were wigs of black and scarlet wools, of peacocks' feathers, of gold and silver threads, of swansdown, of the tendrils of the vine, and of human hairs ; huge collars of stiff muslin rising high above the head ; whole dresses of ostrich feathers curling inwards ; tunics of panthers' skins that looked beautiful over pink tights ; capotes of crimson satin trimmed with the wings of owls ; sleeves cut into the shapes of apocryphal animals ; drawers flounced down to the ankles, and flecked with tiny, red roses ; stockings clocked with *fêtes galantes*, and curious designs ; and petticoats cut like artificial flowers. Some of the women had put on delightful little moustaches dyed in purples and bright greens, twisted and waxed with absolute skill ; and some wore great white beards, after the manner of Saint Wilgeforte. Then Dorat had painted extraordinary grotesques and vignettes over

their bodies, here and there. Upon a cheek, an old man scratching his horned head ; upon a forehead, an old woman teased by an impudent amor ; upon a shoulder, an amorous singerie ; round a breast, a circlet of satyrs ; about a wrist, a wreath of pale, unconscious babes ; upon an elbow, a bouquet of spring flowers ; across a back, some surprising scenes of adventure ; at the corners of a mouth, tiny red spots ; and upon a neck, a flight of birds, a caged parrot, a branch of fruit, a butterfly, a spider, a drunken dwarf, or, simply, some initials. But most wonderful of all were the black silhouettes painted upon the legs, and which showed through a white silk stocking like a sumptuous bruise.

The supper provided by the ingenious Rambouillet was quite beyond parallel. Never had he created a more exquisite menu. The *consommé impromptu* alone would have been sufficient to establish the immortal reputation of any chef.

What, then, can I say of the *Dorade bouillie sauce maréchale*, the *ragoût aux langues de carpes*, the *ramereaux à la charnière*, the *ciboulette de gibier à l'espagnole*, the *pâté de cuisses d'oie aux pois de Monsalvie*, the *queues d'agneau au clair de lune*, the *artichauts à la Grecque*, the *charlotte de pommes à la Lucy Waters*, the *bombes à la marée*, and the *glaces aux rayons d'or*? A veritable tour de cuisine that surpassed even the famous little suppers given by the Marquis de Réchale at Passy, and which the Abbé Mirliton pronounced "impeccable, and too good to be eaten."

Ah! Pierre Antoine Berquin de Rambouillet, you are worthy of your divine mistress!

Mere hunger quickly gave place to those finer instincts of the pure gourmet, and the strange wines, cooled in buckets of snow, unloosed all the décolleté spirits of astonishing conversation and atrocious laughter.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE COURT OF VENUS BEHAVED STRANGELY AT HER SUPPER

AT FIRST there was the fun with the surprise packets that contained myriads of amusing things, then a general criticism of the decorations, everyone finding a different meaning in the fall of a festoon, turn of twig and twist of branch. Pulex, as usual, bore the palm for insight and invention, and to-night he was more brilliant than ever. He leant across the table and explained to the young page, Macfils de Martaga, what thing was intended by a certain arrangement of roses. The young page smiled and hummed the refrain of "La petite balette." Sporion, too, had delicate perceptions,

and was vastly entertained by the disposition of the candelabra.

As the courses advanced, the conversation grew bustling and more personal. Pulex and Cyril and Marisca and Cathelin opened a fire of raillery. The infidelities of Cerise, the difficulties of Brancas, Sarmean's caprices that morning in the lily garden, Thorilliere's declining strength, Astarte's affection for Roseola, Felix's impossible member, Cathelin's passion for Sulpilia's poodle, Sola's passion for herself, the nasty bite that Marisca gave Chloe, the *épilatière* of Pulex, Cyril's diseases, Butor's illness, Maryx's tiny cemetery, Lesbia's profound fourth letter, and a thousand amatory follies of the day were discussed.

From harsh and shrill and clamant, the voices grew blurred and inarticulate. Bad sentences were helped out by worse gestures, and at one table, Scabius could only express himself with his napkin,

after the manner of Sir Jolly Jumble in the first part of the *Soldier's Fortune* of Otway. Basalissa and Lysistrata tried to pronounce each other's names, and became very affectionate in the attempt ; and Tala, the tragedian, robed in roomy purple and wearing plume and buskin, rose to his feet and with swaying gestures began to recite one of his favourite parts. He got no further than the first line, but repeated it again and again, with fresh accents and intonations each time, and was only silenced by the approach of the asparagus that was being served by satyrs dressed in white muslin.

Clitor and Sodon had a violet struggle over the beautiful Pella, and nearly upset a chandelier. Sophie became very intimate with an empty champagne bottle, swore it had made her enceinte, and ended by having a mock accouchement on the top of the table ; and Belamour pretended to be a dog, and pranced from couch to couch

on all fours, biting and barking and licking. Mellefont crept about dropping love philtres into glasses. Juventus and Ruella stripped and put on each other's things, Spelto offered a prize for who ever should come first, and Spelto won it! Tannhäuser, just a little grisé, lay down on the cushions and let Julia do whatever she liked.

I wish I could be allowed to tell you what occurred round table 15 just at this moment. It would amuse you very much, and would give you a capital idea of the habits of Venus's retinue. Indeed, for deplorable reasons, by far the greater part of what was said and done at this supper must remain unrecorded and even unsuggested.

Venus allowed most of the dishes to pass untasted, she was so engaged with the beauty of Tannhäuser. She laid her head many times on his robe, kissing him passionately; and his skin, at once firm and yielding, seemed to those exquisite

little teeth of hers, the most incomparable pasture. Her upper lip curled and trembled with excitement, showing the gums. Tannhäuser, on his side, was no less devoted. He adored her all over and all the things she had on, and buried his face in the folds and flounces of her linen, and ravished away a score of frills in his excess. He found her exasperating, and crushed her in his arms, and slaked his parched lips at her mouth. He caressed her eyelids softly with his finger tips, and pushed aside the curls from her forehead, and did a thousand gracious things, tuning her body as a violinist tunes his instrument before he plays upon it.

Priapusa snorted like an old war horse at the sniff of powder, and tickled Tannhäuser and Venus by turns, and slipped her tongue down their throats, and refused to be quiet at all until she had had a mouthful of the Chevalier. Claude, seizing his chance, dived under the table and

came up on the other side just under the Queen's couch, and before she could say "One!" he was taking his coffee "aux deux colonnes". Clair was furious at his friend's success, and sulked for the rest of the evening.



THE FRUIT-BEARERS

CHAPTER V

OF THE BALLET DANCED BY THE SERVANTS OF VENUS

AFTER THE FRUITS and fresh wines had been brought in by a troop of woodland creatures, decked with green leaves and all sorts of Spring flowers, the candles in the orchestra were lit, and in another moment the musicians bustled into their places. The wonderful Titurel de Schentefleur was the chef d'orchestre, and the most insidious of conductors. His bâton dived into a phrase and brought out the most magical and magnificent things, and seemed rather to play every instrument than to lead it. He could add grace even to Scarlatti and a wonder to Beethoven. A delicate, thin, little man with thick

lips and a nez retroussé, with long black hair and curled moustache, in the manner of Molière. What were his amatory tastes, no one in the Venusberg could tell. He generally passed for a virgin, and Cathos had nicknamed him "The Solitaire."

Tonight he appeared in a court suit of white silk, brilliant with decorations. His hair was curled in resplendent ringlets that trembled like springs at the merest gesture of his arm, and in his ears swung the diamonds given him by Venus.

The orchestra was, as usual, in its uniform of red vest and breeches trimmed with gold lace, white stockings and red shoes. Titurel had written a ballet for the evening divertissement, founded upon De Bergerac's comedy of *Les Bacchanales de Sporion*, in which the action and dances were designed by him as well as the music.

I

The curtain rose upon a scene of rare beauty, a remote Arcadian valley, a delicious scrap of Tempe, gracious with cool woods and watered with a little river. It was early morning and the re-arisen sun, like the prince in the *Sleeping Beauty*, woke all the earth with his lips. In that golden embrace the night dews were caught up and made splendid, the trees were awakened from their obscure dreams, the slumber of the birds was broken, and all the flowers of the valley rejoiced, forgetting their fear of the darkness.

Suddenly, to the music of pipe and horn, a troop of satyrs stepped out from the recesses of the woods bearing in their hands nuts and green boughs and flowers and roots, and whatsoever the forest yielded, to heap upon the altar of the mysterious Pan that stood in the middle of the stage ; and

from the hills came down the shepherds and shepherdesses leading their flocks and carrying garlands upon their crooks. Then a rustic priest, white robed and venerable, came slowly across the valley followed by a choir of radiant children.

The scene was admirably stage-managed and nothing could have been more varied yet harmonious than this Arcadian group. The service was quaint and simple, but with sufficient ritual to give the corps-de-ballet an opportunity of showing its dainty skill. The dancing of the satyrs was received with huge favour, and when the priest raised his hand in final blessing, the whole troop of worshippers made such an intricate and elegant exit, that it was generally agreed that Titurel had never before shown so fine an invention.

Scarcely had the stage been empty for a moment, when Sporion entered, followed by a brilliant rout of dandies and smart women. Sporion was a tall,

slim, depraved young man with a slight stoop, a troubled walk, an oval impassable face, with its olive skin drawn tightly over the bone, strong, scarlet lips, long Japanese eyes, and a great gilt toupet. Round his shoulders hung a high-collared satin cape of salmon pink with long black ribands untied and floating about his body. His coat of sea-green spotted muslin was caught in at the waist by a scarlet sash with scalloped edges and frilled out over the hips for about six inches. His trousers, loose and wrinkled, reached to the end of the calf, and were brocaded down the sides and ruched magnificently at the ankles. The stockings were of white kid with stalls for the toes, and had delicate red sandals strapped over them. But his little hands, peeping out from their frills, seemed quite the most insinuating things, such supple fingers tapering to the point, with tiny nails stained pink, such unquenchable palms, lined and mounted like Lord

Fanny's in *Love at all Hazards*, and such blue-veined, hairless backs ! In his left hand he carried a small lace handkerchief broidered with a coronet.

As for his friends and followers, they made the most superb and insolent crowd imaginable, but to catalogue the clothes they had on would require a chapter as long as the famous tenth in Pénillière's history of underlinen. On the whole they looked a very distinguished chorus.

Sporion stepped forward and explained with swift and various gesture that he and his friends were tired of the amusements, wearied with the poor pleasure offered by the civil world, and had invaded the Arcadian valley hoping to experience a new frisson in the destruction of some shepherd's or some satyr's naïveté, and the infusion of their venom among the dwellers of the woods.

