



THE  
SPIRIT LAMP.

*An Oxford Magazine without News.*

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HOCKS, CLARETS, CHAMPAGNES,

SODA, SELTZER, LEMONADE, &c.

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SUMMER TERM.

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W. J. G. ROBINSON.



# The Spirit Lamp.

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No. IV.

MAY 27, 1892.

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## THE GATES OF GAZA.

### III.

THE religion of Philestia is understood to be a monotheism of a very elastic character. The images of the great god Dagon, which are worshipped all over the country, shew a wonderful diversity of feature and expression, which has made him attractive to the most different sorts of people; and converted so many of the Gentiles that the prestige of the resident priesthood is eclipsed by the splendid career now open to enterprising young missionaries in foreign lands; who are grown too important to be passed over in a treatise on Philistia, and far too insidious not to deserve exposure.

The very shibboleth of this sort of proselytizers is a sound discussion. While our only desire in argument is to improve either our opinions or our dialectic, the Philistine will always argue with a moral purpose. Argument for argument's sake he cannot understand. Such rational motives as the display of ability or the bracing of the intellect by a vigorous contest, he heartily despises. He is not ashamed of avowing that his aim is to convert you. He sees no other advantage in a difference of opinion, than the opportunity of making you finally of one mind with him. He discovers in a keen adversary no subtle debater, no sincere votary of another god—only a possible proselyte. He cannot bear to leave

you where you are—not because he is anxious about your state, but because he is afraid of missing a good chance—of neglecting the special mission to reform you which he feels has been entrusted to him. In short, the ruling passion of his class is the love of instruction.

The Instructive Philistine has, broadly speaking, two types, which we shall call, if you please, the Kindergarten Philistine and the Aristocrat with a Mission.

To take the latter species first: its growth is due to a reaction against constitutional oligarchy. Divine right and so forth being popularly discredited, the oligarch, with the monarch, became a convenient puppet, reduced to supporting his dignity with a shallow adoption of new principles, and an “I myself will be your leader” for a motto. Who has forgotten the citizen peer who flourished in University debating societies half a century ago—who passed self-denying ordinances, and suffered from a moral poor man’s gout? The miniature Mirabeau is gone; and instead we have a type of oligarch who substitutes a personal mission for divine right as his claim on the consideration of mankind.

I know a nobleman, an admirable person in many ways, who might have been saved from this dreadful superstition if he had not been haunted by the image of the German Emperor. But at an early age he was so unfortunate as to discover a preaching likeness, as it seemed, between William of Hohenzollern and William, second Marquess of Admonisham; and this likeness he has ever since felt bound to live up to. It may be frankly acknowledged that so far Admonisham has been very successful. No one who knows the peer can read the speeches of the monarch without fancying himself for a moment in a college Discussion Society; no German subject could read a translation of Admonisham’s address upon the Gallant and the Glorious without recalling the elevating discourses of the Elector of Brandenburg on the deck of the “Hohenzollern.” With the great man of S. Boniface, as with the great man of Potsdam, there is the same determination to bring retrogression up to date—to stem the tide of new ideas by getting well in advance of

them—to convince the world of their plenipotentiary inspiration, and in order to that end to spare no effort, however painful, to take no advice, however profitable, and to be repelled by no flattery, however grovelling. The means employed by either, indeed, are as different as their respective spheres of activity: the one patronises socialism, the other pats Browning on the back; the one bowdlerises Ibsen for the mission-room, the other teaches the epic of modern history to the young recruit; the one takes up the Imperial Navy, the other takes up the Oxford rowing-men. But the essential characteristics are the same. Both seem (as sentimental police-reports say of culprits in the dock) to feel their position very keenly; both take an insatiable interest in other people's affairs; both are fond of public speaking, and invariably run away with their tongues; both are restlessly, abnormally active. Admonisham, it must be owned, is a long way behind his model in point of energy. When a chancellor is dismissed at Berlin, he must be content with advertising for a new amanuensis; when the Emperor starts on one of those hurried tours by which he has deified commercial travelling, the young lord can only hasten from meeting to meeting, and pose as the paragon platform-preacher and complete committee-man. The disadvantages of civilian dress too deter him from displaying too much zeal. His majesty, in the uniform of an English Admiral of the Fleet, may affright the heavens with the thunder of his decrees: but how could Admonisham speak loudly and preserve the unruffled exterior of the *artiste en coiffure*?

