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## LITERATURE.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

#### From Harper's Monthly Magazine. FOUR SIGHTS OF A YOUNG MAN.

##### FIRST SIGHT.

The first time I saw him, he was, I think, one of the handsomest youths I ever beheld. I had gone down to see a boy who had been intrusted to my care by a friend in India, and whom I had put to school at Wimbledon. On entering the playground with the master, I found my young charge early engaged with a schoolfellow, somewhat older, in the highly intellectual occupation of knocking a ball with a crooked stick from one side of the ground to the other. Both were too earnest to observe any body or any thing but the ball; and praying the master's patience, I stood and watched them. Harry Wilson, my young friend, was a plain boy enough; but I never beheld a finer form or a finer face than that of his companion. The features were perfectly Greek, the complexion brown and warm, the hair curling in great masses round the broad open brow, the eyes full of light and life, and the mouth perfect in symmetry. With every muscle brought into action, and with the countenance full of excitement, I could not help thinking that such must have been the moments that ancient sculptors seized for the expression of their models; and this youth certainly might have furnished one to the greatest sculptor that ever lived.

I asked the master who he was; but Mr C— in answering sunk his voice a good deal, saying in a confidential tone: 'He is a very fine lad; but his history is rather a sad one. His father is Colonel Hardy, a very wealthy man, now holding an important command in India. He married a young lady, principally for her beauty, I believe; but they could not agree. This boy was their only child; for—' and he dropped his voice still lower—'about a year after young William's birth, she left her husband—ran away with another man. A divorce and two deaths followed. Her paramour was shot by her husband in a duel; and she died—let us trust penitent—within eight months of her fatal error.'

'And how does the Colonel treat his son?' I asked.

'I should say admirably,' replied Mr C—, 'did he not indulge him too much in one respect. He placed him here before he went back to India, three years ago, with very careful injunctions as to his education, and that is the only time I ever saw him. He is a fine, soldier-like man, somewhat stiff and haughty, perhaps, but yet he showed all kindness towards the boy in leaving him, bestowed him on no account to 'break his spirit,' as he called it, saying that he was destined for the army, and would need it all, and leaving him somewhat to amply supplied with money. I have remonstrated by letter against the large allowance made him; but I received rather a tart reply, to the effect that the young man was the heir of a large fortune, and should learn betimes how to use it.'

'Does he use it well?' I inquired, shaking my head at what I considered a doubtful policy.

'In one respect he does,' replied his master. 'No selfishness, in the common acceptation of the word, mingles with his employment of it. He has treble or quadruple the allowance of any other lad in the school; but he spends less upon himself than any of the others. He is always ready to give or to lend. Indeed, he is lavish; and that is the only fault I can find in his use of his money.'

'He is impetuous, I should think,' I remarked, 'from the way in which he strikes the ball.'

'Too much so—far too much so,' replied Mr C—; 'but, like most impetuous boys, frank and open-hearted. I should call him a creature of impulse, but that he has very strong and enduring affections; and it is only by them that he can be ruled. His mother's was much such a temper as his own, I am told; but she had weakness which he has not; and he has a touch of his father's pride, in which very doubtful quality she was deficient. One proof of his strength of attachment you may see in his regard for your little friend Harry. He has been his protector and guide ever since he came to the school; and not a boy in the house dare hurt or annoy Harry Wilson, if William Hardy is near at hand.'

'I had already obtained the master's permission to take Harry out with me to row on the Thames and dine with me higher up the river; and I easily got permission to add William Hardy to the

party. We made a pleasant expedition without any incident or adventure worth detailing; but I was much charmed with Harry's young comrade.

His manners were peculiarly high-toned and gentleman-like, and there was about him all that frank fearless openness which always characterizes the high-bred English boy. Faults he had, indeed, which were not hidden even during our short companionship. He was not only impetuous, but willful; and I could not but observe that he seemed to harden himself against counsel. In fact, it was evident that he had been somewhat spoiled in his early youth, and I internally prayed that the similar points in his father's character and his own might never be brought into harsh opposition; for I had already gleaned enough insight into that of Colonel Hardy, from the few words which Mr C— had uttered concerning him, to feel sure that such antagonism might be dangerous to the happiness of both. The man who spoils a son in youth is always prone to be harsh with him when he is grown up.

