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The Abinger Chronicle

appears eight times a year. While many of the Contributors are local to the Abinger district, or frequent visitors to it, many come from far afield. MSS. (which are voluntary) are welcomed by

THE EDITOR CHERRY COTTAGE ABINGER COMMON DORKING, SURREY

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The Abinger Chronicle

Vol. 3. No. 1.

February. March, 1942

LOVE MATCHED WITH TIME

Love matched with time fights a defensive war, Time seems love's most despoiler and dread foe, But time delays its prescript, to prolong Love's sweet swift moments, patient is time and strong Being eternal, careless is time being sure, And kind in our long kisses, being slow; Love makes a single war not of time's will Which being warred against is peaceful still.

Our love makes truce with time, bids discord cease, Throws down defence and hails the lapse of days; Then time renews our love in many ways, And our love's fears time lessens and allays; Our love and tolerant time maintain this peace Whereby our love can prosper and increase.

KENNETH HOPKINS

THE PURPLE JAR

When I was five I was in the nursery parlance of those days, a "lady's child," but it was my secret ambition to be a "street child." This however was so hidden, even from my own consciousness, that I well remember the stupified awakening when I was gently chidden, "It is not kind to look down on the street children, who are not so fortunate as you." "Look down?" "Not so fortunate?" No Cinderella could have invested her Court Ball with the glamour I poured over the children I saw in my daily walks round South Kensington and the Fulham Road.

Now I am fifty, and like so many minor dreams of childhood many of those five-year olds' have come true. This is not surprising, for the heart unconsciously works to where its treasure is. But what is surprising is that instead of finding, like Rosamund, that the reality brings dusty disillusion, my Purple Jar has been filled far beyond the dream. "Forget no joy however small, the day shall scarcely hold them all."

To begin with, clothes played an important part in my five-year-old life. One of my earliest reported remarks was repeated ad nauseam to the sound of shame making grownup laughter, "I hates London, 'cos I has to wear gubs !" And it was true, winter and summer small hands were thrust into tight gloves, in summer cotton, all too easily outgrown and shrunk, and in the winter kid. For warmth a horrid muff was tied on with a little cord, and the effect of walking with your hands imprisoned is that it somehow makes your gait curiously unfree. Taking off your gloves was a nursery crime, under the head of "disobedience," as was also walking with your hands in your pockets, once shamefully punished by having them sewn up. On the head perched a large hat, straw in summer, top heavy beaver in winter, fixed with a tight elastic under the chin, and the neck was further held with a plain white scarf pinned tightly back and front to show no creases. Legs were encased in long black stockings all the year round, and ended in tiresome-to-button boots. Compared to all this the street child's equipment seemed as free as a bird's. All the summer it ran hat-less, gloveless, stockingless and even barefoot sometimes. Winter found it with any old cap, probably father's, a bright green, yellow or blue scarf round its neck (the sort of scarf I made "for the poor" with Berlin wool on my "peggy"). If there were any gloves they were of bright wool too, otherwise hands were thrust happily into baggy pockets, out of which sometimes appeared hot chestnuts. Winter stockings often were brightly striped, and left the knees gloriously free. Futhermore, on Sundays the street child sometimes blossomed like a peacock. Here I confess the purple jar is a bit "Rosamundish," but it was years before I saw the charm of our white muslins with blue sash, and wide shady Leghorn hats! At that time the splendours of the horrible Little Lord Fauntleroy and Bubbles "costumes" (no other word will do !) made me green with envy, as did the fantastic sailor dresses complete with white cords, whistles and a

The Purple Jar

real ship's name on the cap, to say nothing of the wild Highland outfits, covered with cheap tartan ribbons from head to foot. When the poor mothers of Fulham and South Kensington let themselves go on best clothes they went a long way, and I hope their admiration was as great as mine, when we met in the street, white muslins going to Children's Service, while the Navy and the Highlands went to Sunday School.

