ARTHUR WARREN

LONDON DAYS: A BOOK OF REMINISCENCES

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CHAPTER I
FIRST GLIMPSES OF LONDON

One day at dusk, in the autumn of 1878, when I was eighteen, I arrived at the heart of the world.

I was fresh from New England, and had left Boston, my native city, seventeen days before, embarking at New York on the Anchor liner *Alsatia* three days later; disembarking at Tilbury after a turbulent voyage that lasted two weeks to the hour. What was left of me passed from the Fenchurch Street Station into Leadenhall Street, the least of three passengers in a four-wheeled cab. Through the cab windows, and the ghost of fog which simmered over gas lamps, flashed glimpses of the city, splashes of light on the pavements illuminated windows bound in brass, cumbrous drays and 'busses, and great grey horses, and glistening pubs. The air was heavy with smoke. I heard the tramp of thousands and thousands of persons, all homeward bound, and all wearing top hats. And, of all names, there at the right on a clothier's sign, the enamelled legend: "Dombey and Son!" My head was packed with Dickens, and in a pocket was a linen-backed map.

In one way and another, by books and maps and imagination, I was already on familiar terms with the world-city which I had never seen. I had read it up, studied it, knew intricate maps of it, and stories of its traditions. At a time when the youth of my country and generation were expected to follow Horace Greeley's advice, "Go West and grow up with the country" or, as interpreted by the cynics, "Go West and start a graveyard"—I made a chance to go East across the Atlantic. And I went. So I beheld the Old World. But I had chances enough, that is, I made them, to see the New World later. And I saw it. History in the making is interesting,—sometimes, and if you survive. History already made and rounded and woven into legend, the scenes among which men have lived and wrought through centuries, shaping the rich past on which we build the present, hold a fascination which did not seem to come to me from regions where man was pioneering. London was the magnet that first drew me. And as the cab turned south from Leadenhall Street and moved slowly along the noisy streams of traffic, I exclaimed presently, to the disappointment of my companions who knew the town and were prepared to point out its places of celebrity:

"London Bridge at last!"

"At last?" said they. "Why, this is quick work for the time of day. How many minutes?"

"But I've been eighteen years on the way," said I.

I managed to keep awake and hungry till we got to the Wiltshire Road in Brixton, where my guides from Fenchurch Street were staying. The stagger and strain of the sea voyage had left me stupidly weary, so that as soon as possible after dinner I went to bed. Although I stayed three weeks in that house, all recollection of a dining room has vanished. That may be attributed to the zeal of youth and its indifference to the art of dining, an art acquired speedily enough later on. But never in the subsequent years have I been able to revive a single memory of that Brixton house. And the only recollection of the first three weeks in England is that on the first morning, at an office in the City, I was violently seasick.

Atlantic passengers who begin their voyaging nowadays in luxuriously fitted vessels of fifty thousand tons, and coddled within an inch of their lives, lack the remotest notion of the sea travel of forty years ago. The *Alsatia*, of the Anchor Line, was one of the largest and finest ships afloat in 1878. She had a single smokestack and a single screw, no covered deck for passengers, no barber shop, no electric lights, not even an electric bell. Deck chairs were unknown, but later you could buy

them ashore and store them in the Company's baggage room against your return. No meal could be served on deck without the permission of the captain. The first mate was a surly ass who threatened passengers with irons if he caught them infringing some stupid rule, long since abolished; and although the steamer was fairly new she belonged to the age when seamen hated fresh air in a hull, and the smells from her bilges would have asphyxiated an ox. She was one tenth the size of the big liners of to-day, five thousand tons being registered to her credit in the advertisements where she was described as "a giant." She was a worthy sea craft, but she hopped, skipped, and jumped all the way from New York to London, used fourteen days in getting there, ten being made against head gales and heavy seas, one of which threw a sailor from the maintop to the deck, killing him, and sweeping overboard two hundred sheep which we carried on the foredeck. Nearly all liners in those days carried sail and were square-rigged. Their canvas was stained with soot and smoke, but it had a steadying effect on the ship when spread to a favouring quarter. Whether the *Alsatia* carried sail I never knew for I was ten days helpless and agonised in my cabin, and for three days more the mastheads seemed to scrape the scudding clouds with a fore-and-aft motion that tore your eyes if you looked skyward. It was only after we had passed well up Channel, near Dover, that the wind eased and we could venture on deck without clinging to life lines.

This horror of seasickness was as unexpected as it was distressing, for, if I had not been brought up on the sea, I had been accustomed to it long enough, and had sailed an eighteen-foot catboat up and down Massachusetts Bay, where there is rough water much of the time and scope for seamanlike work all the time. Whether on long rollers, or on choppy water, I had never been troubled by the sea's motion until the *Alsatia* tumbled across the Atlantic, and then it was my head that bore distress, and not my centreboard. It seemed as if the fragment of brain still remaining in me broke loose and rattled from skull to toes, bounding back with a hideous roar and horrid pressure which found no relief till we got into quiet water. I vowed never to go to sea again. Since then I have made more than fifty voyages on the North Atlantic alone.

There was a man aboard who had a salty sailor's fondness for a howling sea, and we became amazing friendly. And he was amazing fat, so that he took very short steps. As I was no thicker than a lath, and six-feet-an-inch-and-a-half tall, there was contrast enough as he paddled alongside me. Creeping from the hated stateroom where ten nearly foodless and acutely torturing days had been passed in a damp melancholy, I saw a dozen or fifteen passengers—our full strength—seated at a long table on the starboard side of the saloon, listening to Mr. Pickwick reading "Othello." He was as round as Pickwick, not quite so cherubic as Phiz's immortal drawing, and minus the spectacles. In the tossing night, when we had forgotten that any portion of the universe was ever still, he was declaiming Othello's speech to the Senate.

The figure and the fact were incongruous, but the effect of the declamation was not. He read all the tragedy, barring a few cuts. I supposed him a comic actor with an ambition for tragic parts. Some sailors staring through a deck light took him for a "sky pilot" reading the burial service for their fellow, but thought him over-long about it. His name was Henry Murray. He was a Scotsman retired from the Chinese trade. He was also a Free Mason, Past District Grand Master for China. He was returning to England with the intention of becoming a public reader. He intended even to become an actor of Falstaff and he had long been a capable amateur. His father had been a famous actor in Edinburgh; his brother commanded the Guion liner *Arizona*, and later, the *Alaska*.

Henry Murray was a good judge of acting. But his fondness for acting was fatal to his fortunes and his life. The first he spent in efforts to establish himself; the second he wore out in disappointment over the failure of his plans. I remember him with genuine affection, because he was the first to open to me any door in the mighty and mysterious world of London.

Plans had no place in my baggage, at least no plans requiring space. I had practically worked my way to London where I was to join the staff of an American engineering concern who were introducing an invention. Though lacking years I had sufficient application, and I had learned enough

of the business to justify my appointment. That, in fact, had been my purpose, and I worked hard to achieve it and uphold it. But I wanted to write. And, being in London, why not write about London? I knew that Mrs. Glasse's recipe for cooking hare had begun, "First catch your hare", and so the prescription for my own case ran, "First learn your London." Meantime I had my vocation to lean on. During the business hours of four years I ran with my vocation, and, out of business hours, followed my hobby.

Old Mother London gave me the key to her streets, and diligently I used it. Into every old church I wandered, and into every old building that had given shelter to Fame when she touched a poet, a philosopher, a painter, a literary man, a tragedian, a soldier, sailor, or a king. And I knew the burial places of those she cherished, and those she flouted, or those she flirted with, no less than the living places of those who still pursued her on any of the grey mornings in which I rambled. They became as familiar to me as any 'bus line, and I became a walking directory to the odd corners where she had preened her feathers for an hour or for a space of years. I became saturated with her legends, and occasionally an arbiter in cases of suspected masonry whose identity rumour and record had disputed or concealed. That was one form of amusement. The play was another.

I was at home in London from the moment of my arrival at Fenchurch Street. It had been a far cry to Fenchurch Street, and when a lad made it in company with a rotund gentleman of Pickwickian build, the chances were sure to be amusing. After trying two or three boarding houses, I settled in chambers just out of Queen Square in Bloomsbury. Murray was in apartments half a mile away, in Marchmont Street. Marchmont Street was shabby in those days, whatever it may be now. On the west side of it, over a tailor's shop kept by her husband, was the shabby, but clean and shining house of Mrs. Floyth, a melancholy woman who had been maid or housekeeper to John Stuart Mill when the manuscript of Carlyle's "French Revolution" was burned to light the fires! I have always wondered if the old lady herself were responsible for that conflagration. It might have accounted for her settled melancholy.

My chambers near Queen Square were in a spacious old house which was panelled and carved from roof to entrance hall. There soon began to meet here, once or twice a month, a congenial group, smoking churchwarden pipes. It called itself the "Quill Club", talked politics, the drama, and books, and the members disagreed as heartily as any human beings could on all the topics of life.

There would have been no interest in listening to another fellow's talk had you been in agreement with him. There were but two rules in the Club: the first that a man should say what he thought; the second—give his reasons for thinking so. When a man failed to sustain his opinion by his reasons he paid for the tobacco. The Quills, as may be supposed, were chiefly of a trade, quill drivers. But they were not entirely so: one was "by way of being" an artist, another was a solicitor, a third was inclined to surgery, a fourth made musical boxes, the fifth was a dentist, and the others pursued literature, at greater or smaller distances, and incidentally contributed small feed to the presses in Fleet Street, or elsewhere. Of a dozen, ten are dead. Some made goals, some fell by the way. But they all enjoyed life and work, for all were young. And sometimes they could pay their bills.