The chorus assented with languid but expressive movements.

Curious, and not a little frightened at the arrival of the worldly company, the sylvans began to peep nervously at those subtle souls through the branches of the trees, and one or two fauns and a shepherd or so crept out warily. Sporion and all the ladies and gentlemen made enticing sounds and invited the rustic creatures with all the grace in the world to come and join them. By little batches they came, lured by the strange looks, by the scents and the doings, and by the brilliant clothes, and some ventured quite near, timorously fingering the delicious textures of the stuffs. Then Sporion and each of his friends took a satyr or a shepherdess or something by the hand and made the preliminary steps of a courtly measure, for which the most admirable combinations had been invented and the most charming music written.

The pastoral folk were entirely bewildered when they saw such restrained and graceful movements,

and made the most grotesque and futile efforts to imitate them. Dio mio, a pretty sight! A charming effect, too, was obtained by the intermixture of stockinged calf and hairy leg, of rich brocaded bodice and plain blouse, of tortured head-dress and loose untutored locks. When the dance was ended the servants of Sporion brought on champagne, and, with many pirouettes, poured it magnificently into slender glasses, and tripped about plying those Arcadian mouths that had never before tasted such a royal drink.

* * * * *

Then the curtain fell with a pudic rapidity.

II

'Twas not long before the invaders began to enjoy the first fruits of their expedition, plucking them in

the most seductive manner with their smooth fingers, and feasting lip and tongue and tooth, whilst the shepherds and satyrs and shepherdesses fairly gasped under the new joys, for the pleasure they experienced was almost too keen for their simple and untilled natures. Sporion and the rest of the rips and ladies tingled with excitement and frolicked like young lambs in a fresh meadow. Again and again the wine was danced round, and the valley grew as busy as a market day. Attracted by the noise and the merrymaking, all those sweet infants I told you of skipped suddenly on to the stage, and began clapping their hands and laughing immoderately at the passion and disorder and commotion, and mimicking the nervous staccato movements they saw in their pretty childish way.

In a flash Sporion disentangled himself and sprang to his feet, gesticulating as if he would say, "Ah, the little dears!" "Ah, the rorty little things!"

“Ah, the little ducks !” for he was so fond of children. Scarcely had he caught one by the thigh than a quick rush was made by everybody for the succulent limbs ; and how they tousled them and mousled them ! The children cried out, I can tell you. Of course there were not enough for everybody, so some had to share, and some had simply to go on with what they were doing before.

I must not, by the way, forget to mention the independent attitude taken by six or seven of the party, who sat and stood about with half-closed eyes, inflated nostrils, clenched teeth, and painful, parted lips, behaving like the Duc de Broglie when he watched the amours of the Régent d’Orléans.

Now as Sporion and his friends began to grow tired and exhausted with the new debauch, they cared no longer to take the initiative, but, relaxing every muscle, abandoned themselves to passive

joys, yielding utterly to the ardent embraces of the intoxicated satyrs, who waxed fast and furious, and seemed as if they would never come to the end of their strength. Full of the new tricks they had learnt that morning, they played them passionately and roughly, making havoc of the cultured flesh, and tearing the splendid frocks and dresses into ribands. Duchesses and Maréchales, Marquises and Princesses, Dukes and Marshalls, Marquesses and Princes, were ravished and stretched and rumped and crushed beneath the interminable vigour and hairy breasts of the inflamed woodlanders. They bit at the white thighs and nozzled wildly in the crevices. They sat astride the women's chests and consummated frantically with their bosoms ; they caught their prey by the hips and held it over their heads, irrumating with prodigious gusto. It was the triumph of the valley.

High up in the heavens the sun had mounted and filled all the air with generous warmth, whilst shadows grew shorter and sharper. Little light-winged papillons flitted across the stage, the bees made music on their flowery way, the birds were gay and kept up a-jargoning and refraining, the lambs were bleating upon the hillside, and the orchestra kept playing, playing the uncanny tunes of Titirel.

CHAPTER VI

OF THE AMOROUS ENCOUNTER WHICH
TOOK PLACE BETWEEN VENUS AND
TANNHÄUSER

VENUS AND TANNHÄUSER had retired to the exquisite little boudoir or pavilion Le Con had designed for the queen on the first terrace, and which commanded the most delicious view of the parks and gardens. It was a sweet little place, all silk curtains and soft cushions. There were eight sides to it, bright with mirrors and candelabra, and rich with pictured panels, and the ceiling, dome-shaped and some thirty feet above the head, shone obscurely with gilt mouldings through the warm haze of candle light below. Tiny wax statuettes dressed theatrically

and smiling with plump cheeks, quaint magots that looked as cruel as foreign gods, gilded monticules, pale celadon vases, clocks that said nothing, ivory boxes full of secrets, china figurines playing whole scenes of plays, and a world of strange preciousness crowded the curious cabinets that stood against the walls. On one side of the room there were six perfect little card tables, with quite the daintiest and most elegant chairs set primly round them ; so, after all, there may be some truth in that line of Mr. Theodore Watts—

“I played at picquet with the Queen of Love.”

Nothing in the pavilion was more beautiful than the folding screens painted by De La Pine, with Claudian landscapes—the sort of things that fairly make one melt, things one can lie and look at for hours together, and forget that the country can ever be dull and tiresome. There were four of

them, delicate walls that hem in an amour so cosily, and make room within room.

The place was scented with huge branches of red roses, and with a faint amatory perfume breathed out from the couches and cushions—a perfume Chateline distilled in secret and called L'Eau Lavante.

Those who have only seen Venus at the Louvre or the British Museum, at Florence, at Naples, or at Rome, can not have the faintest idea how sweet and enticing and gracious, how really exquisitely she looked lying with Tannhäuser upon rose silk in that pretty boudoir.

Cosmé's precise curls and artful waves had been finally disarranged at supper, and strayed-ringlets of black hair fell loosely over Venus's soft, delicious, tired, swollen eyelids. Her frail chemise and dear little drawers were torn and moist, and clung transparently about her, and all her body

was nervous and responsive. Her closed thighs seemed like a vast replica of the little bijou she had between them ; the beautiful tétons du derrière were firm as a plump virgin's cheek, and promised a joy as profound as the mystery of the Rue Vendôme, and the minor chevelure, just profuse enough, curled as prettily as the hair upon a cherub's head.

Tannhäuser, pale and speechless with excitement, passed his gem-girt fingers brutally over the divine limbs, tearing away smock and pantalon and stocking, and then, stripping himself of his own few things, fell upon the splendid lady with a deep-drawn breath.

It is, I know, the custom of all romancers to paint heroes who can give a lady proof of their valliance at least twenty times a night. Now Tannhäuser had no such Gargantuan facility, and was rather relieved when, an hour later, Priapusa

and Doricourt and some others burst into the room and claimed Venus for themselves. The pavilion soon filled with a noisy crowd that could scarcely keep its feet. Several of the actors were there, and Lesfesses, who had played Sporion so brilliantly, and was still in his make-up, paid tremendous attention to Tannhäuser. But the Chevalier found him quite uninteresting off the stage, and rose and crossed the room to where Venus and the manicure were seated.

“How tired the poor baby looks,” said Priapusa.
“Shall I put him in his little cot?”

“Well, if he’s as sleepy as I am,” yawned Venus,
“you can’t do better.”

Priapusa lifted her mistress off the pillows, and carried her in her arms in a nice, motherly way.

“Come along, children,” said the fat old thing,
“come along ; it’s time you were both in bed.”

CHAPTER VII

HOW TANNHÄUSER AWAKENED AND TOOK HIS MORNING ABLUTIONS IN THE VENUSBERG

IT IS ALWAYS DELIGHTFUL to wake up in a new bedroom. The fresh wall-paper, the strange pictures, the positions of doors and windows—imperfectly grasped the night before—are revealed with all the charm of surprise when we open our eyes the next morning.

It was about eight o'clock when Tannhäuser awoke, stretched himself deliciously in his great plumed four-post bed, murmured "What a pretty room!" and freshened the frilled silk pillows behind him. He lay back in his bed and nursed his waking thoughts, and stared at the curious patterned canopy above him. He was very pleased

with the room, which certainly was chic and fascinating, and recalled the voluptuous interiors of the elegant amorous Baudouin.

He thought of the *Romaunt de la Rose*, beautiful, but all too brief.

Of the Claude in Lady Delaware's collection.*

Of a wonderful pair of blonde trousers he would get Madame Belleville to make for him.

Of Saint Rose, the well known Peruvian virgin ; how she vowed herself to perpetual virginity

* The *chef d'œuvre*, it seems to me, of an adorable and impeccable master, who more than any other landscape-painter puts us out of conceit with our cities, and makes us forget the country can be graceless and dull and tiresome. That he should ever have been compared unfavourably with Turner—the Wiertz of landscape-painting—seems almost incredible. Corot is Claude's only worthy rival, but he does not eclipse or supplant the earlier master. A painting of Corot's is like an exquisite lyric poem, full of love and truth ; whilst one of Claude's recalls some noble eclogue glowing with rich concentrated thought.



THE ASCENSION ☿ ☿ ☿
OF SAINT ROSE OF LIMA

when she was four years old ;* how she was beloved by Mary, who, from the pale fresco in the Church of Saint Dominic, would stretch out her arms to embrace her ; how she built a little oratory at the end of the garden and prayed and sang hymns in it till all the beetles, spiders, snails and creeping

* “An age,” writes Dubonnet, “when girls are for the most part well confirmed in all the hateful practices of coquetry, and attend with gusto, rather than with distaste, the hideous desires and terrible satisfactions of men.”

All who would respire the perfumes of Saint Rose’s sanctity, and enjoy the story of the adorable intimacy that subsisted between her and Our Lady, should read Mother Ursula’s *Ineffable and Miraculous Life of the Flower of Lima*, published shortly after the canonisation of Rose by Pope Clement X, in 1671.

“Truly,” exclaims the famous nun, “to chronicle the girlhood of this holy virgin makes as delicate a task as to trace the forms of some slim, sensitive plant, whose lightness, sweetness and simplicity defy and trouble the most cunning pencil.” Mother Ursula certainly acquits herself of the task with wonderful delicacy and taste. A cheap reprint of the biography has lately been brought out by Chaillot and Son.

things came round to listen ; how she promised to marry Ferdinand de Flores, and on the bridal morning perfumed herself and painted her lips, and put on her wedding frock, and decked her hair with roses, and went up to a little hill not far without the walls of Lima ; how she knelt there some moments calling tenderly upon Our Lady's name, and how Saint Mary descended and kissed Rose upon the forehead and carried her swiftly into heaven.