I often wonder whether he has been as successful in fulfilling his mission as he has been in moulding himself on the Berlin pattern. He has made a few enemies, as what earnest reformer has not? and he has made a great many friends and converts. Has Dagon gained, or Lord Admonisham or Messrs. Day and Martin, by the collusion between those who delight to lick his boots and those who seek to tread upon his corns? His enemies will tell you that they object to the lay confessional he is bent on establishing, and to the

flattering *εἰρωνεία* with which he is continually waiving his rights and titles in their faces. They call his eloquence glibness, his candour bad taste, his self-respect oppressive. But his friends believe in him. He is their confessor, their instructor, their friend, from whom they can keep no one's secrets. They will eat with him, drink with him, pray with him, read with him, and reform the world with him, till he goes down.

But enough of the Aristocrat with a Mission: it is time we considered the type, Kindergarten Philistine, of which Mr. Thomas Rudiment is so admirable a specimen.

Y.

---

**MORTE D'AMOUR.**

FOND love is dead, and we, too sad to weep,  
 Must bear him gently to his resting place  
 Beside the moaning music of the deep  
 That stills its thunders for a little space,  
     While on the sacred ground  
     We turn without a sound  
 To print our farewell kisses on his face.

Bind him with lilies, for his soul is white,  
 Gird him with roses, for his flames are red,  
 Crown him with marigolds for his delight,  
 Nor scorn the tenderer blossoms that have shed  
     Their little lives to pave  
     The pathway to his grave,  
 Content—nay, glad—to die since he is dead.

We too would gladly die—at last with him  
 To rest together, joining hand with hand;  
 Together pluck the poppies thro' the dim  
 Wide poppy-gardens of death's sunless land,  
     Together learn to live  
     The life death hath to give;  
 And love could make us learn to understand.

Yet life remains ; and still the moaning shore  
Is gray with doubt and sorrowful with mist,  
Since cruel fate hath chilled for evermore  
The fervour of the warm red lips we kissed ;  
Since cruel fate hath filled  
His heart with scorn, and stilled  
The music of the master-lutanist.

G.

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SHORT STORIES.—I.

“**BOTH SIDES OF THE WALL.**”—A Nocturne.

CHAPTER II.

When I got up dazed and dirty from the ground, not a soul was to be seen in the street. My pursuer had disappeared, whither I knew not.

I was bruised and sore as well as horribly mired ; altogether it struck me that this had turned out a disagreeable adventure, and I went home tired and disgusted. Morning found me in a different mind : all that had happened in the night seemed unreal, a bad dream. But still my curiosity was as strong as ever ; I burned to discover who was my mysterious pursuer ; and what was the strange secret of the gas-works.

I went there again early in the afternoon. The place was gloomy even by daylight : little sunshine ever reached the narrow slum. There were groups of squalid children playing in the mud ; their welcome to a stranger was not always flattering or desirable. I went up to the door where I had listened and peeped last night, and on knocking loudly was soon admitted by a tall young workman, fairhaired and pleasant-looking.

“ I should like very much to see over the works ; may I ? ”

“ Will you step this way, sir ? ”

I complied, and followed him towards a shed where several more were sitting at lunch, eating bread and bacon.

My guide went up to one who sat in a dark corner, spoke a few words in his ear, and then returned to me saying—

“I’m afraid I can’t shew you over, myself, sir; but here’s Tom Maccles who’ll do it. He’s rather queer, but he knows all about it.”

Maccles did not at first move, but stayed in his dark corner, staring at me. I felt instinctively that his was the eye of the man who chased me last night; and I saw that he knew me.

Presently he came forward, and walked out; I followed, hearing as I left, sounds of whispering and laughter among the remaining workmen.

My guide walked before me in dead silence; he led me all round the works without uttering a syllable; and I did not care to be the first to speak.

We came back to the shed to find it empty; all the men were gone about their business. We sat down—still silent.

I suppose we remained ten minutes without a word.

Every now and then Maccles stared at me with his cold eye: I felt his glance penetrate. Presently his fingers began to twitch convulsively. He stood up, took a small rough bit of iron from his waistcoat pocket, and began to scratch the wall.

That sound made me shiver.

He scraped and worked for some little time, as if unconscious of my presence. After a while one brick was loosened, and he pulled it out with his fingers. Another followed. Then from the cavity in the wall he drew out a knife, very bright, with a blade some eight inches long.