CHAPTER II
LONDON IN THE LATE SEVENTIES

London was a more livable place in the late seventies than it is now, or so it seems to me, as it seems to many others who knew the town in that earlier time. There were not so many means for getting everywhere as there are now, and yet we got everywhere,—everywhere, that is, that we wished to go. We were not in a hurry then, and there was more consideration for the old and the lame than there is now. Now there is none at all in the streets or under them. The electric age was prophesied, but nothing more. Nobody in England believed in prophecies. There were arc lights on Holborn Viaduct and the Thames Embankment, nowhere else, but the incandescent lamp had not appeared. There was nothing electrical, in our modern sense, except the telegraph. The telephone was unknown. It is almost unknown to-day, if London's use of it be compared with New York's. There was no electric traction, and the petrol age was nearly a quarter of a century distant. But for all these drawbacks, as I daresay they may be regarded by the youth of the present hour, London was the most livable place in the world, if you loved cities; it had a charm, a fascination all its own.

That charm is not to be described. How can it be described, any more than the charm of a charming woman? You are conscious of it, you know that there is nothing like it, you are sorry for those who must live elsewhere and cannot come under its spell; they have missed that much out of life. You experience a certain largeness of heart, and would like to give everybody a June in London, but reluctantly acknowledge that every one must take the will for the deed.

But if you attempt to analyse London it will baffle your effort. It is at once so splendid and so mean, so spacious and so meagre, so beautiful and so ugly, so noisy and so quiet, so restless and restful, that the farther you go the more puzzled you become, unless having begun by questioning it you end by accepting. Take it in its own way and you will see that it is in itself a problem that cannot be solved by a study of weeks or months; it is a study for a lifetime, for many lifetimes. For instance: architecturally it is too often saddening and mean.

Some one will fly into a rage when he reads the preceding sentence. He will ask resentfully if I think Westminster Abbey, the Parliament Buildings, St. Paul's Cathedral sad, or mean, or shabby. Of course I do not. Their nobility and beauty almost redeem the hundreds of square miles of commonplace and melancholy builders' work that encumbers London. Yet how the mean shops press upon St. Paul's and shut it in! Could anything be uglier than the National Gallery? Could any important thoroughfare be more conducive to depression of spirits than Victoria Street? It's not the old London that is architecturally ugly and mean; it is the modern London, and usually the more modern the greater the affliction to the eye. Somebody said, I think it was Schelling, "Architecture is frozen music." Would not anybody say that the Methodist mountain in Westminster is frozen pudding?

London in the late seventies was architecturally less saddening than now, because less that was pretentious and defiant of good taste had been undertaken. Its public buildings of later date are the worst in Europe, excepting those that have arisen in Germany. Squat, heavy, out of proportion, lacking in dignity, in beauty, they seem to have been erected for the purpose of proving that in architecture the modern Briton will neither imitate nor aspire. "The finest site in Europe" is almost the meanest sight. The marvel is that a capital and a country having so many fine models of earlier date do not repeat them, improve upon them, or attempt even a finer taste. The opportunities have been unrivalled, but about the achievements the less said the better. Acres of slums have been swept away to be superseded by miles of masonry which serve mainly to prevent an acquaintance with good taste. What public "improvement" could be shabbier than Shaftsbury Avenue, meaner than newer Whitehall, or more commonplace than Kingsway and Aldwych? What department of a Government could have blocked

a vista so remorselessly as the Admiralty has done, or have betrayed a contempt for beauty more disheartening than the County Council has shown in its latest horror at Westminster Bridge?

The majestic beauties of London seem to have developed by accident rather than by design. The view down Waterloo Place to the Abbey and the Victoria Tower and the view eastward from the Serpentine Bridge in Hyde Park have certainly done so. The view down the river from Waterloo Bridge, or Westminster, was never planned; it grew slowly, being first blessed by every natural advantage that a patient Providence could bestow. In its buildings of a private character, its domestic architecture, London still has much to seek; monotony has been the rule, but the style has not deteriorated. In some respects and localities it has much improved; there is evidence that imagination has been allowed to exercise itself, that all house owners do not, in these times, think alike, and are not content with dwellings which, outwardly at least, seem, class by class, to have been run from one mould. Individuality begins to express itself as if, at last, some Londoners were beginning to lose their fear of becoming conspicuous. An advance in taste has run concurrently with the decline of the top hat and frock coat.

But the interiors of English buildings of all kinds, public as well as private, churches as well as theatres, offices no less than railway stations, clubs, homes, hotels, all are draughty, as lacking in warmth as they were when I first knew them. The exceptions are so few that they are advertised. Central heating is still regarded as a fad, constant hot water is a novelty; there is a superstitious regard for cold air as pure air, and a fear of warm air as impure. But the worst cold is that of dampness, and many houses are never dry. Mildew is common in their closets, chill in the bedrooms, and their halls are rheumatic. Rheumatism, and its allies lumbago, influenza, pneumonia, and consumption are the customary ills. When the Briton is cold indoors he goes out for a walk and warms his blood. The theory is that artificial warmth is unhealthful; the truth is that it is an expense to which the Briton objects, and that he has not learned how to warm his house. The tough survive. The delicate, the aged, the invalid, or the sedentary take their chances, and while they live do so with an unbelievable lack of comfort. Consequently the English complain of cold when the American would think the temperature moderate; but the American uses heat to keep his house dry as well as warm. He often overdoes it; he often goes as far in one direction as the Briton in the other. But an English house warmed in the American way, not necessarily to the usual American degree, is always appreciated by the Briton, although he may be far from understanding the reason of his content. London had a charm in the late seventies that it lost when the Twentieth Century was still young,—the charm of leisure. The internal-combustion engine drove leisure from the land. The old two-horse 'bus was a leisurely thing. Even the four-horse express 'busses that plied between the Swan at Clapham to Gracechurch Street, and similar urban and suburban centres, were leisurely enough, compared with the electric trains and motor 'busses that now rush the city man to and fro. They were not comfortable, those horse-drawn caravans with their knifeboard roofs and perilous scaling ladders, that is, they were not comfortable excepting on the box seats to which every man's ambition soared. There, sheltered by great leathery aprons, the lucky passenger braved the weather, beheld the passing world, and exchanged small talk with the driver who condescended affably to discourse, with his "regulars", the news of the day. The smart hansom disappeared long ago. Smart as it was it was leisurely compared with the flashing taxi and motor which have superseded "London's gondola", as Disraeli called it. And, Heaven knows, the sulphurous underground was leisurely beyond words.

Everybody rushes now. London has no more time to spare than New York has. It seems a dream that, when I first entered an English train, the custom was for the railway guards to call, "Take your time, take your time!" But that was their call forty years ago.

Gradually the street cries have lessened in variety, in character, and in interest. The simple trades that announced their wares by a snatch of something that passed for song have disappeared one by one. Even the muffin man is vocal no longer, and his bell is silent. Whatever may have caused the other merchants of the curb to vanish, the war and short rations removed the muffin man. He

was almost the last, perhaps actually the last of the creatures who gave to London streets an old-world sound or savour.

When the late seventies were still on the calendar, and for long after, the silk hat was an unrelenting tyrant, and in the City, among stockbrokers, it bore a special gloss. Every male above the age and status of an office boy or a labouring man wore a silk hat. Without that ugly and inconvenient headgear you would not call upon your solicitor, or appear at your banker's, or negotiate a contract, much less intrude upon an official person. The silk hat was a sign of respectability. In the House of Commons it seemed a symbol of the majesty of the British Constitution. There, to this day, the head must be covered, as if the members were in a synagogue. In summer time straw hats were unknown, excepting for the sex that was gentler then, and invariably the sex wore furs with its straws. A man who ventured in a straw hat incurred the risk of obloquy. At any rate, he was as marked and ridiculous an object as Jonas Hanway when, in an earlier century, he raised an umbrella in Oxford Street.

Temple Bar was standing where Fleet Street joins the Strand; the new Law Courts which now overlook its site were in process of construction; the Griffin was undreamed of. Northumberland Avenue had been opened but was incomplete. The modern hotels had yet to be promoted. The Grand was the first of these, but its fortunes were thought hazardous. There was no Metropole, or Victoria, although their walls were going up. Rimmel's perfumery warehouse stood where the Savoy is now, and that sordid adventurer Hobbs (or was it Jabez Balfour?) had not preëmpted the site of the Cecil which was then covered with lodging houses, chambers, and private hotels. There was no Carlton, no Ritz, no Waldorf; even the Great Central was not in being, and the only restaurants of consequence were the Criterion, St. James', Gatti's old Adelaide Gallery, half its present size, the Café Royal, Very's, and the stuffy predecessor of the present Holborn.

The first run of "Pinafore" had not ended, the revival of Old Drury's prosperous days had not begun; "Our Boys" had been running for nearly five thousand nights at the Vaudeville; Sothern was making his last appearances in the last season of the unremodelled Haymarket; there was the Alhambra but no Empire, no Hippodrome, no Coliseum; St. James' Hall, but no Queen's Hall; the Albert Hall was mostly empty, the old-style music halls were mostly full; Mr. Pinero was acting small parts in Irving's company and had not written so much as the scenario of a one-act play; Henry Arthur Jones had not been heard of; Bernard Shaw was unknown, Adelaide Neilson was at the height of her brief career, Forbes Robertson had begun his, and Buckstone's days were ending. The era of the Kendals and John Hare at the St. James' was yet to come, but the happy reign of the Bancrofts, at the old Prince of Wales', behind the Tottenham Court Road, where the Scala now stands, had yet to close.