I envied them that too, for school had an alluring sound to a small person who sat at her own nursery table " doing lessons " under the eye of a kind but vigilant governess. To be in a class large enough to escape vigilance, to sit at a desk in which treasures might be hid, to have wild spells of yelling in a playground, and then to rush home, stopping perhaps at the cheap sweet shop, where the sweets were piled in huge hills in the window, and to come out with mouth full, sucking unashamedly in the street-this seemed liberty full and complete to me. Our chocolates were doled out after meals, "and put it straight in and wipe your mouth," there was no putting in a quite impossibly large bit of hardbake, and taking it out over and over again to see how it was getting on ! And there were no luscious sticks of black liquorice for the lady's child, nor terrifically striped yellow and pink "four ounces a penny." Our sweets were bought for us, while the street child was free to spend its pennies as it liked, and to earn them too, by running errands or calling cabs with earsplitting whistles on their fingers that I vainly tried to Of course I was fed far too well (thanks to a imitate. quite exceptionally food clever mother) ever to dream to what depths of dullness, poverty, national or private could plunge a diet, ah me, it is nineteen forty-two in the year of our Lord now! But in those years it seemed it must be the height of excitement to wait outside a shop, bag in hand, till the baker called you in, and sent off the bread bringer with the bun or roll to munch on its way home.

I think it was the apparent freedom of the street child in every department that cast such a glamour over its life for me. It was free to stand beside the German band, to follow the Punch and Judy show till it took its stand, to dance to the barre' organ and fondle the organ grinder's monkey. It could run and chat to any child it met, and make up a game of hop scotch, marbles or skipping at any odd corner. Freedom to a child seems to have no limits. To me the grown-ups were free and the street children were free. Perhaps all our history is a sad comment on this childish mistake of unlimited feedom.

"So what?" says Fifty to Five. Is it all illusion? By no means. A slight shake of the kaleidescope, and the colours are as bright as ever. See me now in the village street! In summer I walk hatless, gloveless and O joy. stockingless as well. These war winters have shrouded us in cosy bright hoods, and bright soft knitted gloves and ankle socks. We carry home our groceries, excited at the little bit of extra forage a kind equitable butcher or grocer has seen fit to allot to us, or pounce with pleasure at the little bit of confectionery that has come our way. Above all the habit of conversing freely with strangers has come upon us as we stand in the crowded 'bus, or wait for the late train, or unravel the newest regulations over soap and "points." There is a dragging up of many iron railings that squared us in those endless payements. It was, I think, though I cannot quite remember, Bernard Bosanquet who remarked in an essay on the capacity of the working man to get into easy social contact with his neighbours, without the stiff formality that hampered the more cultivated classes. It is a good point to have made. Reserve there will always be in the good taste of human nature, and deep solitudes, thank Heaven, in all of us. Tastes are happily of many hues, but the cleavage should come in interests, not conventions, music for the musical, art for the artistic, literature for the bookworms. Our interests are the wine of life. But our daily bread and salt can be freely shared.

Yes, the fifty-year-old Purple Jar is full, but some magic has been to work. I remember once we kept a little brown chrysalis, and one morning inside the jar fluttered the incredible beauty of a Purple Emperor !

MILDRED E. BOSANQUET

INVITATION TO WRITE

O for a poem, now the evening's come! I'll steal a quiet hour from war's grasp; I'll search out love from all this warring hate and rescue life, the fire of it, from death.

O for a poem! Here's my swiftest pen— The heart beats faster in a quicker strain; The ear is aware of rhythm, and the mind is quiet now with memory and vision.

O for a poem, now the evening's come ! Here is true hearth, delight and veriest home.

March, 1942.

S.S.

ESULI D'ITALIA

Nei primi anni dell'Ottocento una signora e un bimbo passeggiavano lungo la marina di Genova. Un gentiluomo vestito di nero s'avvicina loro furtivamente e trae una borsa in cui risuona del denaro : "Pei proscritti d'Italia"—egli mormora. La signora, commossa, vi fa scivolare una moneta, mentre alla coscienza precoce del fanciullo si affaccia per la prima volta l'immagine dell'Italia oppressa che soffre in segreto. Il Bimbo e la signora—inutile dirlo erano Mazzini e la sua mamma.