He struck it against the wall till it sang like a tuning fork. Then he replaced the bricks, and handed me the knife, breaking the long silence with—

“Take this: keep it for me till six o’clock this evening.”

I could not disobey: his eye defied refusal. I took it, put it in my coat; and rose to go. He accompanied me to the door, and let me out with a whisper—

“Six o’clock this evening.”

I went out perplexed and dumb, and was half way down the street when he caught me up and, with a wild look

round to see if he was observed, hissed in my ear—"Claud Wilson is watchman to-night."

The mud-larking urchins in the street stared in wonder, but no one else was passing down that way.

\* \* \* \* \*

With an uneasy conscience I presented myself a little before six.

I had examined the knife, and found nothing very remarkable in it; it seemed to be of fine steel and was very sharp.

The same fair-haired, tall, young man with the pleasant expression let me in. I asked for Tom Maccles.

"He's still at work; I have finished," he added, explaining, "I am watchman to-night."

"Oh," said I, "you are Claud Wilson."

"Yes," he answered with some surprise.

Six o'clock struck; the workmen began to stream away homewards. Maccles, Wilson and I were left.

"Good night," said Maccles to the other, and turned to go.

"Good night," answered Wilson with an ironical tinge in his voice, and a slight twitching of the upper lip.

We left him alone, and heard the door bolted behind us.

It was growing dusk; the streets were wrapped in dense, choking fog, through which the gas gleamed red and faint.

"Give me the knife."

I obeyed.

We walked on in silence; where we were I knew not. Small, narrow, foul slums; a good many people dimly seen in the thick veil; now and then hawkers' carts crawling homewards.

We stopped at a small hovel: Maccles knocked, a handsome woman opened the door—tall, with fine grey eyes; dressed in tawdry and vicious squalor.

"O it's you," she said. Her voice was wonderfully sweet and soft; almost unnatural.

Maccles made no reply, but turning to me said, "Wait here a minute," and then went in and shut the door behind him.

In about five minutes he reappeared, and we started back again. I noticed the name of the street as we turned out of it—Carter's Row.

We threaded a maze of undistinguishable slums, walking leisurely.

"Well?"

"What?" said I.

"That was my wife. What do you think of my wife?"

I did not know what to say, but he continued: "Pretty voice, isn't it? Listen how well I can imitate it!" and he mockingly said, "O, it's you," in exactly the woman's tone—with a grim laugh at the end.

"Not bad, is it?"

"Wonderfully like," I assented.

Not another word was said till we got back again to the gasworks street.

It was seven o'clock and the gin-shops were beginning to fill.

We reached the door in the wall. Maccles put his ear to the keyhole and listened.

"All right" he whispered to me. I could hear Wilson's regular tread as he paced up and down.

The fog was pitchy.

Presently Maccles put his mouth to the keyhole and said in his wife's soft voice—

"Claud!" No answer: the footfalls drew nearer.

"Claud!" The horrible falsetto made me shudder.

"Yes, dear," in a low voice from within.

"Open—don't be seen."

"No fear of being seen to-night—in this fog."

"Do be careful."

"All right."

A bolt was quietly drawn: then the footsteps retreated.

Maccles looked round with a grin: you could not see a yard before your face.

"Walk ten paces that way, then stop and listen." I obeyed, trembling from head to feet.

The moment my back was turned, I heard the door open; I looked back and saw him disappear, and heard the bolt shot.

Steps, steps, moving towards the shed on the inside.

Dead silence. I strained every nerve to hear, but in vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

Faint whistling from inside; it grew louder; strong, cheerful whistling.

Then a sudden ring of metal on the pavement beside me; and I picked up Maccles' knife. There was blood on it.

Again steps; he was running to the door. He opened it and paused on the outside. Then I heard him approaching at full speed.

Half mad myself with fear, I fled from him.

Again a horrible race through the fog; how he could follow me I do not know; his sight must have been supernatural. I was getting into more crowded thoroughfares, but I never stopped: on, on through slum, and alley and street; blindly, madly on.

Suddenly I thought I heard cries and tumult behind me; sounds of scuffle. I made one last effort and fell down fainting.

\* \* \* \* \*

I awoke stiff and cold; but with calmed brain. I heard the newsboys shouting — “*Star, Special! Double Murder in Westminster!*”

Was I an accomplice?