George Meredith was not only "caviare to the general" but "the general" were a little shocked when they learned that he was still a reader for a publishing house and a writer when he had the time. "The general" found delight in the fiction of Miss Braddon and Mrs. Henry Wood, and, of course, Ouida, as they would delight now if these ladies were spinning copy; Kipling was at school, and Barrie dreaming in the north. We had William Black and Walter Besant and James Rice, but no Society of Authors, and no literary knights. If the world is small now it was very large then, but "sausage and mashed" were cheap at the top of London Bridge, threepence for a pair of hulking sausages and a liberal plate of mashed potato, a penny more for a great hunk of bread, and tu'ppence more for half a tankard of beer.

A certain splendid swagger departed from London Streets when the regiments quartered in town abandoned their gorgeous uniforms and dressed less like magnificos and more like fighting men. They were fighting men though, they and their successors who held back the outnumbering German rush from the Channel ports of France in 1914, as all the world knows, and none know better than the Huns. But they were dandies too, those earlier men, and they filled the eye. Their saucy scarlet, short-waisted jackets, their jaunty fatigue caps, their tight trousers with broad red stripes, on shapely legs which seemed tremendous in length, were at once the admiration of nursemaids and the envy of small boys, lending, as they did, colour and form to these dun streets. Will the glorious colossi

who strode thus habited be seen again this side of Charon's ferry; or will their successors lead the simple life in khaki and puttees?

CHAPTER III
A NORMAN INTERLUDE

After a winter in London I went to Paris for a part of the spring, stopping on the way a day in Rochester (I had the Dickens fever then), and another day in Canterbury for the Cathedral's sake. A night boat, the ancient Wave, or the antediluvian Foam, took me to Calais, and through some delay on the line there was a wait of hours. But the night was fine, and I spent it roaming through and beyond the old town, getting forty winks afterward in the station, and a breakfast of hot chocolate and bread at a place facing the harbour where I watched the fishing boats put out on a convenient tide. In Paris I knew only one person, an American friend who was studying art, taking his lessons at Julian's, and slowly, yet certainly, learning that art was not for him. He introduced me to a lot of men who knew their way about, and soon I knew my way about as well as they did, possibly, in some directions, a little better, for, with one or two exceptions, I cannot remember any who were gifted with a faculty for anything but good-fellowship and for spending their allowances from home. They knew the jargon of the studios, but as Paris seemed full of men who could paint as well as they and were threatening to do it, the charming group dissolved in a year or two, one after another, returning to their homes in various parts of the world. Not one that I know of is living now, and nearly all whom I could trace in later years had gone into trade, and flourished there.

But my acquaintance with Paris had begun. It was to be extended in subsequent years. What chiefly remains in my recollection concerning those early days is that for the first time I had the consciousness of being in a foreign country. I never had that in England, no, not for a minute, and no one, then or since, ever tried to make me feel it there. Of course, part of the difference was due to language, but not all the difference. There were subtle differences in France, and some plain, outstanding ones. The English are kindly people, hospitable, and, if I must say so—and I think I must, having lived through three years of the great war with them, to say nothing of many preceding years—they are naïve. The Englishman, if he liked you, took you to his home, but he said that the Frenchman did not. But he did, I found. And I found that the Frenchman, if less kindly, was more polite. The Frenchman had either clearer ideas or none at all about other nationalities; the Englishman —but really, these reflections do not belong in this book, but in another, if anywhere. I will not prolong them here, but say only that I was in Paris fairly often after that first visit and that I liked it the more the more I knew it.

But I am forgetting my friend Monsieur Raoul de St. Ange. I would not willingly forget my friend St. Ange. In fact, I could not forget him. He was a delightful man of fifty or thereabouts, a dear and gracious person. I had met him in London where he was giving lessons in French, and trying to make a French weekly paper pay its way and earn him something over. He was of Norman birth, and had lived fairly well in Paris up to the time of the Commune, when he had been ruined. He emigrated to London. He had a wife and two small sons. The boys were about ten and twelve respectively. This little family lived in a little house at Shepherd's Bush. The house was very simple, but it was as neat as wax. I used to help St. Ange a little with the English section of his paper, and in return he gave me lessons in French.

One day he said to me: "I must go to Normandy; a week there. It will give me the greatest pleasure if you come." And so I arranged to meet him at Amiens on my return from Paris. He had some family affairs to settle, something to do with the children, and a bit of property that had been left in trust for them. In Normandy we would see some of his people, a bit of France from the inside not the outside. I jumped at the chance. We met at Amiens, and explored the Cathedral before doing anything else. He knew somebody there, or somebody knew of him, and we were taken all over the wonderful Cathedral, from roof to crypt. We were so long at this that we concluded to spend the

night in Amiens, and push on, next morning, by train to a village some thirty miles or more away, which was one of the objectives of his visit.

The name of that village I have clean forgotten. It has passed like many other names that were supposed to be fixed there. But forgotten it is, although the place itself is associated with memories of rustic hospitality more generous than anything that has ever come my way. Well, we arrived at the village of the forgotten name, and we put up at the house of the station master, in the station building itself. There was no inn. The station master was somehow, somewhere, within St. Ange's circle of friends. He took charge of our kits and showed me to what I am sure was the best bedroom. I had a guilty feeling that the occupants must have turned out for my benefit; but one can only defer to the custom of the country.

Presently Monsieur Station Master, and Madame Station Master, and little Station Master *fils* appeared, each in best bib and tucker, and led the way across the fields, to a little thatched farmhouse two miles distant. The railway contingent evidently were making holiday. All the way we walked through fields of grain, in a wide path which came, by and by, to a little bridge over a chattering stream, and then to a road, and around a bend in the road to the farmhouse, thatched, moss and flowers growing in the thatch, and a family growing in the door, for the doorway was filled with humans of ages from eight to eighty, in rows and tiers. As we drew near there was such a display of waving handkerchiefs and joyous shouts as would have gratified William the Conqueror himself had he been passing.

St. Ange was smothered in embraces, and I was bidden in, not to the embraces, but to a seat in the fireside, after salutations all round. St. Ange had not been in these parts for twenty years. He was trustee for some of these younkers, and had now come to be relieved of his trust, as the younkers were of age in the eyes of the law. You would have thought that I was a benefactor, so generous were their attentions. Food and wine were pressed upon me. What the good folk were saying did not enter my comprehension; the twists of the Norman tongue were beyond me. But smiles are translatable in any language and so are hearty courtesies. Presently what appeared to be the whole population of the neighbouring countryside streamed in, and St. Ange and his American friend had to meet them all. We met like old friends. Then St. Ange took me to call upon some old folk in a cottage not far away. We must have been a couple of hours calling about. When we returned to the first place a dinner was ready for us, and we for it.

The fat of the land was before us. There was every kind of good thing that grew in Normandy. And there was wine of the country, and plenty of it. The triumph of the occasion was duck,—duck such as I never ate before, and have not eaten since, not even in Paris, where they have a subtle skill in cooking these things. I could write rhapsodies about that duck. When, even nowadays, I am seeking to whet appetite, I think of the ducks I ate in Norman cottages. No one has eaten duck who has not eaten it in Normandy where every housewife seemed to me a marvel of a cook. I was in Normandy a week, lunched and dined and supped in a different house each day—they were chiefly the homes of cottage folk—and, for abundance and good feeding, I still regard it as a land of miracle.

How I praised the duck at that first dinner, and extolled Madame's skill in cookery! Madame was pleased. Have I conveyed the impression that these were wealthy folk? It was not my intention to do so. They were Normandy peasants, which may mean anything or little as far as well-being goes. The room in which we ate was the living room, cooking-washing-eating-room. I daresay that behind a panel, or a curtain, there was an alcove with a bed. Anyhow, there was one in an adjoining room. And over the dining table was a loft to which you mounted by a ladder which was slung against the ceiling, when not wanted, by rope and pulley. The dining-room floor was of earth, hard packed, hard as nails, clean as the proverbial whistle. Everything shone with cleanliness—windows, napery, brass, pewter, plates, kettles—if all the belongings of the room had whistled there would have been a bellow as if the siren of a big liner had blown. Such cleanliness and such cooking I have not found in all the

years that followed in the many English cottages I have known, but I met the combination three or four times a day for six or seven days, each time beneath a different roof.

St. Ange and I walked back across the fields by moonlight, Monsieur, Madame, and Toddlekins Station Master, and two from our feasting house, accompanying us. That night I slept like a top. At noon what was my surprise and joy to find another duck, duly prepared and cooked by our hostess of the preceding day, waiting for me on the station master's table. It had been brought by one of her small fry with the lady's compliments. There was a compliment fit for a prince! Have I mentioned the wine that graced the basket, and the miraculous green peas that were to melt in the mouth? Ah, well, it was long ago, and it was hospitality.

In that way did Normandy receive us at every halt, whether we called at farm, or cottage, or château. Was there ever such a country for eating and drinking, I wondered. At last we arrived at Rouen. We had driven in from the country, and somewhat wearied and dusty with the journey, we were hurried by a stout and jolly man, a gigantic person who was in waiting on the road, to a delightful dwelling in the town where three generations of St. Ange's relatives welcomed us and would have haled us forthwith to the seats of honour, but that we pleaded for a wash and a change.

It was twelve o'clock when we gathered at table. It was four when we rose. And when we rose, something else was served in the next room. And I was told that we must dine at another house, at seven; I think seven was the hour. And we were to sup at a third party at eleven! But I had become accustomed to this splendour of generosity. St. Ange had warned me at Amiens that it was inevitable, and could n't be shirked. And so, after the first heroic occasion, the memorable affair of duck at the cottage, I made a great show of eating and drinking, so that these valiant Norman trenchermen would not think me rude and neglectful, and speedily I learned how to keep up the appearance of feasting and of still having a wee-bit appetite at the end. That was doing pretty well, I think, for a novice. And it required some skill in calculation, for at each table there was everything, and abundance of everything, that gourmets or gourmands could desire to eat and drink. In seven days there were twenty-one such feasts!