The approach of calamities either toward others or ourselves, however, is never worth calculating. As the simple iron edge of the railroad gives direction hither and thither to the enormous mass of the train, so things imperceptible or hardly noticed often divert the mighty events that seem coming directly upon us. Our little expedition concluded very pleasantly, and I parted from the two boys with kindly feelings, I am sure, on all parts. William Hardy came frequently during the holidays to see his young companion, and for a time became quite familiar in my house. But the tie between us was to be soon severed, for a time at least. Harry, in some boyish exploit, got very wet, concealed the fact from the master, and was seized with that horrible disease, acute rheumatism of the heart. By enormous bleeding, the severer symptoms were checked; but the disease put on a chronic form, and it was necessary to remove the poor boy to my house.

There he lingered sadly for some five months, and among all the painful pictures with which the gallery of my memory is filled, I knew few more distressing than that of the poor gentle uncomplaining boy, sitting in an easy chair, with his feet at the fire, in the midst of summer, his breathing terribly laborious, his large dark eyes anxiously protruding and his once ruddy lips become of a dark and sickly purple. With the extinction of all corporeal energies, kindly affections seemed to be gathered about him like fruit upon the branches of a tree stripped of all the freshness and green vigor of the summer. He evidently saw my anxiety regarding him, and my deep and painful sympathy, and when I came in he would turn around his head with a bright smile, which made his plain face look lovely, telling me in his gasping voice that he felt better, that he was easier. He kept up the same story to the day of his death and I do believe he did then feel better and easier; for he went to sleep like a child. The mortal part seemed to give up the struggle to retain the immortal companion against the separating power of death and during the last twelve hours one might have fancied that the freed spirit was voluntarily lingering for awhile about the decayed house which it was abandoning forever.

William Hardy got up to see him more than once, and his cheerful tenderness almost seemed to revive the poor boy during his long illness. There was no effort apparent upon William's part to talk happily and cheerfully; but yet there must have been an effort and a strong one; for when I met him one day as he was coming out of poor Harry's room, the tears were already in his eyes, and he passed me hurriedly without a word. There were strong feelings in that boy's heart, and strong powers in his mind. He could not bear to hear poor Harry suffer, and yet how much happier was Harry Wilson's fate than his!

After the death of my little charge, a long interval succeeded, during which I saw nothing of William Hardy. It was nearly five years, I think, and during that time I heard nothing of him personally, though I saw the return of his father from India noticed in some newspaper.

##### THE SECOND SIGHT.

The next time I saw William Hardy was in very different scenes. I was then a man about forty-five; not old enough to forget the feelings of youth; too old to enter into its rivalries. If we would but try, it requires no very severe effort of the mind to fix, for our own government, our exact position in the race of life at each of its various periods; and the benefit of so doing is very great. If every man is in search of happiness, he will never attain his full share at any time of

life, unless he settles what is the happiness that benefits his age. At forty-five I had given up dancing, except when I was wanted to assist the amusements of others; but I was very fond of going to places where I could see others dance and enjoy themselves. To enjoy life innocently, I have always looked upon as obedience to the will of God—as a part of his worship when we do it in a right spirit; and I love to see young people happy.

On one occasion I was invited to a very gay ball, given by a merchant of some eminence. He had a little weakness for what is called 'high life,' but to his honor be it said, that the acquaintance he had contrived with people of elevated station never led him to look down upon or neglect persons in his own rank; nor had the wealth he had acquired ever taught him so severe the kindly ties between himself and the poorer companions of his youth—for he had not always been a rich man.

The house to which I was invited was a very splendid one near the end of Portland Place; and the decorations could not have been surpassed, either in point of cost, or by the palace of a prince. The hour of my arrival was not either very early or very late. Dancing had begun; but still the rooms were comparatively thin, and, as I stood in the first drawing-room, I could see the gay young couples swimming gracefully along in the ball-room beyond. There were many pretty faces there; but the one which most attracted my attention was that of a young lady, of perhaps twenty years of age, with more color than is usually seen in the cheeks of London worn beauties, and with white camellias in her rich dark hair. She was what is called splendidly dressed, but with great taste, and I think I have seldom seen anything more graceful than her movement in the dance. She attracted a good deal of attention from all the male part of the company, but it was very evident that there was one who cared for more than all the rest. Nor was he at all indifferent to her. He was a fine, manly-looking fellow, a model of youthful strength, with the rich brown hair floating round the fine forehead, and rather large whiskers curling wildly wildly which way they would. He was dressed almost in the extreme of the fashion, but without there was a sort of careless ease about him which made his clothes become him much more than if they had been very prettily put on. He danced with that pretty girl twice before any one else could engage her, and then he suffered her to take a turn or two with some one else, but stood still gazing at her with eyes full of admiration—aye, and tenderness; and when she stopped he was by her side again in a moment.

