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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF W. B. YEATS

VOLUME XII

JOHN SHERMAN AND DHOYA

EDITED BY

Richard J. Finneran

Macmillan Publishing Company
NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

This volume represents my third attempt to edit William Butler Yeats's *John Sherman and Dhoya*. The first was begun as a dissertation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1967; it was completed the following year, directed by Richard Harter Fogle. My second was a slightly revised version of that dissertation, published in 1969 by the Wayne State University Press in Detroit, Michigan. Although the present volume does not include a collation of the textual variants between the 1891 and the 1908 editions, as did the first two attempts, in all other respects it supersedes them.

Returning to the same text after two decades has proven to be an interesting if often humbling experience. Happily, I did not discover any significant errors in the reading text of *John Sherman and Dhoya* published in 1969, but much else has required refinement. For instance, trusting to the authority of Allan Wade's *A Bibliography of the Writings of W. B. Yeats*, I repeated his citation of three English "editions" of the work in 1891-92, whereas I now offer a different story. Trusting equally to the authority of Joseph Hone's biography, I repeated the information that Yeats earned £400 for the work, whereas I now think the true sum perhaps no more than half that amount. Either believing in the existence of a "common body of knowledge" or else simply not thinking very clearly, I passed over in silence numerous allusions large and small; whereas I now annotate virtually all direct references (for better or for worse). And, of course, I have benefited from two decades of Yeats scholarship, particularly from William M. Murphy's essay on the autobiographical level of *John Sherman* and from the new material offered in volume one of the *Collected Letters*.

To modify slightly a remark by Yeats, it is indeed true that "all editing is collaboration." To those whose assistance was acknowledged in the 1969 edition, I should like to add the following: Robert Bearman (The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust); George Bornstein; Allen W. Bosch (Kenyon College);

Library); William R. Cagle (The Lilly Library, Indiana University); Wayne Chapman; the late Ia Fletcher; Vincent Giroud and Patricia C. Willis (The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University); Bruce Harkness; Elizabeth Heine; Virginia Hyde; Christina Hunt Mahony; Laura Morland; Stephen Parrish; Lawrence Rainey; Carla Rickerson (University of Washington Library); Ronald Schuchard; Peter Shillingsburg; and Colin Smythe.

One person mentioned in 1969 I cite again, not only because of his continuing assistance to all my work over the past two decades, this edition included, but also because his death in Berkeley, California, on 16 March 1991 was a deep personal loss: Brendan O Hehir.

Finally, I rededicate this edition to Maude Florence Finneran.

Mandeville, Louisiana

6 April 1991

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

On 13 August 1887, W. B. Yeats informed a correspondent that he was “resolved to try story writing but so far have not made a start.”¹ At the age of twenty-two, he was already an established writer in the country of his birth, contributing both poems and critical essays to several Irish periodicals. A week before announcing his new resolve, he had achieved his first publication in America, a poem in *The Boston Pilot*. In September he would introduce himself to English readers, with a lyric in *The Leisure Hour*. The short story must now have seemed a fitting genre to essay. Quickly fulfilling his promise, Yeats was able to announce on 10 September that he had written “a short romance of ancient Ireland—somewhat over dreamy and florid but quite readable* any way and now commence another latter day Ireland” (CL1 36).

Almost thirty years later, he would recall his entrance into fiction as motivated by his father, John Butler Yeats, who was concerned that the state of the family finances might deflect his eldest son into a career as a journalist:

I was greatly troubled because I was making no money... . Our neighbour, York Powell, at last offered to recommend me for the sub-editorship of, I think, [the] Manchester Courier. I took some days to think it over; it meant an immediate income, but it was a Unionist paper. At last I told my father that he could not accept and he said ‘You have taken a great weight off my mind.’ My father suggested that I should write a story and, partly in London and partly in Sligo, where I stayed with my uncle George Pollexfen, I wrote *Dhoya*, a fantastic tale of the heroic age. My father was dissatisfied and said I meant a story with real people, and I began *John Sherman*, putting into it my memory of Sligo and my longing for it.²

This account may not be entirely accurate—*Dhoya* was apparently written entirely in Sligo—but financial considerations were doubtless a factor in Yeats’s turn to fiction.