Περὶ φροῦδων — NIL NISI BONUM.

“Defrudamur;” ait Clio, “non ille Professor Dignus, qui proprio nomine φροῦδος erit.”

Altera mox Musæ placuit sententia doctæ;

“Sic hominem tolero, sit modo φροῦδος” ait.

**OUR ADVERTISEMENTS.**(See last week's *Isis*, passim.)

Dear *Isis*, you're hard up for matter,  
 And we're not quite famous enough;  
 It's a bargain; you beat us to batter,  
 And we get an excellent puff.

**CAUSERIES DU VENDREDI.**

No. III.—Whitman.

THE basis of Whitman's genius is a rich, all-embracing, utterly outspoken sensuousness. In the fearlessness with which he sets aside sentiment—the prevailing note of Christian poetry—and goes forth sensuously to enjoy Nature and Life, he carries us back to the Elizabethans, and from the Elizabethans again to the Pagan Greeks. But his sensuousness is as healthy as the wind of heaven. It is not hectic with feverous and illicit passion like much of Webster and Ford, nor simply prurient as so often is the case in the classics, nor yet is it the innocent unawakened sensuousness of primitive poetry. It is the joyous, optimistic expression of a large nature frankly accepting all that is—refusing to be held back by sentiment or tradition from taking its fill of delight in all that on any side can appeal to the sense of beauty.

Every experience is for him primarily a delight of the senses, whatever further appeal it may then make to mind and heart. External Nature and the Beauty of the Human Body do not appeal to him in one way; Love, Friendship, Sorrow and Death in another. There is no contrariety in these things—the Flesh does not strive against the Spirit, nor the Spirit against the flesh. In the early buoyant poems, the "Song of Myself," "Salut au Monde," "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," all the pictures he passes before him of different scenes, and the doings and thoughts of different men in all the world, even the visions of the universe beyond and the dim guesses at the ultimate meaning of

things are a careless optimistic rapture of the senses. He finds the same rich pleasure in all these things as Keats found in the fields of autumn or the song of the nightingale. In fact on this side of his genius Whitman is wonderfully akin to Keats. No bird since Keats' Nightingale has sung so rich and marvellous a strain as the thrush that sang to Whitman of the mystery and beauty of death. As the song of Keats' nightingale comes to us with the rich scents of—

“White hawthorn and the pastoral eglantine,  
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves  
And Mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves,”

So Whitman's thrush pours out its notes amid the heavy scent of lilacs, under the still light of the stars.

“Sing on, sing on you grey-brown bird,  
Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the  
bushes,  
Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.  
O liquid and free and tender !  
O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer !  
You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart)  
Yet the lilac with mastering odour holds me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,  
And the thought of death close walking the other side of me,  
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands  
of companions.

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,  
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the  
dimness,

To the solemn shadowy cedars and the ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest received me,  
The grey-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three.  
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,  
 From fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still  
 Came the carol of the bird."

But whether Keats could ever have passed beyond this buoyant delight of the senses to master the deeper and sterner experiences of life and draw from them too the same subtle soul of beauty we shall never know. In almost the last that we see of him the contentedness of his spirit is broken by disease and the first touch of passion; yet when Severn lifted him up to die that had passed, and his soul had gained a manliness which with life might have given us poetry as warm with human passion as what he has left is with love of form and colour. Whitman certainly has been tried and not found wanting. His wider human sympathy was more ready for such growth, and in the real and terrible experiences of the war it found the needed conditions. An optimistic content with all things seems hardly compatible with strong affections and deep feelings, since over these the wheel of fate must ever drive so ruthlessly. Yet in the "Drum Taps" we have poems of so profound feeling and sympathy that they can hardly be read without tears—the anguish of the torn and the mangled, the despair of widowed mourners, and withal an unshaken spirit not merely of hope for the future but of contentment with what is. Nor is it the optimism of Mr. Browning acquired by shutting your eyes to facts and shouting aloud some comforting solution of mysteries unsolvable; it is almost the optimism of divine vision — of one who bearing on his own shoulders all the sin and suffering around him can yet by very reason of that all comprehending sympathy feel in an unspeakable way that it is well.

"Look down fair moon and bathe this scene  
 Pour softly down night's nimbus floods on faces ghastly, swollen,  
     purple,  
 On the dead on their backs with arms tossed wide,  
 Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon."

HOC SECURIOR.