I needed not to be told who he was, and yet I asked my host his name.

'That is young William Hardy,' replied he, 'the son of the rich Colonel Hardy.—He is quite infatuated with our pretty little friend Jessie Reid; but I do not know how it is going to end. He has met her here several times at our little parties, but Colonel Hardy was here himself the last time, and I thought he did not seem to like it. I wish William would conceal his admiration a little more, for I fear the Colonel might not approve of his marriage with her.'

'Not rich, I suppose?' I said.

'Neither rich nor high born,' replied my good friend. 'She is an excellent girl though, and her father is an excellent man. He is only, however, our principal managing clerk. I invite the family always, and nothing shall prevent me; for a better man does not live, nor one better educated. Besides he was my school-fellow, and old friend, and though fortune has dealt differently by us, that can make no change in my regard.'

Just at that moment William Hardy's eyes turned for a single instant away from Jessie, and towards where I stood. He darted across at once; and took my hand with kindly warmth. A few words of no consequence passed between us, and then the looks of both were directed towards Jessie Reid.

'Is she not lovely?' he said, with a burst of lover's enthusiasm.

'Yes, she is very pretty indeed,' I answered, drily enough. But he did not wait to hear or comment, darting away to her side again, to pour honey into her ear.

A few minutes after an elderly gentleman, thin, and hard-looking, but with a very distinguished air, in spite of a toilet somewhat too elaborate, came near me, and continued gazing into the ball-room as if he had just arrived, and was reconnoitering the ground before he took up his position. William Hardy nodded to him gayly; but went on with his dancing and his love-making without the slightest change of demeanor. Again and again he danced with Jessie Reid and his manner was not to be mistaken.

His salutation of my neighbour made me turn my eyes to the countenance of the latter; but there was little to be remarked upon it. I was quiet, grave and stern and the only thing that attracted my notice was an occasional twitch of the upper lip, which might be habitual or might proceed from some nervous affection—though, be it said, he did not at all look like a nervous man.

At length when William, as if feeling that he was making his love too conspicuous, withdrew for a moment from fair Jessie's side—it was rather late in the evening—the tall, elderly man walked straight across the ball-room, putting a good number of people out of his way, as he went without the slightest ceremony and seated himself by William's fair partner. What he said to her, I do not know; but at first she smiled faintly, and answered, it seemed to me, with a timid effort to make herself agreeable to him. I had settled who he was, and I was right; but I was looking round for some one to give me confirmation, when suddenly I saw Jessie turn deadly pale, and Colonel Hardy rose dignifiedly, and left her, talking easily to some people near. William at once crossed over to her, and seemed to ask her to dance again, for I could see him offer his arm. She arose and took it with a bewildered sort of look; but the next moment she sunk down, rather than fell, with every particle of color gone from her cheeks and lips. She had fainted.

Some of the people talked of the extreme heat of the room, and some carried her into another chamber, and William Hardy disappeared; but the Colonel carried on his conversation, as if nothing had happened; and the music sounded gayly; and the people proceeded with the dance. I fancied that I saw deeper than others into that fainting fit; and I have every reason to believe that I was not wrong. Soon after I took my departure and retired to my own quiet home. The feathers and the finery, the jewels and the gold, the gay laugh and the music, the whirling dance, and beaming eyes, and the palpitating hearts, all faded away like the images of a vision, and a solemn sort of thoughtfulness fell upon me—an impression of the vanity of life and all things earthly, which would not let me sleep.

I fear the changes from fine weather to storm are more sudden than the reverse—that the brilliant and the gay scenes of life are more frequently the precursors of disaster and sorrow than the dark and the gloomy are of joy and prosperity. The mind requires time to recover from the shock of the tempest; the effect of 'enjoyment' is more evanescent. Even if it leave a sweet trace upon the memory, it is but to make the darker picture which follows, look more black by the comparison.

Was the grave thought which succeeded this bright scene a forewarning of the melancholy thing to come? Within six months from that time, that splendid house and all its costly furniture were brought to the hammer; for a commercial crisis had come on. The owner became a bankrupt, a paralytic, a corpse.—The lied family shared in his ruin; and in old age Mr Reid had to take an inferior clerkship on small salary. It broke his heart too, and he died ere long—I know not how long after the disaster, but at all events within two years.