Having completed *Dhoya*, Yeats seems to have set it aside for several months, until on 13 December 1887 he submitted it for publication in *The Gael*, “hoping it may suit for the Xmas number for some number anyway... .” (CL1 43). Since no complete file of *The Gael* is known to survive, it is impossible to say if *Dhoya* was published there, but it seems unlikely.³ It would be another two and a half years before the story is mentioned in the extant correspondence.

By beginning his career in fiction with “a fantastic tale of the heroic age,” Yeats was being true to both his aesthetic and his nationalistic principles. Indeed, in his first critical article, published le

than a year before the composition of *Dhoya*, he had argued that

Of all the many things the past bequeaths to the future, the greatest are great legends; they are the mother of nations. I hold it the duty of every Irish reader to study those of his own country till they are as familiar as his own hands, for in them is the Celtic heart.⁴

Or, as he would shortly inform his American readers, “Cosmopolitan literature is, at best, but a poor bubble”: “there is no fine nationality without literature, ... no fine literature without nationality.”⁵

Yeats thus bases *Dhoya* on a common motif in Irish literature, a liaison between a mortal and a fairy. Indeed, while writing the story he was also working on “The Wanderings of Oisín,” a long narrative poem employing the same motif. Moreover, although *Dhoya* is a mythological tale, set in “those mysterious pre-human ages when life lasted for hundreds of years” (LNI 80), Yeats presents it as a living legend in the West of Ireland. He would, of course, have known of “a good anchorage called Pooldoy” in Sligo Bay,⁶ and he took a special delight in discovering a continuity of belief in legendary materials. Writing to Katharine Tynan shortly after completing *Dhoya*, for instance, he explained that “I went last Wednesday up Ben Bulbin to see the place where Dermot died, a dark pool fabulous in its depth and still haunted—1732 feet above the sea line, open to all winds... . All peasants at the foot of the mountain know the legend, and know that Dermot still haunts the pool, and fear it. Every hill and stream is some way or other connected with the story” (CL1 37). But perhaps Yeats’s most cogent explanation of his goal in stories such as *Dhoya* was offered to readers of *The Gael* just a few months before he set to work in fiction:

Under all the old legends there is, without doubt, much fact, though, I confess, I care but little whether there be or not. A nation’s history is not in what it does, this invader or that other; the elements of destiny decides all that; but what a nation imagines that is its history, there is its heart; than its legends, a nation owns nothing more precious. Without her possible mythical siege of Troy, perhaps Greece would never have had her real Thermopylae. Learn those of your own country, let the young love them.⁷

Thus, *Dhoya* was altogether in accord with Yeats’s literary ideals in the formative years of his career, and as matters developed, it was to serve as the inspiration for much of his later effort in prose fiction.

However, Yeats next turned away from Irish mythology and folklore as materials for his fiction: as he had promised in his letter of 10 September 1887, having finished *Dhoya*, he would now “commence another of latter day Ireland” (CL1 36). Apparently he delayed this project for several months. On 1 February 1888 he wrote Tynan that “soon” he would “set to work at a short romance,” mentioning that he was following his father’s wishes in the matter (CL1 59). A month later he was still promising to “begin an Irish story, I do not believe in it, but may do for some Irish paper, and give me practice” (CL1 57). Another month passed, and Yeats was “reading up for my romance,” which was then to have an eighteenth-century setting: “I should dream of it only I do not dream much. I am very cheerful over it. Making my romance I have so much affirmative in me ...” (CL1 59).