He thought of the splendid opening of Racine's *Britannicus*.

Of a strange pamphlet he had found in Venus's library, called *A Plea for the Domestication of the Unicorn*.

Of the *Bacchanals of Sporion*.

Of love, and of a hundred other things.

Through the slim parting of the long flowered window curtains, he caught a peep of the sun-lit lawns

outside, the silver fountains, the bright flowers, the gardeners at work, and beneath the shady trees some early breakfasters, dressed for a day's hunting in the distant wooded valleys.

"How sweet it all is," exclaimed the Chevalier, yawning with infinite content; "and what delightful pictures," he continued, wandering with his eyes from print to print that hung upon the rose-striped walls. Within the delicate curved frames lived the corrupt and gracious creatures of Dorat and his school; slim children in masque and domino smiling horribly, exquisite lechers leaning over the shoulders of smooth doll-like girls and doing nothing in particular, terrible little Pierrots posing as mulierasts or pointing at something outside the picture, and unearthly fops and huge birdlike women mingling in some rococo room lighted mysteriously by the flicker of a dying fire that throws great shadows upon wall

and ceiling. One of the prints showing how an old marquis practised the five-finger exercise, while in front of him his mistress offered her warm fesses to a panting poodle, made the Chevalier stroke himself a little.

Tannhäuser had taken some books to bed with him. One was the witty, extravagant *Tuesday and Josephine*, another was the score of *The Rheingold*. Making a pulpit of his knees he propped up the opera before him and turned over the pages with a loving hand, and found it delicious to attack Wagner's brilliant comedy with the cool head of the morning.*

Once more he was ravished with the beauty

* It is a thousand pities that concerts should only be given either in the afternoon, when you are torpid, or in the evening when you are nervous. Surely you should assist at fine music as you assist at the Mass—before noon—when your brain and heart are not too troubled and tired with the secular influences of the growing day.



THE THIRD TABLEAU OF
❧ ❧ "DAS RHEINGOLD"

and wit of the opening scene ; the mystery of its prelude that seems to come up from the very mud of the Rhine, and to be as ancient, the abominable primitive wantonness of the music, the talk and movements of the Rhine-maidens, the black, hateful sounds in Alberich's love-making, and the flowing melody of the river of legends.

But it was the third tableau that he applauded most that morning ; the scene where Loge, like some flamboyant primeval Scapin, practises his cunning upon Alberich. The feverish insistent ringing of the hammers at the forge, the dry staccato restlessness of Mime ; the ceaseless coming and going of the troupe of Nibelungs, drawn hither and thither like a flock of terror-stricken and infernal sheep ; Alberich's savage activity and metamorphoses ; and Loge's rapid, flaming, tongue-like movements, make the tableau the least reposeful, most troubled and

confusing thing in the whole range of opera. How the Chevalier rejoiced in the extravagant monstrous poetry, the heated melodrama, and splendid agitation of it all !

At eleven o'clock Tannhäuser got up and slipped off his dainty night-dress, and postured elegantly before a long mirror, making much of himself.

Now he would bend forward, now lie upon the floor, now stand upright, and now rest upon one leg and let the other hang loosely till he looked as if he might have been drawn by some early Italian master. Anon he would lie upon the floor with his back to the glass, and glance amorously over his shoulder. Then with a white silk sash he draped himself in a hundred charming ways. So engrossed was he with his mirrored shape that he had not noticed the entrance of a troop of serving boys, who stood admiringly but respectfully at a

distance, ready to receive his waking orders. As soon as the Chevalier observed them he smiled sweetly, and bade them prepare his bath.

The bathroom was the largest and perhaps the most beautiful apartment in his splendid suite. The well-known engraving by Lorette that forms the frontispiece to Millevoye's *Architecture du XVIII^{me} Siècle* will give you a better idea than any words of mine of the construction and decoration of the room. Only, in Lorette's engraving, the bath sunk into the middle of the floor is a little too small.

Tannhäuser stood for a moment, like Narcissus, gazing at his reflection in the still, scented water, and then just ruffling its smooth surface with one foot, stepped elegantly into the cool basin, and swam round it twice very gracefully.

"Won't you join me?" he said, turning to those beautiful boys who stood ready with warm towels

and perfume. In a moment they were free of their light morning dress, and jumped into the water and joined hands, and surrounded the Chevalier with a laughing chain.

“Splash me a little,” he cried, and the boys teased him with water and quite excited him. He chased the prettiest of them and bit his fesses, and kissed him upon the perineum till the dear fellow banded like a carmelite, and its little bald top-knot looked like a great pink pearl under the water. As the boy seemed anxious to take up the active attitude, Tannhäuser graciously descended to the passive—a generous trait that won him the complete affections of his valets de bain, or pretty fish, as he liked to call them, because they loved to swim between his legs.

However, it is not so much at the very bath itself as in the drying and delicious frictions that a bather finds his chiefest pleasures. Venus had

appointed her most tried attendants to wait upon Tannhäuser, and he was more than satisfied with the skill that they displayed in the performance of those quasi-amorous functions. The delicate attention they paid his loving parts aroused feelings within him that almost amounted to gratitude ; and when the rites were ended, any touch of home-sickness he might have felt was utterly dispelled.

After he had rested a little, and sipped his chocolate, he wandered into the dressing-room. Daucourt, his valet de chambre, Chenille, the perruquier and barber, and two charming young dressers, were awaiting him and ready with suggestions for the morning toilet. The shaving over, Daucourt commanded his underlings to step forward with the suite of suits from which he proposed Tannhäuser should make a choice. The final selection was a happy one. A dear little coat

of pigeon-rose silk that hung loosely about his hips, and showed off the jut of his behind to perfection ; trousers of black lace in flounces, falling—almost like a petticoat—as far as the knee ; and a delicate chemise of white muslin, spangled with gold and profusely pleated.

The two dressers, under Daucourt's direction, did their work superbly, beautifully, leisurely, with an exquisite deference for the nude, and a really sensitive appreciation of the Chevalier's scrumptious torso.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THE ECSTASY OF ADOLPHE, AND THE REMARKABLE MANIFESTATION THEREOF

AS PLEASED AS LORD FOPPINGTON with his appearance, the Chevalier tripped off to bid good-morning to Venus. He found her wandering, in a sweet muslin frock, upon the lawn outside, and plucking flowers to deck her little déjeuner. He kissed her lightly upon the neck.

“I’m just going to feed Adolphe,” she said, pointing to a little reticule of buns that hung from her arm. Adolphe was her pet unicorn. “He is such a dear,” she continued; “milk white all over, excepting his black eyes, rose mouth and nostrils, and scarlet John. This way.” The unicorn

had a very pretty palace of its own, made of green foliage and golden bars—a fitting home for such a delicate and dainty beast. Ah, it was a splendid thing to watch the white creature roaming in its artful cage, proud and beautiful, knowing no mate and coming to no hand except the Queen's itself.

As Venus and Tannhäuser approached the wicket, Adolphe began prancing and curvetting, pawing the soft turf with his ivory hoofs and flaunting his tail like a gonfalon. Venus raised the latch and entered.

“You mustn't come in with me, Adolphe is so jealous,” she said, turning to the Chevalier who was following her, “but you can stand outside and look on ; Adolphe likes an audience.” Then in her delicious fingers she broke the spicy buns, and with affectionate niceness, breakfasted her ardent pet. When the last crumbs had been scattered, Venus brushed her hands together and pretended to leave

the cage, without taking any further notice of Adolphe. Every morning she went through this piece of play, and every morning the amorous unicorn was cheated into a distressing agony lest that day should have proved the last of Venus's love. Not for long, though, would she leave him in that doubtful, piteous state, but running back passionately to where he stood, make adorable amends for her unkindness.

Poor Adolphe ! How happy he was, touching the Queen's breasts with his quick tongue-tip. I have no doubt that the keener scent of animals must make women much more attractive to them than to men ; for the gorgeous odour that but faintly fills our nostrils must be revealed to the brute creation in divine fullness. Anyhow, Adolphe sniffed as never a man did around the skirts of Venus. After the first charming interchange of affectionate delicacies was over, the unicorn lay

down upon his side, and, closing his eyes, beat his stomach wildly with the mark of manhood !

Venus caught that stunning member in her hands and laid her cheek along it ; but few touches were wanted to consummate the creature's pleasure. The Queen bared her left arm to the elbow, and with the soft underneath of it made amazing movements horizontally upon the tightly-strung instrument. When the melody began to flow, the unicorn offered up an astonishing vocal accompaniment. Tannhäuser was amused to learn that the etiquette of the Venusberg compelled everybody to await the outburst of these venereal sounds before they could sit down to déjeuner.

Adolphe had been quite profuse that morning.

Venus knelt where it had fallen, and lapped her little apéritif.



PORTRAIT OF VENUS

CHAPTER IX

HOW VENUS AND TANNHÄUSER BREAKFASTED AND THEN DROVE THROUGH THE PALACE GARDENS

THE BREAKFASTERS were scattered over the gardens in *têtes-à-tête* and tiny parties. Venus and Tannhäuser sat together upon the lawn that lay in front of the Casino, and made havoc of a ravishing *déjeuner*. The Chevalier was feeling very happy. Everything around him seemed so white and light and matinal ; the floating frocks of the ladies, the scarce-robed boys and satyrs stepping hither and thither elegantly, with meats and wines and fruits ; the damask tablecloths, the delicate talk and laughter that rose everywhere ; the flowers' colour

and the flowers' scent ; the shady trees, the wind's cool voice, and the sky above that was as fresh and pastoral as a perfect sixth. And Venus looked so beautiful. Not at all like the lady in Lempriere.

"You're such a dear !" murmured Tannhäuser, holding her hand.

At the further end of the lawn, and a little hidden by a rose-tree, a young man was breakfasting alone. He toyed nervously with his food now and then, but for the most part leant back in his chair with unemployed hands, and gazed stupidly at Venus.

"That's Felix," said the Goddess, in answer to an enquiry from the Chevalier ; and she went on to explain his attitude. Felix always attended Venus upon her little latrinal excursions, holding her, serving her, and making much of all she did. To undo her things, lift her skirts, to wait and watch the coming, to dip a lip or finger in the royal output, to stain himself deliciously with it, to lie

beneath her as the favours fell, to carry off the crumpled, crotted paper—these were the pleasures of that young man's life.