*Τέκνων ἐξένουσις.*

To live not many I allow  
Of all the offspring of my pen,  
And I review them every now  
And then ;

And purge one here, and prune one there,  
And read them yet another time  
Correcting (if I can and dare),  
A rhyme.

About the fortieth reading through  
You can't imagine how they pall ;  
You wish they ne'er belonged to you  
At all.

Like David in your haste you say  
" All men are liars, all verse is trash,"  
And haste to burn them while you may,  
Being rash.

Be calm for a few minutes, then  
Paternity will reassert  
Its claim ; you will not do them an-  
-y hurt.

One sonnet choice, one favoured scroll,  
One savoury jape, you can't let go ;  
Back they creep into the portfol-  
-io.

And so the pet half-dozen things  
Are kept to be read o'er anew,  
With a sigh that the slow muse brings  
So few.

But what of you my new-born babe,  
Say, shall you be preserved or no ?  
See now I lay you on the tab-  
-le so,

And judge you. Now there is no doubt  
 Offensive babies ought to be  
 Exposed on hills, or else left out  
 At sea.

What are your merits? You are flat  
 As three-days-opened ginger beer,  
 A most unentertaining brat,  
 D'you hear?

Still tho' its undeserv'd God knows,  
 You shall be kept a day or two;  
 The second reading will dispose  
 Of you! O. T. M.

#### LADY D'ESCARVILLE'S LETTERS TO HER SON.

Telegrams: Barsing.

The Purlieu,  
 WRINKLESHAM.  
 Thursday.

My darling Boy,

You tell me in your last letter—*do* write oftener—that the food in Hall is bad. How can this be when you pay so much? Shall I write to your tutor about it? What you say about your luncheons horrifies me. You *must* have green vegetables, and plenty of them. Now manage this, and if you can't, a small *douceur* to the chef—you know what I mean.

And then about wine.

Take a little, only a little always at lunch, a glass or two at dinner, and none afterwards.

And don't, there's a dear boy, smoke too many horrid cigars; you know you are not strong, and everybody—why even Sir Simon Green says so—says it's fearful for the liver.

What a nuisance the scouts seem. Could you not get them both another place on another staircase? Dr. Fitz-

fudle, the Warden of Clarendon, was a first cousin of my mother's, and I am sure he would manage this for me—

If not I really must come up to Oxford and see your master about it.

It is really too preposterous!

Fancy sweetbreads too; and a lunch for eight going to feed some horrid middle-class woman, probably no better than she ought to be!

Of course it's all very well to look after the scouts, and see that their rooms are properly aired, and that they go to church regularly, but when it comes to entirely taking all that good food for themselves—

Its terrible, simply terrible!

About calling now. I'm sure you won't know many other young men yet, so you really ought to call on Lady Togood. It is a delightful house to stop at, and though she does wear dreadfully second-rate bonnets, they are very good people and know everybody.

Cultivate women—you can always get to know plenty of nice young men, but you will never get on unless you know women.

Are you in the boating set or the College Eight?

Athletics is a great thing, and so many people have taken it up lately that it looks quite dowdy not to know something about it.

Don't get bloated of course, or box, or anything of that sort; and don't, don't, don't drink iced things when you come in hot.

The Dean of Lattarley was here only yesterday, and told the most fearful story about a boy he knew who got a dreadful illness and lost an appointment—something in the War Office—with an unpronounceable name, simply from taking one glass of Moselle cup after tennis.

He is now a perfect skeleton and has to be wheeled about in a bath chair.

Your connection with the new paper the *Spirit Lamp* pleases me, though I should not get too literary, as people

always think you are a radical or a bohemian or something dreadful of that sort.

I am sorry to hear you were gated. What is it? and was it done publicly?

How unpleasant about Mr. Froude! I have had that kind of trouble myself with a butler.

Your loving Mother,

CLARA D'ESCARVILLE.

I am thinking about your paper. You know your poor dear uncle left some Greek translations from Marshall, I think it was, and I have no doubt in the world that Cicely would let you have them. Do be careful about *everything*.

#### NOTICES.

THE columns of the *Spirit Lamp* are open to all the talents. We shall be glad to receive contributions in Prose or in Verse. They should be written on *one* side of the paper only, and sent in not later than the *Wednesday before publication*, to

THE EDITOR,

c/o MR. JAMES THORNTON,

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COMMÉM.

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