When we reached London, on our homeward journey, I called for sausage and mashed, and a tankard of bitter, by way of return to the simple life.

But the kindness of it all, the generous hospitality; the opening of hearts to a stranger who comes with an old friend or relative,—in forty years I have seen nothing to equal it. The gentleman who killed the fatted calf offered but a Barmecide feast in comparison with the provender of my Norman friends.

A few days after the return from France a telegram came to me from St. Ange, saying that his boy was seriously ill, and asking me to come at once. In the evening I went as quickly as I could to Shepherd's Bush. The little chap had taken a chill, pneumonia had supervened. The doctor was in the house when I arrived. "Can't live through the night," he said. The parents were with the little fellow. I dozed below in an armchair, knowing that there was need of sleep if I were to see these good people through the crest of their trouble. An hour after midnight the mother came and said: "It is finished! Yes, dead. I am anxious for *mon mari*. He will not move, or speak. He sits staring —*comme ça*. Please go to him."

I aroused St. Ange and made him come with me. All night till dawn I walked him, through Shepherd's Bush, through Hammersmith, across the Bridge, across Barnes Common, through Mortlake and Richmond, and back again, making him talk and tiring him out. That was the object, to counter his nervous excitement by physical fatigue and to divert his mind. I brought him home at sunrise, limp, exhausted. He slept for ten hours.

I had to make him see that the world had not come to a standstill, that there was no "copy" for his paper, and so on. I saw his printers, his publishers, and some other people he knew who turned out "copy." Between them all they saw him through the worst of his problems. This brought me in a practical way into connection with the outer fringes of Fleet Street and London journalism, and in

my odd hours I learned how "copy" was prepared for the compositors, how proofs were corrected, how "forms" were made up, and before long was able to assist some of my new acquaintances when they were pressed for time at these games.

It was natural enough that in following these lines as a joyous amateur I should drift into journalism. I never intended to stay in it, I preferred to write books; but in those days that seemed a mad thing to do,—to write books and expect to earn money by them. In journalism, if one got his "stuff" printed, he got paid, and, if one knew the ropes, he had n't to wait forever for the payment. There was a certain attractiveness about being paid for work one liked to do, and I liked writing better than anything else. And I liked the rush and pressure of journalism as I saw these things manifested in the experience of my friends. They had adventures too; I also would have them. It seemed possible to know everybody, go everywhere, see everything, and, if one worked the ropes with skill, he might remain his own master. One saw it all through rose-coloured glasses. How else should youth see anything?

Even to-day I see St. Ange through the rose-coloured glasses of memory. It is the only way possible, for except in memory I have not seen him in all these years since we returned from Normandy and his boy died. Within a month from the funeral Raoul St. Ange and his wife vanished. They had returned to France, 't was said, but no one knew. His pupils did not know, his printers did not know, his paper was dying. I suppose he had n't the heart to face the obsequies. He merely vanished. No inquiry revealed him. Never a letter, never a wire, never a trace of any kind in forty years.

CHAPTER IV
I TAKE THE PLUNGE

I have never been so old as I was during my first three or four years in London. It is, or at any rate it used to be, a common delusion of youth that the mantle of years has descended upon its shoulders. In my case the shoulders could have carried a large mantle. I was tall and big framed, earning my living in a foreign country, where, by the way, I felt completely at home; my habits of thought were far beyond those which custom fixes for the 'teens, and all my associates were older than myself, most of them much older. In the work which circumstances and I laid out, youth was by others supposed to be a disadvantage, so that it might have been natural had I assumed the merit of a maturity which I did not possess. But I was not compelled to assume it. It was attributed to me. Nobody supposed that I was under nineteen. I was supposed to be at least half a dozen years older.

My first editor was George Parsons Lathrop, of the *Boston Courier*. He was a son-in-law of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and he achieved the honour of editing my copy by the alacrity with which he published it for nothing. As the suggestion was my own the acceptance of non-compensated work was entirely fair. If his paper could stand it, I could. I wanted practise, and Lathrop wanted copy. He was perfectly willing that I should practise in his columns. I did n't know him from Adam, but had written to him enclosing a "London Letter" which solicited his acceptance on gratuitous terms. Beneath my generosity was a design. Not only did I need practice but I wanted to be known as the London Correspondent of an American paper, in order to have the *entrée* at theatres, concerts, political gatherings, and other public functions. After sufficient practice with Lathrop, I would endeavour to sell copy in other quarters. The plan succeeded.

When the period of gratuitous service had stretched far enough, a Boston journal of much interest and overwhelming respectability, deigned graciously to pay five dollars a letter for my London "stuff." The magnitude of this offer did not shock me, but five dollars meant a sovereign, and the addition of twenty shillings to one's weekly income suggested wealth to a young scribbler in London. Three or four letters had been despatched when, one evening, an expensive acquaintance who had rooms above mine, near Queen Square, dropped in at my snug chambers and spun a yarn. He had "seen Leighton, you know, President of the Royal Academy, good sort, dev'lish good fellow. What do you suppose he 's done now? Taken up a sculptor in Paris, French of course, poor as I am, poorer, if it 's possible to be poorer than I am, and has had a piece of the chap's work sent over here for exhibit at the Academy. Sculptor could n't send it. No money. Not even a studio. Devilled for years in other men's studios. Leighton saw, says fellow must become known in London. Got artist chaps to pay expenses of sending over. Good fellow, Leighton. Go see it, you! Press Day—Royal Academy —next week. Forgot French chap's name!"

This brought to my recollection the fact that in Paris, the previous Easter, when haunting Bohemia with a pack of student friends, I had heard of a needy sculptor who was doing things of strange power, and was hard up because he would not work in accepted forms, but persisted in carving things that nobody wanted. And who, in those days, would buy sculpture from an "artist unknown"? My friends promised that I should meet the man, but I was called away from Paris before this could be arranged.

I went to the Royal Academy on Press Day, and saw the specimen of the "new man's" work. I was quite alone with it. One is always sure to be alone in the Statuary Room of the Royal Academy. An article came out of the silence. It went to my five-dollar editor. He responded with this note:

"Sorry we can't pay for any more of your letters. We printed the last one, but, really, we don't want articles about unknown sculptors, especially French ones."

The unknown sculptor, whose name, of course, I gave, was Auguste Rodin!

I subsequently heard that the article was the first about Rodin to be published in America, and that an artist and fellow townsman of mine, Henry Bacon, then in Paris, brought it to his attention. Months afterward, having followed me half around the world, there arrived by post a big and battered parcel. It contained a photograph of the sculpture I had seen, the bust of Rodin's "St. John Preaching", and the large mount bore Auguste Rodin's autograph with a grateful message to me. I had the trophy framed and hung over the fireplace in my chambers, and there, whether the fireplace were in England or America, it has hung ever since. If I were the first to give Auguste Rodin public recognition in my country, he was the first anywhere to acknowledge my stumbling work.

Vocation was pressing its claims more heavily than usual about that time and there was little opportunity to pursue a project I had formed for writing a series of articles upon "The London of Disraeli." Everybody in pendom had written of "Dickens' London", and "Thackeray's London", and after "Endymion" had made its loudly trumpeted appearance, it occurred to me that Disraeli had a London which the makers of articles had not seized upon and which would yield "material" for interesting copy. This, if well illustrated, might appeal to some magazine editor in America and subsequently become a book. At the same time I was gathering notes and impressions for a series of papers which might be called "Odd Corners of London." For things of this kind America seemed to promise an especially good market, and I believed that I could supply it fairly well. One thing after another delayed this little plan. Vocation was taking up more time and at higher pressure than is compatible with hobby-riding. It has a habit of doing so. Then a visit to America intervened, for the purpose of spending my twenty-first birthday, and the following five or six months, at home. The return to England was followed by a rush of work in the City, and this by an illness of some weeks' duration. All the while the Disraeli subject lay untouched until, one day in 1882, I met a character in a Disraeli novel, who was much more of a character outside it.

It was a day of powerful rain. The Pullman Company were to run their first train in England over the Brighton line from Victoria Station. They had invited a regiment of celebrities and a few odd sticks. Among the latter I was included by some official of my acquaintance who thought I might write an article for some overseas paper. Taking a place in a smoking car I was solitary for but a minute, when George Augustus Sala entered hurriedly and plumped himself down beside me, saying: "What a beastly, blowy, wet morning!"

"The worst since Noah's time," said I.

"If this train gets to Brighton and returns through the flood, it will be another case not only of pull man, but also of pull devil, pull baker," said Sala.

"There 's copy for you," said I.

"Oh, are you a journalist?" asked Sala.

"I 'm hoping to be. It's an aspiration."

"Desperation, more likely," he said. "Don't do it, young man, not if there 's a good crossing to sweep in your neighbourhood. Journalism is the worst trade in the world."

"Every man says that of his own profession," I replied.

"Profession be hanged! What do we profess? We stain paper, and look as wise as owls, and know a damned sight more than we ever tell. Most of us bleat in our folds like sheep; few of us have the chance to go about the world and see things, and even they work like slaves to entertain the public while their owners take the profits. The worst trade in the world, sir; work harder, know more than any other—about human nature, anyhow—and get less for it than any other; what we write is forgotten the day after it's printed, and when we can't grind out any more, when they 've squeezed our brains dry, we 're thrown on the dust-heap to be buried by a benevolent association. Don't go into journalism unless you own the paper! That's where the profits are—big circulation and advertising revenue, politics and peerages! I 'm too old for aiming at ownership now; besides, I 'm a writer, not a screw! Journalism be hanged. If I 'd been a *chef* in a millionaire's palace, or a fashionable hotel, I 'd have done better."