Quest'episodio ha per gli Italiani un significato profondo: esso dice che prima del Risorgimento, prima ancor di Mazzini—l'uomo che doveva impersonare l'esule nei suoi tratti più nobili e più alti—esistevano dei "Proscritti d'Italia." Esso fa sorgere una domanda ancor più vasta: quando mai fu l'Italia senza esuli?

Dante stesso, cimentandosi nella prosa di quella nuova lingua che doveva schiudere possibilità così meravigliose ai vigorosi ingegni di Boccaccio, Machiavelli e Galileo, non sa—non può—non iniziare il *Convivio* se non con un appassionato accenno alle sue condizioni di esule :

"Poiché fu piacere dei cittadini di Fiorenza di gettarmi fuora del suo dolcissimo nido—nel quale nato e nudrito fui e'nel quale desidero con tutto il cuore di riposare l'animo stancato e terminare il tempo che mi é dato—per le parti quasi tutte a cui questa lingua si stende, peregrino, quasi mendico, sono andato mostrando contro mia voglia la piaga della fortuna."

Tutto ciò fa pensare all'esilio non come ad un episodio, ma comé un momento eterno nella vita spirituale d'Italia.

Con sigolare facilità l'Italiano si organizza e si adatta alla vita in un paese straniero. La vita nel piccolo caffé, il conciliabolo che sa di segreto, la *Lectura Dantis* in qualche cameretta di terzo o quarto piano, la *riunione* che dovrebbe preparare grandi eventi ed infine la Biblioteca pubblica dove molti vanno a leggere. . . ed a riscaldarsi quando in casa manca il carbone—queste e tante altre cose, accettate con lo spirito di chi molto sa e troppo ha vissuto, testimoniano di un recondito istinto che si ridesta e attraverso cui parla l'esperienza di generazioni di esuli italiani.

In qual misura l'esilio-e la sofferenza che esso comporta-hanno concorso a formare l'anima e il carattere italiano? Senza dubbio il lato patetico del temperamneto italiano, lato che talora appare addirittura morbido alla sensibilità degli inglesi, è dovuto a secoli di sofferenze e di persecuzioni durante i quali la prigionia era spesso dell'esilio l'unica alternativa. Sono forse queste dure prove che hanno affinato ed ipersensibilizzato l'anima italiana. Altri dolori possono essere tragici e silenziosi, e possono indurire il cuore; l'affetto per la patria lontana o perduta é quello, viceversa, che più abbisogna di effusione lirica e sul quale l'animo si piega con maggior tenerezza. Non accadde ciò forse al divino Odisseo-l'uomo rotto ad ogni strapazzo della guerra, incallito nell'astuzia e nell'inganno; l'uomo che aveva errato per anni, sopravvissuto ai naufragi, assistito alla morte dei compagni, vinto le blandizie della magail quale all'isola dei Feàci udendo l'aèdo cantare ignaro di

Esuli d'Italia

Itaca, si copre la faccia col mantello e, non visto, piange in silenzio? In che cosa, se non nel profondo lirismo dell'esilio come atteggiamento spirituale, risiede il successo di una delle più toccanti romanze di Verdi nei giorni in cui l'invocazione così appassionata.

"O mia patria sì bella e perduta" strappava irrefrenabili applausi e lagrime di commozione ad una generazione che palpitava per l'Italia?

In tutte queste espressioni artistiche del mal dell'esilio un pensiero é implicito, che é un implorante interrogativo : perché un divieto così crudele,—così snaturato—verso chi null'altro desidera se non "riposare l'animo stancato nella terra in cui fu nato e nudrito?" Perché tanta ferocia su questa nostra "aiuola"? Riecheggiano in questo interrogativo insieme ai versi del "Paradiso" le parole di un pocta spagnuolo, dello Jimenez, che tanto somigliano all'Italiano da poter esser tradotti parola per parola :

> ... O che una man potesse dissipare il passato, schiudere da ogni spina una foglia di rosa posar la sera in pace e convertir l'affanno in una stella grande serena e luminosa.