All these facts reached my ears by degrees: but we are all very hard in this world: our feelings and affections are short-sighted; they only perceive keenly when things are brought very near them. A 'Poor Fellow!' a 'Well, that is very sad!' is the most we give to the sorrow, the ruin, the death of mere acquaintance—and then, they are forgotten.

I next heard that William Hardy had married Jessie Reid against his father's consent, and that the Colonel had cast him off. That touched me more nearly. I had an interest in William Hardy, and I tried to find out where he was living—to see if I could not meditate a reconciliation between him and his father. I could not find him, and I concluded that he was trying the rarely successful experiment of love in a cottage. I heard nothing more of his history for a long while and then I heard it from his own mouth.

(To be continued.)

A VOLATILE young lord, whose conquest in the female world were numberless, at last married.

'Now, my lord,' said his lady, 'I hope you'll mend.'

'Madam,' replied he, 'you may depend on it, this is my last folly.'

A man that loves to be peevish and paragon, and to play the sovereign at every turn, does but blast the blessings of life, and swagger away his own enjoyment.

## The Politician.

From the Editor's Table of Harper's Magazine for December.

### POLITICAL CORRUPTION.

WHY has Political Corruption become a jest and a byword among us—a settled phrase, denoting a fixed fact in our history—a fact conceded by all parties, and which no intelligent man ever thinks of denying? We hear it from all sides.—There is political corruption, and that too on the broadest scale—corruption in all parties—corruption in leading partisans—corruption in political measures—corruption in political services—corruption in the dispensation of offices—corruption in the management of the press—corruption among almost the entire class of those who may be called politicians by profession—a growing corruption, or what is equally bad, a growing indifference to corruption among the masses of the people.

It is no longer the charge merely of one party against another; and we therefore adapt it as the theme of our editorial lucubrations without any fear of being accused of partisan tendencies or partialities. To speak now of political corruption, is no evidence that a man is a Whig or Democrat, a Hunker or a Barnburner, a Conservative or a Radical. More or less an evil in all governments, it has grown to such a pitch among us as to arrest the attention of even the most superficial thinkers, and the most careless observers. The pure men in all parties—and there are such in all parties—confess and deplore it. There was once a redeeming hypocrisy in this matter. The evil may have existed to some degree, in our present administrations; but it was not avowed; it was not gloried in. It is only of late that the leading dogma we condemn has been maintained to be an indispensable, and, therefore, a defensible attendant of all politics—that is, as some would define it—all party action.

By what do we mean by this avowed term political corruption? What is its essential idea? Is it capable of a true definition, presenting at once its inherent nature, its inseparable moral turpitude? To prevent, in any sense, and in any way, the measures, the appointments, the powers of government, whether legislative, judicial, or executive, from common to private ends, from catholic or universal to individual or partisan aims—whether on a larger or smaller scale—whether secretly or openly—whether with a redeeming hypocrisy or with an unblushing avowal of rascality—that is political corruption. The logical instinct of mankind has rightly named it. It is a corruption, a breaking up, a decomposition, a disease in the body politic, destructive to its healthy organization, and unfitting it for the performance of its true organic functions. It is an unnatural violation of the purpose for which government is created. It is worse than private gambling; for it puts at stake not the gambler's own property, but what has been committed to him as a sacred deposit in the names of millions now living, and many more millions yet unborn.

It adds the meanness of theft to the lawlessness of robbery. It is lying; it is perjury; it is the foulest, the rankest, the most Heavily daring perjury. Its baseness and its wickedness are exactly in proportion to the supposed honor of the stewardship, and the high religious nature of the trust. It is a violation of the solemn oath taken and imposed for this very purpose, the guard against the intrusion of the private feeling, or the private partisan interest, in the management of a commission so secretly intended for the common good.

In the earlier ages of the world, almost every thing was religious. The oaths were commonly used, even in private transactions, as an end of all strife. The appeal to Heaven, and the confirmation of it by sacrifice, entered into the daily compact between man and man. Most of the federative terms, even in modern languages, retain still the etymological traces of such religious origin. In later ages, as we would call them, more enlightened times, the oath has been confined to judicial proceedings, and the imparting of something of a religious character to political trusts. The President of the United States, the Governors of the respective States, and all officers under them, whether appointers or appointees, lay their hands upon the holy volume wherein God reveals his abhorrence of perjury, or lift them up to Heaven, and swear by the Ever Living One, that they will rightly, and faithfully, and according to its fair meaning, and true spirit, and well known ends, support a constitu-