Possibly. At any rate he would have been the prince of *chefs* as he was "the prince of journalists", or was it the king the public called him? He was supposed to earn fabulous sums with his pen. If he earned them he spent them, for he left nothing when he had "gone west." He was an artist in cookery, had a knowing taste in wines; he had been everywhere, seen everything, knew everybody, and on the shortest possible notice could write an article upon anything or nothing. He had a flaming face, small, glittering eyes, a build and frontage not unlike that of Pierpont Morgan of later fame, and a reputation for wit and story-telling. He had also a reputation for geniality. He was as genial as a thunderstorm. His rumblings and clatters might pass quite harmless, or sear you with a flash. His familiar signature was "G.A.S."

"I see you don't believe it," said he, "but you will. Don't say I did n't warn you."

"Thanks," said I.

"Not in the least," said he. "Go to your doom! What's your paper?"

I said I had written for two or three papers at home, in America, and I told him the story of the editor who did n't want Rodin. He laughed until his white waistcoat nearly burst its buttons. "I had an editor once," said he, "who didn't know the date of the Battle of Waterloo but was certain that Nelson had saved the day. Journalism a 'profession', eh? And editors are the High Board of Examiners. But don't mind me. I 'm like this on wet mornings."

Just then a wet prelate in a shaggy coat shook himself at the door, as if he were a huge dog that had soaked in the rain. His prelacy was revealed by the purple at his throat.

"Monsignor Capel," exclaimed Sala. "How are you? And did you come in a boat?"

"The voyage from Kensington was rough," said the prelate, "but this seems a snug harbour."

"Make fast to moorings here, and to-morrow the envious will say that G.A.S. is travelling Rome-wards with you on an American train."

"Undreamed-of felicity," said the prelate. "But I think we shall not go far toward Rome to-day. This train has no 'through connection', as they say in America. This is my first experience in an American train, but not, of course, your first, Mr. Sala. Possibly your first, sir," he said, turning to me, as he took a seat beside Sala.

"Oh, no, I 'm an American," said I.

"Then I am doubly fortunate," said the Monsignor. "Because I am going to America and you can tell me how to get about, if you will be so good." This was a pleasant way to break the ice, and as the train filled, presently we had a pleasant company and were speedily at Brighton, where the Pullman people entertained their trainload at luncheon. On the return journey Monsignor Capel sat opposite me at a table built for two, and talked about America. That is to say, he asked questions and I answered them, as we smoked the Pullman cigars. As we parted at Victoria, he invited me to dine at his house, making an appointment for the following week.

He was not only a clever man and "striking", as they say, in appearance, but he had great charm, and being a Jesuit of brilliant and varied accomplishments, could adapt himself easily to any company. As a preacher he was eloquent; as a man of the world he was brilliant and fascinating; as an ecclesiastic distinguished and influential; as a maker of titled, wealthy, and in the worldly sense "important" converts to Rome he was famous, but as the administrator of a college or university he proved a failure. He was a prominent figure in London life; he was the Monsignor Catesby of "Lothair", as Manning was the Cardinal Grandison. If his fortunes had begun to ebb at the time I knew him, the glamour of his successes was still about him.

Disraeli had described Catesby as "a fascinating man who talked upon all subjects except high mass, and knew everything that took place at Court without being present there himself. He led the conversation to the majestic theme, and while he seemed to be busied in breaking an egg with delicate precision, and hardly listening to the frank expression of opinions which he carelessly encouraged, obtained a not insufficient share of Lothair's views and impressions of human beings and affairs in general."

I dined with Monsignor Capel on several occasions at Scarsdale Lodge, in Wright's Lane, Kensington. Scarsdale Lodge has for many years known a succession of celebrated tenants, of whom Dundreary Sothern was one. Sothern had also lived at Cedar Villa, next door, and Capel had succeeded him there. Now, and for many years, Scarsdale Lodge has been the town home of H. Hughes-Stanton, R.A., whom I have known from almost the beginning of things. Up to the year preceding the Pullman excursion Monsignor Capel had lived in Cedar Villa. Sothern had made that place famous for breakfasts and suppers and practical jokes. Capel's breakfasts had been quite as famous without the practical jokes. Capel had transformed Sothern's billiard room into a chapel. The dining room in which the actor had "exposed" the "feats" of the Davenport brothers, and where the lights of Bohemia had twinkled, had, under the prelate's tenancy, been noted for its hospitality to pilgrims from the polite world who were on the way to Rome. But the line was not drawn at hungry hearts. Palates that were used to dainty feasts were tickled there, and brilliant table talk of politics and art, of literature and science and society had rippled there. Capel's hospitality was wide; his guests were, as likely as not, non-conformists—if they dared to come—Anglicans who dared anything—and political men of all shades of opinion, especially anti-Gladstonian opinion. But disciples of the G.O.M. were welcome if they were good talkers. They might be converted to other politics; at any rate they would hear them.

Monsignor Capel at home was in purple-edged cassock, with purple buttons and broad purple sash. If in his shaggy overcoat he had suggested bulk, in his cassock and biretta he was a dignified, even an imposing figure. He received me in his study at the twilight hour. The fire-glow played over the room, while the papal chamberlain submitted to the processes of an interview. But "submitted" is scarcely the right word; it is merely the word that custom applies to the extraction of copy from a willing subject. He had invited the interviewer and did not pretend that the interview was torture. We sat by the fire and spun. The room was on the ground floor of the house and in the rear, overlooking the garden. His writing desk was in a bay window, and above it a crucifix was suspended. Near it, on the left wall, hung a large photograph of Pope Pius IX and his household. The Monsignor himself was not inconspicuous in this. About the room were a dozen or more photographs of celebrities. Among these was a photograph of Gladstone. "I keep that here as a penance," said Capel, to whom the name of the "Grand Old Man" was anathema.

Capel alluded to himself as a "lamb" in politics, but his allusion to politicians opposed to his way of thinking were anything but lamblike that early evening. He had published a pamphlet called "Great Britain and Rome, or Ought the Queen to Hold Diplomatic Relations with the Sovereign Pontiff?" Of course he held that she ought, and he said so to the immense disapproval of the majority of his fellow countrymen. He had also produced a pamphlet on the Irish Question which, then as now, could be counted on for enraging and puzzling half the population. The solution proposed by him, was, I believe, more Roman Catholicism, but why and how to get more of what was already in excess one did not see then, and sees now even less than before.

But Capel's star was dimming. His Catholic college, or university, or whatever it was, had failed for lack of support and faults of administration, and the financial troubles were soon to drive him to the bankruptcy court, if they had not already done so. And His Eminence Cardinal Manning had thrown his influence against the captivating Monsignor. The Cardinal had his reasons, and, I suppose, they were good reasons. At any rate, like Shylock's, they were sufficient. When the Cardinal was against a man in his flock, that man's chances for preferment, and even for holding his own, were not worth discussing. Capel went to America in 1883. He sailed on the *Arizona* whose captain was the brother of my friend, Henry Murray. The Monsignor made a meteoric flash over the American continent. I saw him there. And then the continent swallowed him. He died in California, if not unknown then practically forgotten.

The sequel to my visit at Scarsdale Lodge was an article, and the article was sent, on chance, to the *Boston Herald*, then the leading newspaper in New England and of almost metropolitan

importance. I did not know any one connected with the paper, not even the editor's name. But the article was printed, although I did not know that until some months later, at the end of 1882, when I turned up in Boston, at the *Herald* office, and asked for the editor, sending him my card with a message of inquiry about the article which I had posted to him from London some months earlier.

I intended to ask him for a job, for I had decided to settle awhile in Boston and turn my London experiences to account if the opportunity could be made.

A boy came to the room where I had waited on the anxious seat for an unhappy quarter of an hour.

"Mr. Holmes will see you," he said. "Come this way."

Holmes was the man's name, was it! Yes, John H. I had learned that much, and I followed the boy to an inner office. A dark-haired, slender, agreeable-mannered man, who looked rather like the Whitelaw Reid of that time, rose from his desk. As he did so I said:

"Mr. Holmes, I believe."

"Yes," said he, "and you are the writer of that article?" naming it.

"Yes," said I.

He held out his hand, and smiled. We shook hands, and I tried to look as if it were my daily occupation to be welcomed by the editors of powerful journals. Naturally, I did n't feel that way, and was nervously wondering what to say next. That anxiety vanished as the editor asked:

"Are you at liberty to do any more work of that kind, or of any special kind, for us?"

"Yes," said I, concealing, I hoped, my eagerness and delight.

"Then I will take as much as you are willing to write," said he, "and pay you ten dollars a column, and when you go anywhere for us, your expense bill."

This seemed a fair beginning, particularly as I had not been compelled to ask for it, as I had expected to do. When I closed the door behind me and descended the stairs, I felt an elation of spirit that was natural enough in a young chap who was more than five months short of his twenty-third birthday.

And so, with the beginning of 1883, I took the plunge into journalism. There followed five more or less adventurous years which carried me from one end of the country to the other and across the Atlantic and back again. Then in 1888, I was appointed London correspondent of the same paper, a position which I held for nine years until called elsewhere. It is with memories and impressions of the London Days of that time, and of some of their celebrated personages, that the following pages are concerned.