Truly there never was a queen so beloved by her subjects as Venus. Everything she wore had its lover. Heavens ! how her handkerchiefs were filched, her stockings stolen ! Daily, what intrigues, what countless ruses to possess her merest frippery ! Every scrap of her body was adored. Never, for Savaral, could her ear yield sufficient wax ! Never, for Pradon, could she spit prodigally enough ! And Saphius found a month an interminable time.

After breakfast was over, and Felix's fears lest Tannhäuser should have robbed him of his capricious rights had been dispelled, Venus invited the Chevalier to take a more extensive view of the gardens, parks, pavilions, and ornamental waters. The carriage was ordered. It was a delicate, shell-like affair, with billowy cushions and a

light canopy, and was drawn by ten satyrs, dressed as finely as the coachmen of the Empress Pauline the First.

The drive proved interesting and various, and Tannhäuser was quite delighted with almost everything he saw.

And who is not pleased when on either side of him rich lawns are spread with lovely frocks and white limbs, and upon flower-beds the dearest ladies are implicated in a glory of underclothing ; when he can see, in the deep cool shadow of the trees, warm boys entwined, here at the base, there at the branch—when in the fountain's wave Love holds his court, and the insistent water burrows in every delicious crease and crevice ?

A pretty sight, too, was little Rosalie, perched like a postilion upon the painted phallus god of all gardens. Her eyes were closed and she was smiling as the carriage passed. Round her neck

and slender girlish shoulders there was a cloud of complex dress, over which bulged her wig-like flaxen tresses. Her legs and feet were bare, and the toes twisted in an amorous style. At the foot of the statue lay her shoes and stockings and a few other things.

Tannhäuser was singularly moved at this spectacle, and rose out of all proportion. Venus slipped the fingers of comfort under the lace flounces of his trousers, saying, "Is it all mine? Is it all mine?" and doing fascinating things. In the end, the carriage was only prevented from being overturned by the happy intervention of Priapusa, who stepped out from somewhere or other just in time to preserve its balance.

How the old lady's eye glistened as Tannhäuser withdrew his panting blade! In her sincere admiration for fine things, she quite forgot and forgave the shock she had received from the

falling of the gay equipage. Venus and Tannhäuser were profuse with apology and thanks, and quite a crowd of loving courtiers gathered round, consoling and congratulating in a breath.

The Chevalier vowed he would never go in the carriage again, and was really quite upset about it. However, after he had had a little support from the smelling-salts, he recovered his self-possession, and consented to drive on further.

The landscape grew rather mysterious. The park, no longer troubled and adorned with figures, was full of grey echoes and mysterious sounds; the leaves whispered a little sadly, and there was a grotto that murmured like a voice haunting the silence of a deserted oracle. Tannhäuser became a little triste. In the distance, through the trees, gleamed a still, argent lake—a reticent, romantic water that must have held the subtlest fish that ever were. Around its

marge the trees and flags and fleurs de luce were unbreakably asleep.

The Chevalier fell into a strange mood, as he looked at the lake. It seemed to him that the thing would speak, reveal some curious secret, say some beautiful word, if he should dare wrinkle its pale face with a pebble.

“I should be frightened to do that, though,” he said to himself. Then he wondered what might be upon the other side ; other gardens, other gods ? A thousand drowsy fancies passed through his brain. Sometimes the lake took fantastic shapes, or grew to twenty times its size, or shrunk into a miniature of itself, without ever once losing its unruffled calm, its deathly reserve. When the water increased, the Chevalier was very frightened, for he thought how huge the frogs must have become. He thought of their big eyes and monstrous wet feet, but when the water lessened, he laughed to

himself, whilst thinking how tiny the frogs must look thinner than spiders', and of their dwindled croaking, that never could be heard. Perhaps the lake was only painted, after all. He had seen things like it at the theatre. Anyway, it was a wonderful lake, a beautiful lake, and he would love to bathe in it, but he was sure he would be drowned if he did.

CHAPTER X

OF THE STABAT MATER, SPIRIDION AND DE LA PINE

WHEN HE WOKE UP from his day-dream, he noticed that the carriage was on its way back to the palace. They stopped at the Casino first, and stepped out to join the players at *petits chevaux*. Tannhäuser preferred to watch the game rather than play himself, and stood behind Venus, who slipped into a vacant chair and cast gold pieces upon lucky numbers. The first thing that Tannhäuser noticed was the grace and charm, the gaiety and beauty of the croupiers. They were quite adorable even when they raked in one's little losings. Dressed in black silk, and wearing white kid gloves, loose yellow

wigs and feathered toques, with faces oval and young, bodies lithe and quick, voices silvery and affectionate, they made amends for all the hateful arrogance, disgusting aplomb, and shameful ugliness of the rest of their kind.

The dear fellow who proclaimed the winner was really quite delightful. He took a passionate interest in the horses, and had licked all the paint off their *petits couillons* ! You will ask me, no doubt, "Is that all he did ?" I will answer, "Not quite"—as the merest glance at their *jolis derrières* would prove.

In the afternoon light that came through the great silken-blinded windows of the Casino, all the gilded decorations, all the chandeliers, the mirrors, the polished floor, the painted ceiling, the horses galloping round their green meadow, the fat *rouleaux* of gold and silver, the ivory rakes, the fanned and strange-frocked crowd of dandy gamesters looked magnificently rich and warm.

Tea was being served. It was so pretty to see some plush little lady sipping nervously, and keeping her eyes over the cup's edge intently upon the slackening horses.

The more indifferent left the tables and took their tea in parties here and there.

Tannhäuser found a great deal to amuse him at the Casino. Ponchon was the manager, and a person of extraordinary invention. Never a day but he was ready for a new show—a novel attraction. A glance through the old Casino programmes would give you a very considerable idea of his talent. What countless ballets, comedies, comedy-ballets, concerts, masques, charades, proverbs, pantomimes, tableaux magiques, and peep-shows excentriques ; what troupes of marionettes, what burlesques !

Ponchon had an astonishing flair for new talent, and many of the principal comedians and singers at

the Queen's Theatre and Opera House had made their first appearance and reputation at the Casino.

This afternoon the pièce de résistance was a performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, an adorable masterpiece. It was given in the beautiful Salle des Printemps Parfumés. Ah! what a stunning rendering of the delicious démodée pièce de décadence. There is a subtle quality about the music, like the unhealthy bloom upon wax fruit, that both orchestra and singer contrived to emphasise with consummate delicacy.

The Virgin was sung by Spiridion, that soft, incomparable alto. A miraculous virgin, too, he made of her. To begin with, he dressed the rôle most effectively. His plump legs up to the feminine hips of him were in very white stockings, clocked with a false pink. He wore brown kid boots, buttoned to mid-calf, and his whorish thighs had thin scarlet garters round them. His jacket was cut

like a jockey's, only the sleeves ended in manifold frills, and round the neck, and just upon the shoulders there was a black cape. His hair, dyed green, was curled into ringlets, such as the smooth Madonnas of Morales are made lovely with, and fell over his high egg-shaped creamy forehead, and about his ears and cheeks and back.

The alto's face was fearful and wonderful—a dream face. The eyes were full and black, with puffy blue-rimmed hemispheres beneath them, the cheeks, inclining to fatness, were powdered and dimpled, the mouth was purple and curved painfully, the chin tiny, and exquisitely modelled, the expression cruel and womanish. Heavens! how splendid he looked and sounded.

An exquisite piece of phrasing was accompanied with some curly gesture of the hand, some delightful undulation of the stomach, some nervous movement of the thigh, or glorious rising of the bosom.

The performance provoked enthusiasm—thunders of applause. Claude and Clair pelted the thing with roses, and carried him off in triumph to the tables. His costume was declared ravishing. The men almost pulled him to bits, and mouthed at his great quivering bottom! The little horses were quite forgotten for the moment.

Sup, the penetrating, burst through his silk fleshings, and thrust in bravely up to the hilt, whilst the alto's legs were feasted upon by Pudex, Cyril, Anquetin, and some others. Ballice, Corvo, Quadra, Senillé, Mellefont, Théodore, Le Vit and Matta, all of the egoistic cult, stood and crouched round, saturating the lovers with warm douches.

Later in the afternoon, Venus and Tannhäuser paid a little visit to De La Pine's studio, as the Chevalier was very anxious to have his portrait painted. De La Pine's glory as a painter was hugely increased by his reputation as a fouteur,

for ladies that had pleasant memories of him looked with a biased eye upon his fêtes galantes merveilleuses, portraits and folies bergères.

Yes, he was a bawdy creature, and his workshop a regular brothel. However, his great talent stood in no need of such meretricious and phallic support, and he was every whit as strong and facile with his brush as with his tool.

When Venus and the Chevalier entered his studio, he was standing amid a group of friends and connoisseurs who were liking his latest picture. It was a small canvas, one of his delightful morning pieces. Upon an Italian balcony stood a lady in a white frock, reading a letter. She wore brown stockings, straw-coloured petticoats, white shoes and a Leghorn hat. Her hair was red and in a chignon. At her feet lay a tiny Japanese dog, painted from the Queen's favourite "Fanny", and upon the balustrade stood an open empty bird cage. The back-ground was a stretch of Gallic

country, clusters of trees cresting the ridges of low hills, a bit of river, a château, and the morning sky.

De La Pine hastened to kiss the moist and scented hand of Venus. Tannhäuser bowed profoundly and begged to have some pictures shown him. The gracious painter took him round his studio.

Cosmé was one of the party, for De La Pine just then was painting his portrait—a portrait, by the way, which promised to be a veritable chef d'œuvre. Cosmé was loved and admired by everybody. To begin with, he was pastmaster in his art, that fine, relevant art of coiffing ; then he was really modest and obliging, and was only seen and heard when he was wanted. He was useful ; he was decorative in his white apron, black mask and silver suit ; he was discreet.

The painter was giving Venus and Tannhäuser a little dinner that evening, and he insisted on Cosmé joining them. The barber vowed he would be *de trop*, and required a world of pressing before

he would accept the invitation. Venus added her voice, and he consented.

Ah! what a delightful little *partie carrée* it turned out. The painter was in purple and full dress, all tassels and grand folds. His hair magnificently curled, his heavy eyelids painted, his gestures large and romantic, he reminded one a little of Maurel playing Wolfram in the second act of the Opera of Wagner.

Venus was in a ravishing toilet and confection of Camille's, and looked like K——. Tannhäuser was dressed as a woman and looked like a Goddess. Cosmé sparkled with gold, bristled with ruffs, glittered with bright buttons, was painted, powdered, gorgeously bewigged, and looked like a marquis in a comic opera.

The *salle à manger* at De La Pine's was quite the prettiest that ever was.