Z.Z.

TRANSLATION (of the above poem)

O that a hand Might waft away the past, Might keep each rose leaf Free of thorns, Might let peace in at evening, And turn the ache Into a great star Serene and luminous.

DREAMS

I wish that I had made a habit of trying to recollect and keeping a record of my dreams immediately on waking. As it is, I can remember very few particular dreams, but only certain general types of them. Nor am I skilful or curious in the modern art of finding hidden meanings symbolized beneath their superficial images and emotions. To me they are quite interesting enough as they are.

It is very common for my dreams to begin happily, or at least in the hope and quest of some intense happiness. But in most cases the happiness after a time fades out of them, and they end in dissillusion and disappointment. Thus I sometimes dream that I am in the presence of some brilliant and fascinating talker; but I am certain to find that either what he says is completely commonplace, or that he has nothing to say at all. At other times I imagine that I have discovered some delightful, forgotten poem of my own; but it always turns out to be fragmentary and illusive, and soon fades into nonsense, or into non-existence.

A not unfrequent dream is to find myself hastening through a familiar country in eager search of some place where I had been happy in my boyhood, with the certainty that, if I could but once refind it, the same happiness would once more be mine. But soon those delectable hills and valleys seem to have changed, and that house where I once lived is nowhere to be found; or, if I do find it, all its charm and romance will have disappeared.

Then there is the happy Bultitudinous dream. I am at school once more, a boy among boys, playing football with miraculous skill and felicity, or rushing off to morning school with my lesson unprepared and my repetition half-learned. But I soon begin to suspect that my youthfulness is an illusion, that my footballing days vanished long years ago, and that all these superannuated delights and anxieties are no more than the deception of a dream.

The essence of my dreams consists, I suppose, almost entirely of emotions, of wishes, desires, fears, regrets,

Dreams

ambitions and affections. Their superficial imagery, being unsubstantial and perpetually changing, invariably fails to satisfy these feelings.

Ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum; Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago, Par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno.

Thrice then did I strive to fling my arms about her neck; Thrice did the image, vainly clasped, take flight out of my hands,

Swift fleeting as the nimble winds, and like a winged dream.

But though so many dreams end thus in frustration and disappointment, yet when we wake from them, the real world will often seem to be a cold uncongenial melancholy place compared with that land of dreams where we have been wandering; for there all was emotion, and desire, and hope however vain; but here it is no such thing—as the little boy in Blake's poem had already discovered.

"Dear child, I also by pleasant streams Have wandered all night in the Land of Dreams; But tho' calm and warm the waters wide, I could not get to the other side."

"Father, O Father ! What do we here In this land of unbelief and fear? The Land of Dreams is better far, Above the light of the morning star."

Before I could swim, I used to dream of swimming. After I had learnt to swim, I no longer dreamed of that, but of flying. As I shall never fly, I suppose I shall dream of flying as long as I dream of anything. My flight is always wingless, a kind of skimming over the surface of the earth, a marvellously extended long-jump. Sometimes, like a terrified bat, imprisoned in a lofty room, I am seek-

Dreams

ing to reach a window near the ceiling, and finding it shut, make frantic efforts to open it, while there is yet time to escape through it into the freedom of the air outside. At other times I am gliding, careless-hearted as a sea-bird, over some vast expanse of land or ocean. But often a doubt, bred of former disillusioning experience, will come into my mind. Can the miracle really be true? Yes, this time surely it is not a dream. So I thrust doubt away, and continuing the felicity of flight, enjoy that deceptive "sober certainty of waking bliss," until the dream changes, or I awake to find myself unadventurously in bed.

Doubtless dreams have various beneficent functions. Mathematicians, philosophers, and inventors are said to have solved obstinate problems in their sleep. Poets have composed verses, though I doubt if they have often printed them. Here are some kines, Miltonic, though tagged with rime, which Roger Fry told me that he once dreamt.