CHAPTER V
BROWNING AND MOSCHELES

You will look in vain now for the old brown-brick bungalow that stood, for the most part concealed by trees and shrubs, within the railings of the park-like enclosure halfway down Sloane Street, on the left-hand side, as you go from Knightsbridge. It stood there till the end of the eighties. If you walked there in the days of my early acquaintance with it, or glided through Sloane Street in a hansom, the chances were that the bungalow would still escape your glance, sheltered as it was by foliage. But from the top of any 'bus you could make it out readily, and you would wonder, as most 'bus fares did, what lucky or eccentric fellow lived within the very plain walls and had all that Cadogan enclosure as a back garden. Probably your neighbour on the 'bus top would tell you, 'bus neighbours being at all times well stocked with misinformation, that the favoured dwelling was the home of the gardener of the enclosure. But it was not. It was the home of my delightful friend, Felix Moscheles, and there you could find Robert Browning almost any Sunday afternoon when he was in London.

Felix Stone Moscheles was the son of Ignaz Moscheles, composer and pianist, whose intimate friendship with Mendelssohn is revealed in the latter's published correspondence. Felix was born in London February 8, 1833, at Number 3 Chester Place, Regent's Park, and Mendelssohn acted as his godfather at the christening in St. Pancras Church. Felix died at Tunbridge Wells, December 22, 1917. He was as kind a man as ever lived. He was an artist by profession, fond of music and musicians, as you might expect him to be; he spoke several languages fluently and with equal charm —English, French, German, Esperanto, and I know not what else—and he was passionately attached to movements for world peace. We know that nothing made for the peace of the world down to mid-1914; that while Germany had been deceiving it, the world had lulled itself to sleep with "drowsy syrups" and ecstatic daydreams. I think the awakening killed my dear old friend. That is not surprising. He was over eighty-one when the war broke out, and almost eighty-five when he died. Down to 1913, when I saw him last, I used to say that he was the youngest man of my acquaintance. He had the optimism of youth, its buoyant spirit, its gallant outlook.

When I first knew Moscheles he was only fifty-five or fifty-six, and he was passing cakes to the ladies, while his wife poured tea, and a stoutish man in a grey checked suit, and with grey moustache and chin-beard, was talking something which seemed like philosophy, and was certainly not poetry, to a mixed group in a cosy corner. It was one of the happy points about Moscheles' Sunday afternoons that if you cared to continue talking with another caller and the other caller cared to continue to listen, or to talk with you, you were not routed up to exchange commonplaces about the weather with somebody else who needed to be assured that it rained, or that the sun was shining. You could flit from group to group, and find a place where you fitted, and the host or hostess would contrive, if you were unknown, to make you known to some one without interrupting some one else's story, so that no one was left adorning the wall.

The stoutish, grey man in the grey checked suit was Robert Browning whose afternoon-tea manner was quite simple, as unaffected as that of a bank-chairman contemplating dividends or deposits. He was not in the least a posing poet. He had been a great friend of Moscheles for a long time, and the latter spoke of him as "my literary godfather." Moscheles, at this time, was preparing for publication "Felix Mendelssohn's letters to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles." I had something to do with persuading him to write "In Bohemia with George Du Maurier." I had been looking in his studio through a mass of autograph letters and sketches relating to his years in Paris as an art student, the "Trilby" years, and, as Du Maurier's book and the play adapted from it were the rage of the time, Felix was encouraged to write around the letters he had, and Du Maurier's early sketches, and about

the characters in the romance of the hour, and to send some of the chapters to the *Century Magazine*, and afterward to produce the whole as a book.

Moscheles was brought up among celebrities, and was surrounded by the famous all his life. Mendelssohn, Joachim, Malibran, Lablache were, in his boyhood, family friends. He attracted distinguished persons as long as he lived. When he was thirteen the family moved from London to Leipzig, at Mendelssohn's instigation. Mendelssohn was eager that his friend, Moscheles' father, should become a professor in the Conservatoire which he was founding at Leipzig. And so the move was made, Ignaz Moscheles relinquishing his London career and its worldly advantages in order to live near his friend. Felix, who at ten had begun his education at King's College, London, had, at thirteen, to find it in Germany. But not for long; when he was seventeen, determined to become an artist, he began studying drawing and painting in Paris, at the Atelier Gleyre. Having seen something of the troubles of Germany in 1848, he was now to see the troubles of France which led to and followed the flight of Louis Philippe, and attended the *coup d'état*.

It was during the Atelier Gleyre period that he met George du Maurier and had the amusing experiences he described afterwards in the book to which I have alluded. From Paris he went to Antwerp, where he studied under Van Lorino at De Keyser's Academy, and where he had as fellow students Laurens Alma-Tadema, Maris, and Heyermans. I don't know when he returned to London to settle down, but when he did so he began a career that was to be rich in friendships, helpful to all, and productive in portraiture.

As a portrait painter he was at his best, I think. As long ago as 1862, in his studio at Cadogan Gardens, he painted a portrait of Mazzini which, after Mazzini's death, he offered to present to Italy. But official Italy at that time was not desiring portraits of Mazzini and the offer was declined. Now, after the painter's death, the portrait goes to a museum at Milan. In 1882, Moscheles visited America, accompanying his friends Henry Irving and Ellen Terry on their first journey over the Atlantic. He painted Grover Cleveland, during the week when Cleveland was first elected to the Presidency, and talked with him of the subjects which absorbed the artist,—International Arbitration and Universal Peace. His portrait of Browning went to the Armour Institute, Chicago. Other portraits of his which were quite remarkable, which linger in the memory, were of his mother, Charlotte Moscheles, Rubinstein, H. M. Stanley, Gounod, Sarasate, Tom Mann, Israels, Stepniak, George Jacob Holyoake (at the age of eighty); he made beautiful water colours of Venice, of Spain, of Sicily, of Cairo, of Tunis, of Algerian subjects; and later was quite fascinated by his scheme of painting a series of "Pictures with a Purpose."

But the "Pictures with a Purpose" did not, I think, attract persons less purposeful than the painter. They were socialistic pictures, reforming, philanthropic, propagandist, as if the painter were preaching by paint and canvas. I think his oral preaching was preferred.

I have mentioned the old brown-brick bungalow where Moscheles lived in Cadogan Gardens, where I first knew him, and first saw Robert Browning. Moscheles had lived there for I know not how many years, but when his lease expired, in the early nineties, the bungalow expired too. The march of "improvement" was coming down Sloane Street, and the bungalow was doomed. It disappeared from the gaze of surrounding and jealous neighbours who might have keys to the gardens but could not live in those pleasant demesnes. In the Elm Park Road, near the borders of Chelsea and Fulham, Moscheles found a house with an unusually large garden. He transformed the house and built a studio which he connected with it, and there one went to so many melodious evenings and artistic afternoons that through the years of recollection I seem to behold him hospitably dispensing tea and bread and butter, attended by swarms of musicians who were, or were to become, famous; by poets and painters who had found, or still were seeking, celebrity; by dreamers who were going to free Russia; or zealous gentlemen, like Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, who were not only labouring for the Hague Conferences but for the Parliament of Man.

It was there that Mark Hambourg first played when he came to London. I remember the occasion well enough, but not the music, for I cannot forget that phenomenally ugly youngster. He was then only a boy. But the music rippled and thundered from his fingers, while that amazing head with its torrential hair cast shivering shadows over the magical keyboard. The unprepossessing youth was then unknown. He became known soon enough and he ran quickly to the fame that waits upon pianists of remarkable gifts.

Moscheles was a citizen of the world, which he regarded as his native country, so it was natural enough that he should take a lively interest in Esperanto in the days when people thought it a fad, and he became, as he remained, President of the London Esperanto Club. He was constantly corresponding with congenial folk in remote countries with the object of spreading the merits of Esperanto as an auxiliary language for international intercourse. "Even now," he said a generation ago, "I can go anywhere with it, and by its aid find somebody who will make me feel at home." He was a tireless propagandist. I would venture to say that he loved "propaganding" more than art. At any rate he could seldom avoid diluting his painting with propaganda in the contented Victorian era when little wars were fought every six months and trouble looked for between whiles. How easy it seemed in those days, when most of us were credulous, to achieve Liberty by lecturing!

Partly through his zeal for Esperanto and partly through his passion for a "Free Russia", he was particularly keen to meet Stepniak. I had known the latter for some years, having as long ago as 1885 or 1886 written an article about him for the *New York Tribune*. The meeting with Moscheles was brought about one night at a "Smoke Talk" in my home in Cheyne Walk, and from that moment the two men became fast friends, remaining so until Stepniak's tragic death. Whether Stepniak had or had not killed an official in Russia I don't know, and I do not care much. If he had killed him I dare say the man deserved it, for, of all the plundering and oppressive gangs of officialdom, the Russians of that era had about the worst; they robbed like desperados and they ruled their land with lies, torture, and corruption. In a country capable of producing the "Revolution" of 1917 and the later Bolshevism, anything was possible in the mid-eighties,—anything except the shadow of freedom. The tall dark Russian with the thin beard and the thin squeaky voice was a striking contrast to Moscheles, who was grey, and rather short than tall, and whose quiet geniality was the bloom on a trustful, generous character that invited confidence. Stepniak used to say that he never became quite accustomed to the liberty of English life. The opposite character of Russian habits had bitten too deeply into him. I remember that when he first came to London he would look around furtively when in the street, and if we stopped at a corner to talk he would ask: "Will the police allow this? In Russia they would not after dark." If he had lived to see London during the Great War he might have felt much more at home.