At last, by early May 1888 Yeats was able to tell Tynan that he was “absorbed” in the composition of what would become *John Sherman*, apparently already transposed to a contemporary setting: “I am writing a short story—it goes on fairly well the style quite sane and the theme modern, more character than plot in it” (CL1 67). By the middle of the month he had shown a draft to a friend and could offer further details: “My story goes well the plot is laid mainly in Sligo. It deals more with character than incidents. Sparling praised it much thinks my skill lies more in character than incidents.” He also noted that “my father was very anxious for me to go on with my story ...” (CL1 69-70). By the middle of June the work was almost completed, but Yeats was not optimistic about it

prospects:

my father ... does not wish me to do critical work. He wants me to write stories. I am working at on as you know. It is almost done now. There is some good character drawing I think, but the construction is patchy and incoherent. I have not much hope of it. It will join I fear my ever multiplying boxes of unsaleable MSS—work to[o] strange at one moment and to[o] incoherent the next for any first class Magazine and too ambitious for local papers. Yet I don't know that it is ambition for I have no wish but to write a saleable story. (CL1 71)

However, a few days later Yeats was more enthusiastic about *John Sherman*: “My story is going well another chapter will finish it. It is rather a curious production for me—full of observation and worldly wisdom or what pretends to be such” (CL1 75).

Around this time Yeats seems to have suspended work on *John Sherman*, telling Tynan on 28 July 1888 that “My story waits for its last chapter and will have to wait until immediate work concludes” (CL1 88). It is not until late September that he took it up again. By 8 October a draft had been finished. He wrote John O’Leary that “My novel or novelette draws to a close. The first draft is complete. It is all about a curate and a young man from the country. The difficulty is to keep the characters from turning into eastern symbolic monsters of some sort which would be a curious thing to happen to a curate and a young man from the country” (CL1 104).⁸ On 14 November he described the work as “a very quiet plotless little story” but noted that a friend had made suggestions for revision:

on reading my story to Edwin Ellis Saturday week he suggested alterations of much importance of which I am still at work and it is quite needful for me to get this story in some editors hands at once as we have not been doing very well lately. I think however three days will quite finish it... . (CL1 106)

Yeats appears to have overestimated the speed with which he could revise *John Sherman*, but by December 1888 the novelette had been completed. He informed Tynan that “my practice over ‘Sherman’ has made my prose come much more easily. I am now setting to work on an article on Todhunters book” (CL1 110).

Despite his anxiety over the family finances, Yeats seems to have made no immediate attempt to have *John Sherman* published. On 21 April 1889 he explained to Tynan: “I know I gained greatly from my experiment in novel writing. The hero turned out a bad character and so I did not try to sell the story anywhere. I am in hopes he may reform” (CL1 162). Almost eighteen months passed before he would inform Tynan on 6 October 1890 that “I have retouched my Story John Sherman & am trying to get it published. Edward Garnett, author of the Paradox Club, is going to read it & see if it will suit the publisher he reads for ie Fisher Unwin” (CL1 230). Garnett apparently did not take up this task at once, though, as it is not until 5 March 1891 that Yeats passed on the news that Garnett was “quite enthusiastic” about *John Sherman* (CL1 245). Although Yeats may have first offered the story to William Heinemann, in late March of 1891 he happily wrote Tynan that “My ‘John Sherman’ has at last been taken by Fisher Unwin for his Pseudonym Library,” adding “I am to get a royalty but not until it gets into its second thousand if it ever do so” (CL1 247).

Yeats was glad to have a contract but frustrated that his work would be published anonymously. “Unwin I believe makes rather a point of the Pseudonymous nature of the books,” he told O’Leary (CL1 248). This lack of publicity would be less than helpful to a young writer still seeking to make a name for himself. Indeed, he had boasted to Tynan that being able to include the novelette in his bibliography for 1891 would place him “well in evidence” (CL1 245).