High on a Throne the almighty Arch-Fiend sat,

And thence he gave Judgements deliberate.

The plaintiff first he heard, then the defence,

And meeted out the costs in pence.

All in hot coppers were the payments given,

For such the coin they brought with them from Heaven. To me, my dreams have seldom proved of much utility. Yet I have sometimes happened to dream of a friend or acquaintance towards whom my emotional attitude had hitherto been ambiguous; and my dream has discovered to me my true feelings about him. Perhaps I have always unconsciously respected and desired to please him, or else I have disliked and distrusted him; and I now become aware for the first time of admiration and affection, or of fear and contempt. Such intimations have afterwards in some degree coloured and modified my waking thoughts.

But now, as I grow old, the sovereign grace and benefit that comes to me from dreams, is that, during so large a portion of my day, they keep alive within me the romance and poetry that of necessity is more and more fading out of my life. What matter that I can recollect so little of this submerged blissfulness ! It is a consoling thought to know that for seven or eight hours out of every twentyfour I may still be as hopeful and as active, as happy and as foolish, as ever I was in my youth and boyhood.

Mr. Arthur Waley has translated this poem of Po Chü-i, written when he was over seventy.

At night, in my dream, I stoutly climb a mountain, Going out alone with my staff of holly-wood. A thousand crags, a hundred hundred valleys-In my dream-journey none were unexplored. And all the while my feet never grew tired And my step was as strong as in my young days. Can it be that when the mind travels backward The body also returns to its old state? And can it be, as between body and soul, That the body may languish, while the soul is still strong? Soul and body-both are vanities : Dreaming and waking-both alike unreal. In the day my feet are palsied and tottering; In the night my steps go striding over the hills. As day and night are divided in equal parts-Between the two, I get as much as I lose.

I have never been much of a mountaineer, but several times, on a solitary rock-climb, I have found myself in a position where to go up or to go down seemed to be equally dangerous. Such terrifying moments now frequently come back to me as nightmares. Suddenly the ground on which I am walking seems to tilt itself into a fearful precipice, on the edge of which I cling for a few hopeless moments before I fall, and so awake. As Lucretius says of dreamers :

Multi, de montibus altis Ut qui praecipitent ad terram corpore toto, Externantur et ex somno quasi mentibu' capti Vix ad se redeunt permoti corporis aestu.

Many, as though falling with all their weight From high cliffs to the ground, are scared with terror, And like men reft of reason, hardly from sleep Come to themselves again, being quite distraught By the body's tumult.

Dreams

In general my dreams are colourless or monochrome. But this is not so with everyone. Several friends whom I have questioned tell me that definite colours often, though not always, enter into their dreams. I have occasionally dreamt of ravishingly beautiful landscapes, which seemed to be richly coloured; but on waking I could not recall any distinct picture of them. Perhaps they were not really visual, but emotional or romantic dreams. I may have had no actual vision of a scene, but only an intense longing, which transformed itself into a feeling of delight in a landscape of marvellous beauty; but it was a mere emotion, not a thing seen.

I have never had the good fortune of a friend of mine, a great connoisseur in English and Chinese landscape painting, who told me that he once dreamed that he was himself a landscape; but being unable to contemplate himself, he was troubled by doubt as to whether he was a beautiful, or perhaps a commonplace, or even an ugly landscape. At length a picnic party in a waggonette stopped and got out not far from the hill-side that was himself, and began to eat their lunch, looking across and pointing at him, and evidently discussing him. Filled with an overwhelming desire to hear what they were saying about him, my friend began cautiously to creep and sidle down, like a moving Irish bog, till at last he came near enough to overhear what they were saying. Whether their remarks were flattering or the reverse I cannot remember. But if the landscape in which my friend was embodied were even one-half as exquisite as his taste in natural and pictorial beauty, I feel sure that he ought not to have been disappointed.