No one was ever bored at the Moscheles' afternoons. How could one be bored when host and hostess gave no thought to themselves but all their thought to their guests? Even the Swami I met there did not depress my spirits as many Swamis have done. I forget his name. I have met regiments of them in one country and another. Mostly they blazed, not with humility but importance. He, I say, had a worldly air, as if he were an Anglican bishop. He had also a sense of humour which was not entirely subdued as he listened to an American lady expounding the doctrine of "Votes for Women."
"Madame," said he, "may I ask a question?"

The lady looked assent.

"Your husband: does he share these views?"

"Not yet," she replied.

"Ah," said the Swami. And there were gusts of laughter.

"I may add," said the lady, "that I am not yet married."

Then the laughter came in shrieks, and the Swami smiled. But this, of course, was a generation before the suffragettes were brandishing hatchets like the Redmen, and burning churches and slashing paintings like the Huns.

But I have alluded to Browning, and have done so because whenever I think of Moscheles, I always think of him in association with Browning. Their friendship was very intimate, and that is one fact which shows the kind of man Moscheles was. After that glimpse and how-d'ye-do-good-bye at the old brown-brick bungalow which the Earl of Cadogan was so glad to destroy when the chance arrived to do so, it had been arranged by Moscheles and the poet that we should meet again with another friend of the three at a little lunch of four. But fate, or, to be precise, politics, which may be another name for fate, decided otherwise, and I had to go far afield to chronicle the results. Never again did that little company come together unless it were at Browning's open grave, on the midday of the dying year. The reaper Death had mown quickly.

When the scene shifted to Westminster Abbey, I waited at the cloister doors till I could pass to a seat in the Poets' Corner. While waiting at the door, I heard from the pressing throng behind me the voice of an Irish writer whom I had known and had lost from sight five years before. While looking for the familiar face that belonged to the delicious brogue, there came the sound of a great key turning an ancient lock, and then the door swung open. "Come," said another friend, and we went in, getting separated before we had gone far, but taking seats near the draped grave.

Browning's son was chief mourner. The poet had died in his son's home, the Palazzo Rezzonico, in Venice. And now, this day at Westminster was the last day of 1889. The great bell of the Abbey began tolling; its deep notes floated down from its tower as they sought lodgment in the hearts of the assembling throng, and with every stroke some face appeared that all England, or the world, knew well. After thirty years I can recall many of the faces that the grey light of the dull day, softened by the colouring of the Abbey windows, fell upon. There were tiers of people. Even the openings in the triforium revealed them, and by the great western doors they were packed, though they could catch but glimpses of the chancel, and most of them not that. Huxley's was the first face I saw. I had first seen it in the same place, almost on the same spot, years before, at Darwin's funeral. Max Muller and George Meredith were near him now. One thought that England sent her celebrated living men that day to meet the famous multitudes whose bodies have been laid away beneath the Abbey pavement for centuries upon centuries. There were Lord Wolseley and the Lord Chief Justice, Lord (then Professor) Bryce, Frederic Harrison, Holman Hunt, Henry Irving, Sidney Colvin, Whistler and Poynter and Alma-Tadema and Sir John Lubbock (afterwards Lord Avebury).

London was covered with a thickening fog. You could scarcely see the Abbey from Dean's Yard. Within the Abbey the arches aloft dissolved in mist, a mist of copper and pale gold where the light glanced through rose windows. Slipping into one's memory came Mrs. Browning's lines:

> "—view the city perish in the mist
> Like Pharaoh's armaments in the deep Red Sea,
> The chariots, horsemen, footmen, all the host
> Sucked down and choked to silence."

Candles from the choir places, and long-chained lamps, sent their soft, yellow gleams eerily through the veil which seemed to hang above us. And as the high noon drew near my glances fell upon the historians Kinglake, Lecky, and Froude. Would any one of the three ever write of this scene in England's history, I wondered? Bret Harte, Burne-Jones, George du Maurier, Leslie Stephen, William Black, Bancroft, and John Hare, and the publishers Blackwood, Macmillan, Murray, and Spottiswoode, ambassadors and ministers, the heads of universities, of learned societies, were shown to their places, singly or in groups, or took positions where they could find them, standing against the monuments. And when no more people could find space, the Abbey clock struck twelve, and the great west doors swung open, and down the long central aisle came the funeral train. Then arose the choral music which for one hundred and seventy years has risen at every burial within the Abbey, the burial office composed and played by Croft and Purcell when they were organists at Westminster.

Sir Frederick Bridge is playing it now, as Robert Browning, all there is of him on earth, is carried on his bier through the dense throng, to pause a while at the foot of the chancel steps beneath the central lantern. Choir and clergy precede him. On either side of him walk Hallam Tennyson, Doctor Butler (of Trinity College, Cambridge), Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Sir Theodore Martin, Archdean Farrar, Professor Masson, Professor Jowett (master of Balliol), Sir Frederick Leighton, Sir James Paget, Sir George Grove, George Murray Smith (Browning's publisher), and Professor Knight (of the University of St. Andrews). Then as the service proceeds (the Archbishop of Canterbury is here, Dean Vaughan, and others eminent in the Church) the choristers sing a "Meditation" which Sir Frederick Bridge has composed to Mrs. Browning's poem:

"What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?
'He giveth His beloved sleep.'

"O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delved gold, the wailers heap!
O strife, O curse that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And 'giveth His beloved sleep.'

"His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slopes men sow and reap,
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
'He giveth His beloved sleep.'"

The organ and the choir paused; all sounds died away. God struck a silence through us all. It fell upon a throng that faced the world's loss as if suddenly confronted by the flight of the soul for whose absence all mourned. And just then there fell a shaft of sunlight, golden, magical, touching the bier, and then it faded slowly away. To many, very many among the silent company, the loss by this death was a personal one; to all it had more than a touch of that. It must be so when a great poet dies. What I remember as vividly as all else was the great number of young faces in the Abbey, as if the rising generation did reverence to him who had passed.

By and by the last hymn had been sung, the Dean had pronounced the benediction, and Bridge, at the great organ, made the old Abbey thrill to its inmost stones with the vibrating tones of the Dead March from "Saul." Now the coffin had been lowered into its grave at the foot of Chaucer's tomb. Before us and at each hand were monuments, tablets, inlaid stones, marking the burial places of Spenser, Dryden, Gay, of Butler and Casaubon, Ben Jonson, Addison and Cowley, Prior, Macaulay and Grote; of Handel, Campbell, Sheridan, and Garrick. I stood on the grave of Dickens. And the throng passed slowly, reverently gazing into the dark grave where Browning's body had been laid as the old year was dying. Pealing through nave and transepts and the chapels of Kings, above the altar and the tombs of soldiers, sailors, statesmen—the brood who had made England and sung of her—the rumbling and trumpeting of the Dead March. Might not Shakespeare and Milton, Doctor Johnson, and Goldsmith and Gray have come to the Poets' Corner that day at noon to join the company, and to

greet, from their own memorials, this other man who had helped to make England? It seemed quite probable as we passed from that real world into the world of fog, and the closing door of the Poets' Corner shut in behind us the now tremulous notes of the organ.

How often have I heard Sir Frederick stir the slumbering majesty, beauty, and solemnity that lie within the Abbey organ, stir them to living wonder on occasions like this? More times than I can easily recall. In capitals and churches and cathedrals, in many parts of the world, that March from "Saul" has awakened memories within me. My earliest memory of music concerns itself with a military band, marching slowly, slowly down a hill, troops following with reversed arms, a gun carriage carrying something that was not a gun, covered with a flag; horses whose riders moved very slowly; coaches that young eyes saw as beyond number; and then a hole-in-the-ground. Men carried something on their shoulders from the gun carriage and lowered it into the hole; other men fired guns at the sky. A hawk flew full circle in the blue. And some one said, "My boy, take a last look where your father lies." Then the Dead March rolled and moaned again, and fixed itself on one of the pins of memory.

The solemn notes always bring back those moments, as a vision in which a small boy made his first acquaintance with Death. But they have never seemed to humble and exalt, moan and triumph and sob and victoriously march to the rhythm of the winds, so charged with majesty, as when Sir Frederick touched the heart of his instrument at the Abbey. The occasion, the place drenched with memories, the simple ceremony, the music's magic, and the mystery of it all make of this tribute to Death one of the rich experiences of living.

CHAPTER VI
PATTI

One broiling afternoon—it was in August, 1893—a Great Western train from London left me at a wee-bit station on the top of a Welsh mountain. The station was called "Penwylt." It overlooked the Swansea Valley, and stood about halfway between Brecon and the sea. When a traveller alighted at Penwylt there was no need to ask why he did so. He could have but one destination, and that was Craig-y-Nos Castle, the home of Madame Patti. She was then Madame Patti-Nicolini; she afterward became the Baroness Cederström. I shall use here the name by which, for sixty years, she has been known to an adoring world. A carriage from the castle was awaiting me, and quickly it bore me down the steep road to the valley, a sudden turn showing the Patti palace there on the banks of the Tawe. The Castle was two miles distant and a thousand feet below the railway. An American flag was flying on the tower. It flew there through the week of my visit, for was I not an ambassador from the American Public to the Queen of Song?

Mr. Gladstone once told Madame Patti that he would like to make her Queen of Wales. But she was that already, and more. She was Queen of Hearts the world over, and every soul with an ear was her liege. And, literally, in Wales Patti was very like a queen. She lived in a palace; people came to her from the ends of the earth; she was attended with "love, honour, troops of friends"; and whenever she went beyond her own immediate gardens the country folk gathered by the roadside, dropping curtseys and throwing kisses to her bonny majesty.