HERE THE MANUSCRIPT ENDS



THE RETURN OF TANNHÄUSER
❧ ❧ ❧ TO THE VENUSBERG

NOTE

¶ In spite of intensive efforts, writing, revising and and endless polishings of the enamelled phrases of *Under the Hill*, at Beardsley's death his "romantic novel" remained unfinished. His original and heavily re-worked manuscript draft is preserved in the Rosenbach Foundation library in Philadelphia.

The history of the the novel's publication is highly complex. Having originally offered the book to John Lane, in the event the early chapters were first published in serial form by Leonard Smithers in early numbers of *The Savoy*. On Smithers's bankruptcy, Lane acquired all the surviving material for the book, including most of the pictures, and in 1904 issued a heavily Bowdlerised illustrated version of the manuscript in a handsome quarto volume : as had Smithers in *The Savoy*, Lane published the work as *Under the Hill*. In 1907 Smithers himself issued a pirated version, this time, however, under Beardsley's original title, *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser*, printed without illustrations and with Smithers's usual typographic panache completely absent, was limited to 300 copies "for the use of literary students who are also admirers of Beardsley's wayward genius". Its chief merit lies in the fact that it makes available a much fuller text than had Lane.

Precisely in what way Beardsley would have developed his story and his characters, and what other bizarre and fantastical

episodes he might have introduced, must ever remain a mystery. From various oblique mentions of his plans, however, and most importantly from the long and elaborate explanatory title given on the double-page spread which Beardsley had originally intended to open the book, it is clear that he envisaged that his version would to a large extent follow the original Tannhäuser legends: mention is made of Tannhäuser's further journeying to Rome, and we may presume that there would have been descriptions of his audience with the Pope, of his repentance, and of the "miraculous burgeoning of the Papal staff" which symbolised Tannhäuser's attainment of a state of Grace.

Nevertheless, it is equally clear that Beardsley intended a final twist to the story, in which Tannhäuser made one more return to the "loving mountain" of the Venusberg. This last episode formed the subject of the poignant drawing, reproduced from the line-block, on the preceding page, which the artist made and presented to J. M. Dent, his first publisher, in thanks for Dent's granting of permission to reproduce a number of Beardsley's early designs to which he owned the copyright.

In common with recent editors, we have compiled the present text from the three early printed sources mentioned above in order to include in a single version all the best passages of Beardsley's writing. We have eliminated, however, certain infelicitous repetitions of both phrase and style which, due to the fragmented nature of the text, were allowed to creep into both Lane's and Smithers's later versions. We have also retained the title by which the work is best known.

PROSE AND VERSE

THE LITERARY REMAINS

THE ART OF THE HOARDING

ADVERTISEMENT is an absolute necessity of modern life, and if it can be made beautiful as well as obvious, so much the better for the makers of soap and the public who are likely to wash.

The popular idea of a picture is something told in oil or writ in water to be hung on a room's wall or in a picture gallery to perplex an artless public. No one expects it to serve a useful purpose or take a part in everyday existence. Our modern painter has merely to give a picture a good name and hang it.

Now the poster first of all justified its existence on the grounds of utility, and should it further aspire to beauty of line and colour, may not our hoardings claim kinship with the galleries, and the designers

of *affiches* pose proudly in the public eye as the masters of Holland Road or Bond Street Barbizon (and, recollect, no gate money, no catalogue) ?

Still there is a general feeling that the artist who puts his art into the poster is *déclassé*—on the streets—and consequently of light character. The critics can discover no brush work to prate of, the painter looks askance upon a thing that achieves publicity without a frame, and beauty without modelling, and the public find it hard to take seriously a poor printed thing left to the mercy of sunshine, soot, and shower, like any old fresco over an Italian church door.

What view the bill-sticker and sandwich man take of the subject I have yet to learn. The first is, at least, no bad substitute for a hanging committee, and the clothes of the second are better company than somebody else's picture, and less obtrusive than a background of stamped magenta paper.

Happy, then, those artists who thus escape the injustice of juries and the shuffling of dealers, and choose to keep that distance that lends enchantment to the private view, and avoid the world of worries that attends on those who elect to make an exhibition of themselves.

London will soon be resplendent with advertisements, and, against a leaden sky, sky-signs will trace their formal arabesque. Beauty has laid siege to the city, and telegraph wires shall no longer be the sole joy of our æsthetic perceptions.

Now, as to the technicalities of the art, I have nothing to say. To generalise upon any subject is to fall foul of the particular, and 'twere futile to lay down any rules for the making of posters. One's ears are weary of the voice of the art teacher who sits like the parrot on his perch, learning the jargon of the studios, making but poor copy and calling it criticism. We have had enough of their

omniscience, their parade of technical knowledge, and their predilection for the wrong end of the stick. But if there be any who desire to know—not how posters are made—but how they should be, I doubt not that I could give them the addresses of one or two gentlemen who, having taken art under their wing, would give all necessary information.



DESIGN FOR THE FRONTISPIECE TO
THE PLAYS OF JOHN DAVIDSON ¶ ¶

THREE LETTERS
WRITTEN IN REPLY TO HIS CRITICS

To the Editor of the Daily Chronicle.

1 March 1894.
114 Cambridge Street.

SIR,

In your review of Mr. Davidson's plays, I find myself convicted of an error of taste, for having introduced portraits into my frontispiece to that book. I cannot help feeling that your reviewer is unduly severe. One of the gentlemen who form part of my decoration is surely beautiful enough to stand the test even of portraiture, the other owes me half a crown.

I am, yours truly,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

To the Editor of the Pall Mall Budget.

27 April 1894.

The Bodley Head, Vigo Street, W.

SIR,

So much exception has been taken, both by the Press and by private persons, to my title-page of *The Yellow Book*, that I must plead for space in your valuable paper to enlighten those who profess to find my picture unintelligible. It represents a lady playing the piano in the middle of a field.

Unpardonable affectation! cry the critics. But let us listen to Bomvet. "Christopher Willibald Ritter von Gluck, in order to warm his imagination and to transport himself to Aulis or Sparta, was accustomed to place himself in the middle of a field. In this situation, with his piano before him, and a bottle of champagne on each side, he



The Yellow Book

An Illustrated Quarterly

Volume I April 1894

London : Elkin Mathews
& John Lane
Boston : Copeland &
Day

DESIGN FOR THE TITLE PAGE TO
"THE YELLOW BOOK", VOLUME I

wrote in the open air his two *Iphigenias*, his *Orpheus*, and some other works." I tremble to think what critics would say had I introduced those bottles of champagne. And yet we do not call Gluck a decadent.

Yours obediently,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

To the Editor of St. Paul's.

28 June 1895.

114 Cambridge Street.

SIR,

No one more than myself welcomes frank, nay hostile, criticism, or enjoys more thoroughly a personal remark. But your art critic surely goes a

little too far in last week's issue of St. Paul's, and I may be forgiven if I take up the pen of resentment. He says that I am "sexless and unclean".

As to my uncleanness, I do the best for it in my morning bath, and if he has really any doubts as to my sex, he may come and see me take it.

Yours, etc.,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

TABLE TALK

THE BROMPTON ORATORY

THE ONLY PLACE IN LONDON where one can forget that it is Sunday.

WEBER

Weber's pianoforte pieces remind me of the beautiful glass chandeliers at the Brighton Pavilion.

GEORGE SAND, ETC.

After all the Muses are women, and you must be a man to possess them—properly.

MENDELSSOHN

Mendelssohn has no gift for construction. He has only a feeling for continuity.

SHAKESPEARE

When an Englishman has professed his belief in the supremacy of Shakespeare amongst all poets, he feels himself excused from the general study of literature. He also feels himself excused from the particular study of Shakespeare.

ROSSINI'S "STABAT MATER"

The dolorous Mother should be sung by a virgin of Morales, one of the Spanish painter's unhealthy and hardly deiparous creatures, with high, egg-shaped, creamy forehead and well-crimped silken hair.

ALEXANDER POPE

Pope has more virulence and less vehemence than any of the great satirists. His character of Sporus is the perfection of satirical writing. The very sound of words scarify before the sense strikes.

IMPRESSIONISTS

How few of our young English impressionists knew the difference between a palette and a picture ! However, I believe that Walter Sickert did—sly dog !

TURNER

Turner is only a rhetorician in paint. That is why Ruskin likes him.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

What a stay-at-home literature is the English ! It would be easy to name fifty lesser French writers whose names and works are familiar all over the world. It would be difficult to name four of our greatest whose writings are read to any extent outside England.

HIS AFFECTATION

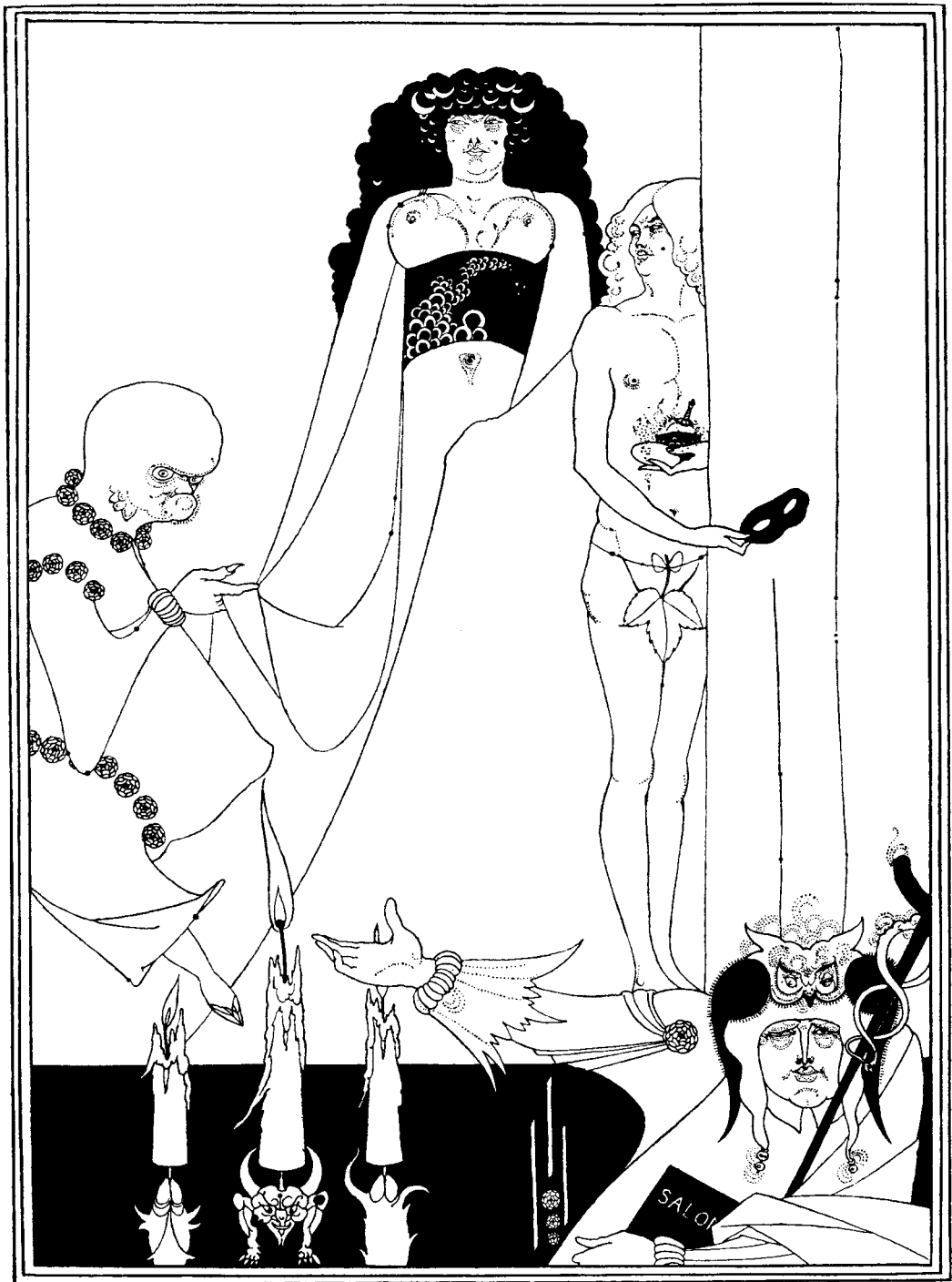
I'm so affected, that even my lungs are affected.