R. C. TREVELYAN

A DOG LOVER

Anyway, the Pekingese puppy which complacently lies on his lap doesn't appear good looking to me. Her coat is made of mixed ragged fur, and her eyes are just dull. Most repulsive of all are her flat nose and her long pouting mouth. I have loathed her since the first day of her arrival. I have touched her only once; it was when she sniffed at the shopping basket of Chow-sao, the maid. Then I spanked her twice.

"Oh no, that won't do !" exclaimed her master. "A dog is not born to be spanked."

He quickly gathers the ugly little creature into his arms, pats her and fondles her as though she had been treated with great injustice.

"I am a great lover of dogs." He seems to be describing himself. The puppy dives into his armpit. He recalls that ten years ago he had a Mongolian dog at his home in the province of Honan. "His coat was pitch dark," he boasts, "and his eyes glowed at night. In the daytime he sprawled under the mule cart by the barn. He was so docile that he wouldn't stir even if he was being kicked. But when night came—" He glares at us with mock horror, "Soo-oo! Up he jumps on top of the wall, like a watch-dog."

We immediately lift up our heads. The puppy in his arms bellows to remind us of her humble presence.

"One night the dog was lost." His face becomes long drawn. He made it appear as though all the neighbours were envious of his beautiful dog, and that some rogue must have translated his envy into action. Then the search. He had suspected even an old woman of eighty in the village. One night he had heard someone yelping in his dream, and the scratching of paws on the gate. He had grabbed his long gown and dashed out. Could we believe it? A woolly thing jumped up to his shoulder, and there he saw his shining eyes,

A Dog Lover

As his story reaches this point we actually hear some scratching on the wooden screen in the courtyard. A yellow dog pops in stealthily, with his tail hanging low. It looks like a homeless dog, looking for some scraps.

All of a sudden anger lights the face of our dog lover. He gently lets go his puppy. The poor creature wanders with her dull eyes. He crawls to the back of the door. There he has prepared his weapons—a heap of broken bricks all sharpened in triangle shapes. Very briskly he grabs a handful of broken bricks and dashes to the doorstep.

(The "target" is still sniffing for treasures along the wall, whether in the form of flesh or bones. His guilty eyes peep all round as he moves on, apparently knowing that this house belongs to another human being.)

Swish! The first brick is a near miss. It gives the dog a great shock, but no damage so far. He quickly turns his head, and with his tail between his hind legs, rushes out.

With more fury and dexterity, the second brick follows like lightning. I only hear a shrill cry, and his yellow shadow disappears. His howling can still be heard in the distance, as though begging for help and forgiveness.

Our dog lover does not seem to be content. He runs out. Another desperate scream indicates the success of his marksmanship.

"To cross my doorstep!" he scolds from the chair, quite out of breath after his triumphant sortie. His Pekingese puppy admiringly waves her flabby tail.

HSIAO CH'IEN

Hampstead, February, 1942.

THE ROSE

The lady stood on the rain-drenched quay, Though the Sun had foundered she watched the sea. An old man leaned on a stake near by, He heard her sing, he heard her sigh. ' Do you look for a ship that you search the line?' ' For a ship, and a word, and a lord of mine, For my love,' said she, ' he is far away, For he sailed in the Rose in the dawn of May.' The stranger looked at the evening star, 'Far, my child, he must needs be far. For the sun sank down and so did she Into the depths of the midnight sea. The Rose was . . - Ah . . - was . . - 'So they say, But she set her prow in the dawn of May, And I was on board and my love with me, And we sailed the treacherous midnight sea; Icebergs we saw, and the boats that kill, But we sailed on Northward, Westward, still. And I think at last I returned alone, In a boat with people not my own. And when he comes I must needs be near; So I wait in the harbour cottage here. If he land at night he might not know I was waiting here, and to London go, And I might lose of short life a week While we apart for each other seek .---For never more over ocean wide Shall we scan the waves where the U-boats hide, We shall rest for ever now in peace As quiet as under the tumbling seas."

OLIVER LODGE

Williamsburg, Virginia, 1942.

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