Her greeting of me was characteristic of this most famous and fortunate of women, this unspoiled favourite of our whirling planet. A group of her friends stood merrily chatting in the hall, and, as I approached, a dainty little woman with big brown eyes came running out from the centre of the company, stretched forth her hands, spoke a hearty welcome, and accompanied it with the inimitable smile which had made slaves of emperors. She had the figure and vivacity of a girl. She was fifty that year, but, there in broad daylight, looked fifteen or twenty years younger. This is not an illusion of gallantry, but a statement of fact.

There was a kind of family party at Craig-y-Nos. Stiffness and dullness, and the usual country-house talk about horses and guns, golf and fishing, did not prevail there. *La Diva's* guests were intimate friends, and chiefly a company of English girls who were passing the summer with her. In the evening, when all assembled in the drawing-room before going in to dinner, I found that we represented five nationalities,—Italian, Spanish, French, English, and American. While we awaited the appearance of our hostess, the gathering seemed like a polyglot congress.

As the chimes in the tower struck the hour of eight, a fairy vision appeared at the drawing-room door,—Patti, royally gowned and jewelled. The defects of the masculine intellect leave me incapable of describing the costume of that radiant little woman. It belonged to one of her operatic characters, I forget which one. But my forgetfulness does n't matter. The sight brought us to our feet, bowing as if we had been a company of court gallants in the "spacious days of great Elizabeth", and we added the modern tribute of applause, which our queen acknowledged with a silvery laugh. I remember only that the gown was white and of some silky stuff, and that about *La Diva's* neck were loops of pearls, and that above her fluffy chestnut hair were glittering jewels. With women it may be different, but mere man cannot give a list of Patti's adornments on any occasion; he can know only that they became her, and that he saw only her happy face. Before our murmurs had ceased, Patti, who had not entered the room, but had merely stood in the portal, turned, taking the arm of the guest who was to sit at her right, and away we marched in her train, as if she were truly the queen, through the corridors to the conservatory, where dinner was served.

It was my privilege at the Castle table to sit at Madame Patti's left. At her right was one whose friendship with her dated from the instant of her first European triumph. Heavens!—How many years ago? But it was a quarter of a century less than it now is at the time of which I am writing. The delight of those luncheons and dinners at Craig-y-Nos is unforgettable. There was a notion abroad that these meals were held "in state"; but they were not. There was merely the ordinary dinner custom of an English mansion. The menu, though, was stately enough, for the art of cookery was practised at Craig-y-Nos by a master who had earned the right to prepare dinners for Patti. The dining room was seldom used in summer for, handsome though that apartment is, Patti, and her guests, too, for that matter, preferred to be served in the great glass room which was formerly the conservatory and was still called so. There we sat, as far as outlook goes, out of doors; in whatever direction we gazed we looked up or down the Swansea Valley, across to the mountains, and along the tumbling course of the river Tawe. I was risking some neglect of my dinner, for I sat gazing at the wood-covered cliffs of Craig-y-Nos (Rock-of-the-Night) opposite, and listening to the ceaseless prattle of the mountain stream. Patti, noticing my admiration of the view, said, "You see what a dreadful place it is in which I bury myself."

"'Bury' yourself! On the contrary, here you are at the summit of Paradise, and you have discovered the fountain of perpetual youth. A 'dreadful place', indeed! It's the nearest thing to fairy-land."

"But one of your countrymen says that I 'hide far from the world among the ugly Welsh hills.' He writes it in an American journal of fabulous circulation, and I suppose people believe the tale."

Patti laughed at the thought of a too credulous public, and then she added:

"Really, they write the oddest things about my home, as if it were either the scene of Jack-the-Giant-Killer's exploits on the top of the Beanstalk, or a prison in a desolate land."

After visiting Patti at Craig-y-Nos I wondered no more why this enchanting woman sang "Home, Sweet Home" so that she fascinated millions. Her own home was far from being "humble", but it was before all things, a home. And she had earned it. There is not anywhere a lovelier spot, nor was there elsewhere a place so remote and at the same time so complete in every resource of civilization.

Dinner passed merrily. Merrily is exactly the word to describe it. Up and down the table good stories flew, sometimes faster than one could catch them. Nobody liked a good joke better than Patti, and when she heard one that particularly pleased her she would interpret it to some guest who had not sufficiently mastered the language in which it was told. It was all sheer comedy, and after watching it, and hearing *La Diva* speak in a variety of tongues, I asked:

"I wonder if you have what people call a native tongue, or whether all of them came to you as a gift of the gods."

"Oh, I don't know so many languages," she replied, "only—let's see—English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian."

"And which do you speak best, or like best?"

"I really don't know. To me there is no difference, as far as readiness goes, and I suppose 'the readiness is all.'"

"Not quite all. But what is your favourite, if you have a favourite among them?"

"Oh, Italian! Listen!"

And then she recited an Italian poem. Next to hearing Patti sing, the sweetest sound was her Italian speech. Presently she said:

"Speaking of languages, Mr. Gladstone paid me a pretty compliment a little while ago—nearly three years ago. I will show you his letter to-morrow, if you care to see it."

Patti forgot nothing. The next day she brought me Mr. Gladstone's letter. The Grand Old Man had been among her auditors at Edinburgh, and after the performance he went on the stage to thank her for the pleasure she had given him. He complained a little of a cold which had been troubling

him, and Patti begged him to try some lozenges which she found useful. That night she sent him a little box of them. The old statesman acknowledged the gift with this letter:

> 6, Rothesay Terrace,
> Edinburgh.
> October 22, 1890.
> Dear Madame Patti:
> I do not know how to thank you enough for your charming gift. I am afraid, however, that the use of your lozenges will not make me your rival. *Voce quastata di ottante' anni non si ricupera*.
> It was a rare treat to hear from your Italian lips last night the songs of my own tongue, rendered with a delicacy of modulation and a fineness of utterance such as no native ever in my hearing had reached or even approached. Believe me,
> Faithfully yours,
> *W. E. GLADSTONE.*

This letter, naturally enough, gave conversation a reminiscent turn. After some talk of great folk she had known, I asked Madame Patti what had been the proudest experience in her career.

"For a great and unexpected honour most gracefully tendered," said she, "I have known nothing that has touched me more deeply than a compliment paid by the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) and a distinguished company, at a dinner given to the Duke of York and the Princess May (the present King and Queen), a little while before their wedding. The dinner was given by Mr. Alfred Rothschild, one of my oldest and best friends. There were many royalties present and more dukes and duchesses than I can easily remember. During the ceremonies the Prince of Wales arose, and to my astonishment, proposed the health of his 'old and valued friend, Madame Patti.' He made *such* a pretty speech, and in the course of it said that he had first seen and heard me in Philadelphia in 1860, when I sang in 'Martha', and that since then his own attendance at what he was good enough to call my 'victories in the realm of song' had been among his pleasantest recollections. He recalled the fact that on one of the occasions, when the Princess and himself had invited me to Marlborough House, his wife had held up little Prince George, in whose honour we were this night assembled, and bade him kiss me, so that in after life he might say that he had 'kissed the famous Madame Patti.' And then, do you know, that whole company of royalty, nobility, and men of genius rose and cheered me and drank my health. Don't you think that any little woman would be proud, and ought to be proud, of a spontaneous tribute like that?"

It is difficult, when repeating in this way such snatches of biography, to suggest the modest tone and manner of the person whose words may be recorded. It is particularly difficult in the case of Madame Patti, who was absolutely unspoiled by praise. Autobiography such as hers must read a little fanciful to most folk; it is so far removed from the common experiences of us all and even from the extraordinary experiences of the renowned persons we hear about usually. But there was not a patch of vanity in Patti's sunny nature. Her life had been a long, unbroken record of success,—success to a degree attained by no other woman. No one else has won and held such homage; no one else had been so wondrously endowed with beauty and genius and sweet simplicity of nature,—a nature unmarred by flattery, by applause, by wealth, by the possession and exercise of power. Patti at fifty was like a girl in her ways, in her thoughts, her spirit, in her disinterestedness, in her enjoyments. Time had dimmed none of her charms, it had not lessened then her superb gifts. She said to me one day:

"They tell me I am getting to be an old woman, but I don't believe it. I don't feel old. I feel young. I am the youngest person of my acquaintance."

That was true enough, as they knew who saw Patti from day to day. She had all the enthusiasm and none of the affectations of a young girl. When she spoke of herself it was with most delicious frankness and lack of self-consciousness. She was perfectly natural.

She promised to show me the programme of that Philadelphia performance before the Prince of Wales so long ago, and the next day she put it before me. It was a satin programme with gilt fringe, and it was topped by the Prince of Wales's feathers. At that Philadelphia performance Patti made her first appearance before royalty. In the next year she made her London début at Covent Garden, as Amina in "La Somnambula." The next morning Europe rang with the fame of the new prima donna from America.

"I tried to show them that the young lady from America was entitled to a hearing," said she, as we looked over the old programmes.

"And has 'the young lady from America' kept her national spirit, or has she become so much a citizen of the world that no corner of it has any greater claim than another upon her affections?"

"I love the Italian language, the American people, the English country, and my Welsh home," she said.

"Good! The national preferences, if you can be said to own any, have reason on their side. Your parents were Italian, you were born in Spain, you made your first professional appearance in America, you first won international fame in England, and among these Welsh hills you have planted a paradise."

"How nice of you! That evening at Mr. Alfred Rothschild's, the Prince of Wales asked me why I do not stay in London during 'the season', and take some part in its endless social pleasures. 'Because, your Royal Highness,' I replied, 'I have a lovely home in Wales, and whenever I come away from it I leave my heart there.' 'After all,' said the prince, 'why should you stay in London when the whole world is only too glad to make pilgrimages to Craig-y-Nos?' Was n't that nice of him?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.