TAKING A CHILL

I caught cold—by going out without the tassel on my walking stick.

CHRISTIANITY

Nero set Christians on fire, like large tallow candles—the only light Christians have ever been known to give.



ENTER HERODIAS

LINES ON PICTURES

VERSE INSCRIBED ON A PROOF OF
THE UNEXPURGATED VERSION OF THE
SALOME ILLUSTRATION "ENTER HERODIAS"

BECAUSE ONE FIGURE was undressed
This little drawing was suppressed.
It was unkind—
But never mind—
Perhaps it was all for the best.

TO ACCOMPANY A PRINT OF
THE DRAWING OF SAINT ROSE OF LIMA

THERE WAS A YOUNG LADY of Lima
Whose life was as fast as a steamer.
 She played dirty tricks
 With a large crucifix
Till the spunk trickled right down her femur.



THE THREE MUSICIANS

THE THREE MUSICIANS

ALONG THE PATH that skirts the wood,
The three musicians wend their way,
Pleased with their thoughts, each other's mood,
Franz Himmel's latest roundelay,
The morning's work, a new-found theme, their
breakfast and the summer day.

One's a soprano, lightly frocked
In cool, white muslin that just shows
Her brown silk stockings gaily clocked,
Plump arms and elbows tipped with rose,
And frills of petticoats and things, and outlines
as the warm wind blows.

Beside her a slim, gracious boy
Hastens to mend her tresses' fall,
And dies her favour to enjoy,
And dies for *réclame* and recall
At Paris and St. Petersburg, Vienna and
St. James's Hall.

The third's a Polish Pianist
With big engagements everywhere,
A light heart and an iron wrist,
And shocks and shoals of yellow hair,
And fingers that can trill on sixths and fill
beginners with despair.



FIRST DESIGN (NOT USED) FOR
THE THREE MUSICIANS

The three musicians stroll along
 And pluck the ears of ripened corn,
Break into odds and ends of song,
 And mock the woods with Siegfried's horn,
And fill the air with Gluck, and fill the tweeded
 tourist's soul with scorn.

The Polish genius lags behind,
 And, with some poppies in his hand,
Picks out the strings and wood and wind
 Of an imaginary band,
Enchanted that for once his men obey his beat
 and understand.

The charming cantatrice reclines
And rests a moment where she sees
Her chateau's roof that hotly shines
Amid the dusky summer trees,
And fans herself, half shuts her eyes, and
smoothes the frock about her knees.

The gracious boy is at her feet,
And weighs his courage with his chance ;
His fears soon melt in noon-day heat.
The tourist gives a furious glance,
Red as his guide-book grows, moves on, and
offers up a prayer for France.



THE COIFFING

THE BALLAD OF A BARBER

HERE IS THE TALE of Carrousel,
The barber of Meridian Street.
He cut, and coiffed, and shaved so well,
That all the world was at his feet.

The King, the Queen, and all the Court,
To no one else would trust their hair,
And reigning belles of every sort
Owed their successes to his care.

With carriage and with cabriolet
Daily Meridian Street was blocked,
Like bees about a bright bouquet
The beaux about his doorway flocked.

Such was his art he could with ease
Curl wit into the dullest face ;
Or to a goddess of old Greece
Add a new wonder and a grace.

All powders, paints, and subtle dyes,
And costliest scents that men distil,
And rare pomades, forgot their price
And marvelled at his splendid skill.

The curling irons in his hand
Almost grew quick enough to speak,
The razor was a magic wand
That understood the softest cheek.

Yet with no pride his heart was moved ;
He was so modest in his ways !
His daily task was all he loved,
And now and then a little praise.

An equal care he would bestow
 On problems simple or complex ;
And nobody had seen him show
 A preference for either sex.

How came it then one summer day,
 Coiffing the daughter of the King,
He lengthened out the least delay
 And loitered in his hairdressing ?

The Princess was a pretty child,
 Thirteen years old, or thereabout.
She was as joyous and as wild
 As spring flowers when the sun is out.

Her gold hair fell down to her feet
 And hung about her pretty eyes ;
She was as lyrical and sweet
 As one of Schubert's melodies.

Three times the barber curled a lock,
And thrice he straightened it again ;
And twice the irons scorched her frock,
And twice he stumbled in her train.

His fingers lost their cunning quite,
His ivory combs obeyed no more ;
Something or other dimmed his sight,
And moved mysteriously the floor.

He leant upon the toilet table,
His fingers fumbled in his breast ;
He felt as foolish as a fable,
And feeble as a pointless jest.

He snatched a bottle of Cologne,
And broke the neck between his hands ;
He felt as if he was alone,
And mighty as a king's commands.

The Princess gave a little scream,
 Carrousel's cut was sharp and deep ;
He left her softly as a dream
 That leaves a sleeper to his sleep.

He left the room on pointed feet ;
 Smiling that things had gone so well.
They hanged him in Meridian Street.
 You pray in vain for Carrousel.





AB.

AVE ATQUE VALE

AVE ATQUE VALE

A TRANSLATION FROM CATULLUS:

CARMEN CI.

BY WAYS REMOTE and distant waters sped,
Brother, to thy sad grave-side am I come,
That I may give the last gifts to the dead,
And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb :
Since she who now bestows and now denies
Hath taken thee, hapless brother, from mine eyes.

But lo ! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,
Are made sad things to grace thy coffin shell,
Take them, all drenchèd with a brother's tears,
And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell !

THE CELESTIAL LOVER

A FRAGMENT

THE CAFÉ STRELITZ was almost empty.

Upon a hot midday in July, Don Juan wandered into the Café Strelitz for his breakfast. I know not by what chance he had left the rest of the world to go that day to the Valdau races with[out] him. Whether in search of some adventure...

* * * * *

The most fashionable of Restaurants was white with empty tables, for the *Prix d'Honneur* was being run that afternoon at Valdau—magnificent waiters sat about in magnificent unruffled expectation of the telegrams from the racecourse and rose reluctantly when there came some demand for coffee or the *addition*.

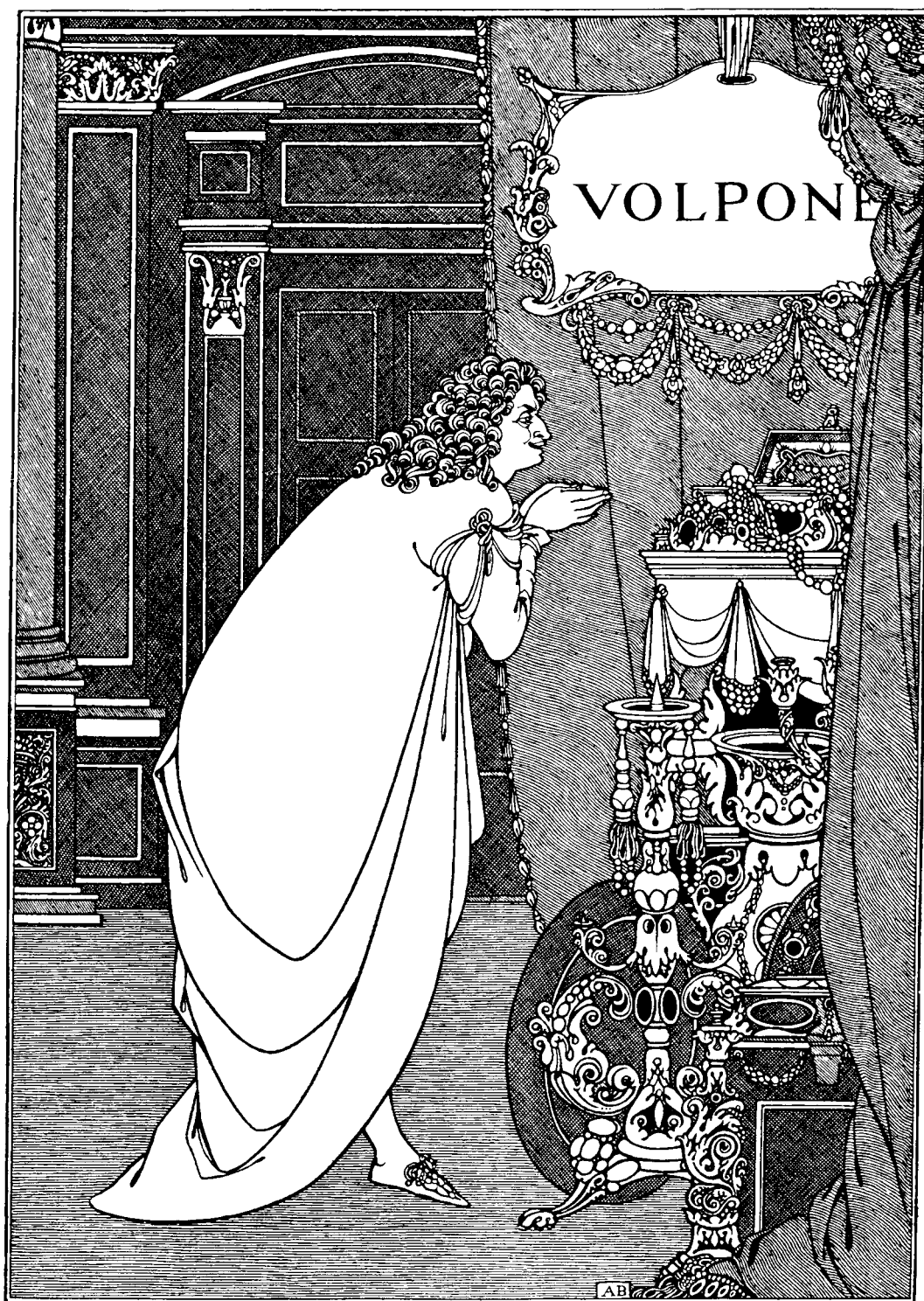
THE IVORY PIECE

A FRAGMENT OF VERSE

CARELESSLY COIFFED, with sash half
 slipping down
Cravat mis-tied, and tassels left to stream,
I walked haphazard through the early town,
Teased with the memory of a charming dream.

I recollected a great room. The day,
Half dead, lit faintly on the walls the pale
And sudden eyes that showed the formal play
Of woven actors in some curious tale.

In fabulous gardens, where romantic trees
Perched on the branches birds without a name.



VOLPONE ADORING HIS TREASURE

PROSPECTUS FOR VOLPONE

VOLPONE was first brought out at the Globe Theatre in 1605 and printed in quarto in 1607, after having been acted with great applause at both Universities, and was republished by Jonson in 1616 without alterations or additions. Volpone is undoubtedly the finest comedy in the English language outside the works of Shakespeare. Daring and forcible in conception, brilliant and faultless in execution, its extraordinary merits have excited the enthusiasm of all critics. The great French historian of English literature, Henri Taine, has devoted to it some of the most splendid pages of his famous work. “*Volpone*,” he exclaims,

*œuvre sublime, la plus vive peinture des mœurs du siècle,
où s'étale la pleine beauté des convoitises méchantes, où la*

*luxure, la cruauté, l'amour de l'or, l'impudeur de vice,
déploient une poésie sinistre et splendide, digne d'une
bacchanale du Titien.*

In none other of his plays, not even in *The Alchemist*, in *Bartholomew Fair*, or in *The Silent Woman*, is Ben Jonson's prodigious intellect and ardent satirical genius so perfectly revealed as in *Volpone*. The whole of Juvenal's satires are not more full of scorn and indignation than this one play, and the portraits which the Latin poet has given us of the lechers, dotards, pimps and parasites of Rome, are not drawn with a more passionate virulence than the English dramatist has displayed in the portrayal of the Venetian *magnifico*, his creatures and his gulls. Like *Le Misanthrope*, *Le Festin de Pierre*, like *L'Avare*, *Volpone* might more fitly be styled a tragedy, for the pitiless unmasking of the fox at the conclusion of the play is terrible rather than sufficient.

Volpone is a splendid sinner and compels our admiration by the fineness and very excess of his wickedness. We are scarcely shocked by his lust, so magnificent is the vehemence of his passion, and we marvel and are aghast rather than disgusted at his cunning and audacity. As Mr. Swinburne observes, "there is something throughout of the lion as well as the fox in this original and incomparable figure."

Volpone's capacity for pleasure is even greater than his capacity for crime, and Ben Jonson has added to these two salient characteristics a third, which is equally dominant in the Italian—the passion for the theatre. Disguise, costume, and the attitude have an irresistible attraction for him, the blood of the mime is in his veins. To be effective, to be imposing, to play a part magnificently, are as much a joy to him as the consciousness of the most real qualities and powers ;

and how perfectly Volpone acts, how marvellously he improvises ! He takes up a rôle with as much gusto and sureness as a finished comedian for whom the stage has not yet lost its glamour, and each new part gives him the huge pleasure of developing and accentuating some characteristic of his inexhaustibly rich nature, and of exercising his immensely fertile brain.

One of the most striking features in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama is the wonderful knowledge which our poets possess of the Italian nature, but it is generally upon the more gloomy side of that nature that they have dwelt with the greatest success.

In *Volpone* we find the *beau-idéal* of manhood as the seventeenth century in Italy conceived it. "*Faire de l'homme un être fort, muni de genie, d'audace, de presence d'esprit, de fine politique, de dissimulation, de patience, et tourner toute cette*

puissance à la recherche de tous les plaisirs, de luxe, des arts, des lettres, de l'autorité, c'est-à-dire, fermer et déchaîner un animal admirable et redoutable", such, in the words of Taine, was the aim of polite education in the days of Benvenuto Cellini.

The qualities which the Latin nations admire most are beauty, strength, cunning and versatility, and Volpone is Latin to the finger tips. He is as perfect an epitome of the Southern races as Hamlet is of the Northern.

NOTES

THE ART OF THE HOARDING

¶ 1894. First published in *The New Review*, July 1894.

THREE LETTERS TO HIS CRITICS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY CHRONICLE"

¶ 1894. The *Daily Chronicle* for 1 March 1894 printed a review of the Bodley Head edition of John Davidson's *Plays*, which took Beardsley to task specifically for his inclusion of identifiable figures in the frontispiece. This letter appeared on the following day. The likenesses were recognisable caricatures of Oscar Wilde and Sir Augustus Harris, then Manager of Covent Garden, where Beardsley had a short time before paid his 2/6d for a seat, only to be told, much to his indignation, that none was available and that he would have to stand.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PALL MALL BUDGET"

¶ 1894. Occasioned by adverse comment about the title-page of the first number of the Yellow Book, this letter was almost certainly written to stir up controversy for publicity purposes. The historical reference and the quotation are undoubtedly Beardsley's own inventions.

TO THE EDITOR OF "ST PAUL'S"

¶ 1895. This letter was written in reply to the journalist Haldane MacFall, who later became a supporter of the artist and wrote a valuable, if wildly opinionated, study of his character and art.

TABLE TALK

¶ The first ten aphorisms were collected under the title "Table Talk" and printed in John Lane's edition of the expurgated text of *Under the Hill*, 1904. The latter three *mots* are traditionally ascribed to Beardsley, and have been printed in a number of variant versions.

LINES UPON PICTURES

ENTER HERODIAS

¶ 1894. Beardsley's illustrations to Oscar Wilde's *Salome* were published in 1894. These lines, inscribed on a proof copy of the unexpurgated version of one of the most contentious of the pictures he executed, were sent by Beardsley to his friend Alfred Lambart.

THE ASCENSION OF SAINT ROSE OF LIMA

¶ 1896. In a letter to Leonard Smithers, written from Boscombe on 31st December 1896, Beardsley, no doubt facetiously, informed his publisher that

a lady has just written to ask me if I would be kind enough to send her a copy of verses upon any of my pictures. Whereupon I wired the following chaste thing...

THE THREE MUSICIANS

¶ 1895. First published in *The Savoy*, No.1, Jan 1896. Written during the Summer of 1895 at Arques-la-Bataille and in Dieppe. Arthur Symons described the verses as being “in their own way, a tour de force,” but peevishly added that they revealed only that Aubrey had succeeding “in doing what he certainly had no aptitude for doing.” According to a highly unlikely legend, the first version of the drawing made to accompany these verses was censored by Leonard Smithers, who is reputed to have thought the pose of the young man, with his hand upon the girl’s knee, too suggestive.

THE BALLAD OF A BARBER

¶ 1896. First published in *The Savoy*, No.3, July 1896. Originally intended to be printed as an episode of *Under the Hill*, Beardsley’s poem was adversely criticised by Arthur Symons, the magazine’s literary editor. When he heard of Symons’s reaction, Beardsley wrote facetiously to Leonard Smithers : “I am horrified at what you tell me about ‘*the Ballad*’. I had no idea it was ‘poor’. For goodness’ sake print the poem under a pseudonym and separately from *Under the Hill*... What do you think of ‘Symons’ as a *nom de plume* ?”

CATULLUS CARMEN CI

¶ 1896. First published in *The Savoy*, No.7, November 1896. Beardsley’s verses were written when he was already gravely ill, and follow closely a prose translation made by Smithers and the

polymath Sir Richard Burton for their edition of the *Carmina of Catullus*, one of Smithers's first, and most elegant, publications.

THE CELESTIAL LOVER

¶ 1897. Beardsley mentions the story of the *Celestial Lover*, and an accompanying picture, in several letters, but only this fragment of manuscript, preserved at Princeton, is extant.

THE IVORY PIECE

¶ 1898. Written in January 1898, shortly before his last illness, this draft of a poem—of which both theme and context remain tantalisingly obscure—gives an intriguing glimpse into the elliptic flights of Beardsley's imagination.

VOLPONE

¶ 1898. In addition to designing several full-page illustrations and numerous initial letters, Beardsley also intended to write an extended critical essay, by way of introduction to an edition of *Volpone* to be published by Leonard Smithers. *Volpone* proved to be Beardsley's last work, however, and he had completed only a handful of the designs before his death. The book appeared posthumously, with Robert Ross's "Eulogy of the Artist"; in the event, the essay was written by Vincent O'Sullivan. Smithers printed Beardsley's perceptive notes on the play, together with the ravishing illustration of *Volpone Adoring his Treasure*, as a prospectus for the book.

APPENDIX
JUVENILIA

THE VALIANT

A BALLAD

THE VALIANT was a noble bark
As ever ploughed the sea,
A noble crew she also had
As ever there might be.

When once at night upon the deep
The Valiant did sail,
Her captain saw a pirate ship
By the moonlight dim and pale.

Then up he called his goodly crew
And unto them thus spake :
“A musket and a cutlass sharp
Each must directly take.

“For yonder see a pirate ship,
Behold her flag so dark ;
See now the gloomy vessel
Makes straight for this our bark.”

Scarce had the Captain spoke those words
Than a shot o’er his head did fly
From the deck of the pirate ship which now
To the Valiant was hard by.

Approaching near, twelve desperate men
On the Valiant’s deck did leap,
But some there were less brave and strong
Who to their ship did keep.

And then a moment afterwards
Did a bloody fray ensue,
And as the time sped onward
Fiercer the fray it grew.

“Come on !” the Valiant’s captain cried,
“Come on, my comrades brave,
And if we die we shall not sink
Inglorious ’neath the wave.”

When the morning came, and the men arose,
The pirates, where were they ?
The ship had sunk and all its crew ;
Dead ’neath the sea they lay.

A RIDE IN A OMNIBUS

OF ALL KINDS OF CONVEYANCES, I think
the omnibus
For many little reasons should be voted best
by us ;
But there are just a few annoyances attendant
on a ride
In the very best of 'busses that you ever yet
have tried.

First, you get a little huddled with the odorous
“unélite”,
And—unless you are a Socialist, and love with
such to meet—
You have most distracting visions of an army
of disease,
Or the tortures of an insect, which are—well,
not exactly bees.

There's the horrible old laundress in a shawl
that's always plaid,
And that low-crowned-hatted gentleman,
whom people call a cad,
Then a fat old corduroyed navy goes a flop
into a seat,
With his bargy grimy boots just gently
stamping on your feet.

Next a drably little maiden jumps into the
omnibus,
With some parcels and a baby—such a
screaming little cuss !
After that a showy shopman smelling strong of
scented grease,
Thinks the omnibus his own and tries to make
his neighbours squeeze.

Whilst a pert and frowzy damsel, in a jacket
 trimmed with braid,
Sets up giggling and humming—oh, she is a
 modest maid !—
Then a stout and vulgar woman, quite a mass
 of rouge and paint,
With her cheap and nasty perfumes almost
 causes you to faint.

In addition to your neighbour's aggravating
 little ways,
The confounded public carriage at each street
 and corner stays,
The conductor then is bawling that "They go
 to—" you know, of course—
Keeps you waiting for an hour all without the
 least remorse.

To conclude my little poem, I would simply
just remark,
That it is not exactly pleasant when you have
to disembark,
As you're stepping out, the vehicle that very
moment starts,
And in the mud you find yourself amongst a
score of carts.

THE STORY OF
A CONFESSION ALBUM

OF ALL THE MINOR NUISANCES of life, I think none surpass the Confession Album. It is a miserable sort of private publicity, a new inquisition, though no doubt it is as well-meant as the old one.

I know not which is the more trying ordeal ; to write your own “confession” or to read those of other people. The general opinion appears to be that it is very funny to make yourself out as fast or as foolish as possible ; though even worse than this is the painful orthodoxy of those individuals who claim Shakespeare for their favourite poet, Beethoven for their favourite composer, and Raphael for their favourite painter.

My aversion to the Confession Album was strengthened a hundred-fold some little time back. It is now six months since I pledged my heart and hand to Miss —. The match was in every respect what is usually termed “desirable”, and I looked forward with no little satisfaction to a union which appeared so conducive to my future happiness.

It was Wednesday evening, a week before our marriage was to take place.

My fiancée was spending a few days in the country with an old school-fellow, a mutual friend at whose house we had first met. I was sitting smoking in my study in the most complaisant frame of mind, thinking what a happy individual I was, when my nerves were suddenly jarred by the sharp report of a postman’s knock. A minute after, the servant entered the room and handed me a letter.

My pleasure was great when I perceived that it was from my intended. I broke the seal, and drawing the lamp nearer, began reading with the greatest eagerness. What was my astonishment when I read the following :

“Dear Mr. H—,

“After the discovery I made this morning, all is at an end between us. I leave England to-morrow.

“P.s. Your presents shall be returned by Parcel Post.”

A month elapsed. Being a bit of a philosopher, I sustained the blow better than might have been expected. At first I had to put up with a considerable amount of chaff from my old chums. I nearly lost the friendship of a maiden aunt for having omitted to send her a piece of the wedding-cake, and I had some difficulty in making her understand that the ceremony had never taken place.

My grandfather wrote me a long letter, telling me

that I had acted disgracefully in jilting Miss—, and that he considered she had shown the greatest delicacy and good feeling in not bringing a “breach-of-promise” against me.

But what worried me most was the desire with which I was consumed to find out what on earth I had done to merit such treatment at her hands. Was it a previous love? That was out of the question. I had never had one. No scandal about me could possibly have come to her ears, for my life had been a very model for other young men. How was it, then, that I was still a lonely bachelor, when by rights I should have been gaily advancing on my honeymoon. The mystery, however, was soon to be unravelled. I received an invitation to stay at the house of that mutual friend of whom I have already spoken. On my arrival I was greeted most kindly by all the members of the family, who expressed in the most feeling manner their sorrow

at the upshot of my love affair. But nothing they said afforded me the slightest clue to the mystery, while I, always bashful, was far too timid to speak on the subject myself.

One day, however, I came across a Confession Album that was lying on the drawing-room table. I fancied that I recognised the book. Yes ; certainly I had seen it before. I turned over a few leaves, when my friend, looking over my shoulder, remarked :

“Ah ! There’s that unfortunate page.”

I looked round at her inquiringly, and said :
“Why, what’s the matter with it ?”

“Matter with it ?” she replied. “Look at it again.”

I did so. It was my own handwriting. “Ah, I scarcely remembered that I wrote that ; but,” I added, “what of it ?”

“How can you ask such a question ?” she said. “I suppose it was the cause of the most unfortunate event in your life.”

Then, at last, came the long-sought-for explanation. It appeared that my fiancée, in looking through this very book, while she was spending those few days in the country previous to our intended marriage, had come across this, my "confession". She read it with interest until she came to the question "Your *beau idéal* of happiness?" I had tried to be very funny and had written without a particle of truth, "Sitting beside Emily".

Now, unfortunately, "Emily" was not the name of my intended. Well, she shut the book with a bang, went off into a violent fit of hysterics, and on coming to, said that she hated and despised the man who, on the very verge of matrimony with one deluded female could still carry on an intrigue with another. "Let that Emily marry him," she cried, "he sees me no more". Argument was useless, she was deaf to persuasion. She took

her departure immediately after writing me that cruel note, and the following day started off with Mrs. — for the Engadine.

The sight of a Confession Album fairly makes me feel queer now. My friends seem to know this, so I am spared the aggravation of having to give my opinions succinctly on subjects of which I am perfectly ignorant.

THE COURTS OF LOVE

THE COURTS OF LOVE are fair to see
Built of shining masonry
Quaintly carved in olden day
By the fairies' hands they say.
Underneath the arching trees
Gentle lovers take their ease
Chanting songs of Ladye Love,
Whilst the birds which flit above
Make the golden courts to ring
With the joyous song they sing.
"Love is Lord of everything".

Maidens in the Month of May
Watch the Knights who ride that way
Who for noble deeds and name
Are received with fair acclaim.

At the court they linger long,
Rest is sweet and Love is strong.
Then at quiet eventide
Lovers through the gardens glide
Speaking softly, whilst a ring
Of twilight fairies strangely sing
“Love is Lord of everything”.

DANTE IN EXILE

THROUGH SORROW'S MIST God's glory
 shines most bright,
Then may we feel His presence doubly nigh.
Save for the dark no stars would stud the sky.
Our lamps would be untrimmed save for
 the night.
Thus Dante, shrouded in misfortune's blight—
A prince in pilgrim's guise—trod gloriously
The bitter paths which in the darkness lie,
Strove through the Forest thick, and reached
 the height,
Raised from the earth where hopes like
 leaves lay dead.

His vision pierced the clouds, and soul grew
strong

Dwelling upon the mysteries, till no signs
Mystic of heavenly love were left unread.
The highest found an utterance in that song
Sung lonesomely beneath Ravenna's pines.

LINES WRITTEN IN UNCERTAINTY

THE LIGHTS ARE SHINING dimly round about,
The Path is dark, I cannot see ahead ;
And so I go as one perplexed with doubt,
Nor guessing where my footsteps may be led.

The wind is high, the rain falls heavily,
The strongest heart may well admit a fear,
For there are wrecks on land as well as sea
E'en though the haven may be very near.

The night is dark and strength seems failing fast
Though on my journey I but late set out.
And who can tell where the way leads at last ?
Would that the lights shone clearer round about !

VERSES
OCCASIONED BY THE MAGNITUDE
OF THE TASK OF ILLUSTRATING
THE MORTE D'ARTHUR

THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN with a salary,
Who had to do drawings for Malory ;
 When they asked him for more,
 He replied : "Why ? Sure
You've enough as it is for a gallery."

NOTES

THE VALIANT

¶ 1884. First published in *Past and Present*, the magazine of the Brighton Grammar School, Vol. X, No.2, June 1885, and thus the artist's first published literary work. These lines were written the previous year, when he was twelve, and were apparently inspired by a popular childrens' book of the day, *The Lives of All the Notorious Pirates*, for a while a great favourite with Beardsley and his schoolmates. Beardsley recited the poem on several occasions to considerable acclaim from both masters and boys in the school.

A RIDE ON AN OMNIBUS

¶ 1887. One of a number of Beardsley's juvenile contributions to the local journal, Brighton Society ; this trifle, penned in imitation of the manner of Gilbert and Sullivan, appeared in the issue for 9th July 1887, where, unfortunately, the author's name was erroneously printed as W. V. Beardsley.

THE CONFESSION ALBUM

¶ 1889. Written *aet.* 17, and published in *Tit Bits*, no.429, 4 January 1890. The original manuscript draft of the article is now

preserved in the Gallatin Collection at Princeton, having been in the possession of Mrs. Belloc-Lowndes. In 1947 she recorded that "it was given to me by Beardsley because I was at the time writing something about him. I did not ask him for it, he sent it to me. I knew him rather well and liked him very much."

THE COURTS OF LOVE

¶ c. 1891 Presumed to have been composed by Beardsley himself, these twenty-two lines—somewhat in the manner of the Pre-Raphaelite poet William Allingham's archly pretty fairy songs—come from a page of illuminated verses embellished with two illustrations and other decorative designs. The original was one of a number of early drawings which Beardsley's school master, A. W. King attempted to sell for him. This sheet, one of the few actually sold, was purchased by Richard Haworth, a local picture-framer and "art-dealer", and one of King's acquaintances.

DANTE IN EXILE

¶ c. 1891 Beardsley's interest in Dante was stimulated by his friend A. H. Pargeter, a fellow-clerk in the Guardian Fire and Life Assurance Office. The hand-lettering in the illuminated manuscript of this poem carries the strong whiff of the influence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work on the young Aubrey.

LINES WRITTEN IN UNCERTAINTY

¶ 1891. Written shortly after Beardsley's nineteenth birthday, and reflecting anxieties brought on by a major tubercular relapse, these verses were included in a letter to a school friend.

LINES ON LE MORTE DARTHUR

¶ 1893. Said to have been extemporised one morning, while Beardsley was still in bed, when J. M. Dent called to chivvy his young *protégé* for a batch of urgently-required designs for the book.