In the event, though, Yeats acquiesced to the wishes of his publisher. He chose as a pseudonym

“Ganconagh,” the name of an Irish fairy, and composed an “Apology” to explain this persona. But the problem of anonymous publication may well have been one of Yeats’s reasons for adding to the volume *Dhoya*, an expansion we first hear of (under an earlier title) in late June 1891:

My novel has gone to press but does not come out until September. I have sent in with it, to be put in the same volume, a short tale of ancient Irish legendary days and called the book *John Sherman and The Midnight Ride*. The second part of the title refers to the second story. My pseudonym Ganconagh, the name of an Irish spirit. (CL1 250-51)⁹

The short story included (or perhaps Yeats now added to it) a lyric already published as “Girl’s Song” in *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889). Thus, as he told Tynan, “the incognito will be pretty transparent” (CL1 253). Indeed, Yeats made a point of telling potential reviewers of *John Sherman and Dhoya* that the text offered a ready key to disclose his identity, even supplying at least one of them with the precise reference: “I want it to be known as mine—the poem at page 187 is in my book of poems so the disguise is not very deep ...” (CL1 268). There may well have been other reasons for the addition of the short story—Yeats (or Unwin) may have wanted a longer book; *Dhoya* was a completed story awaiting a publisher, and moreover one which firmly shows Yeats’s commitment to Irish literature rather than English; and so on. But Yeats’s desire to expand his acknowledged canon may have been foremost: indeed, when *The Celtic Twilight* was published in 1893, *John Sherman and Dhoya* was included in the list of books “By the same Author.”

With the book in press in July 1891, Yeats expressed to Tynan his concern for its reception and began to do what he could to stimulate favorable reviews:

I am rather anxious about “Sherman”. It is good I believe but it will be a toss up how the reviewers take it—for if they look for the ordinary stuff of novels they will find nothing. Do what you can for— for a success with stories would solve many problems with me & I write them easily. (CL1 256-57)

Two similar letters survive. As they provide Yeats’s most extended commentary on *John Sherman and Dhoya*, they are of particular interest. First, to Father Matthew Russell early in November 1891:

I send you a copy of my novel “John Sherman”. If you will kindly review it & say that it is mine I shall be well pleased. People are given to thinking I can only write of the fantastical & wild & the book has to do so far as the long story is concerned with very ordinary persons & events... . I shall probably write other stories but of a more dramatic & stirring kind if this goes at all well. Dowden quotes “Sherman” in the “Fortnightly” by the by. He told me he likes the story that “it is full of beautiful things” and “very interesting” though not a strong and dramatic story in any way nor was it so intended. The American edition has been sold & success seems likely. (CL1 268)¹⁰

Finally, to Tynan again, on 2 December offering a defense of the novelette as an “Irish” work:

I studied my characters in Ireland & described a typical Irish feeling in Sherman’s devotion to Balla. A West of Ireland feeling I might almost say for like that of Allingham for Ballyshannon it is local rather than national. Sherman belonged like Allingham to the small gentry who in the West at any rate love their native places without perhaps loving Ireland. They do not travel & are shut off from England by the whole breadth of Ireland with the result that they are forced to make their native town their world. I remember when we were children how intense our devotion was to all things in Sligo I still see in my mother the old feeling. I claim for this & other reasons that Sherman is as much an Irish novel as anything by Banim or Griffen. Lady Wylde has written me an absurd & enthusiastic letter about it. She is queer enough to prefer it to my poems. (CL1 274-75)¹¹

The exact circumstances of the printing and publication of *John Sherman and Dhoya* are less than

fully clear. Yeats had the volume in hand no later than 1 September 1891, as on that day he inscribed a copy to Maud Gonne.¹² Lily Yeats's copy (now in the Library of Trinity College Dublin) is also dated "Sep. 1891," and on the fourth of that month Yeats informed William Ernest Henley that "Unwin will send you in a day or two a story of mine called *John Sherman*. There is a little thing bound up with it called *Dhoya* that may please you" (CL1 264). But *John Sherman and Dhoya* was not officially published until the second week of November 1891, a copy being received at the British Library on Friday the thirteenth.¹³ However, that copy was of the "second edition." Moreover, at least two of the volumes which Yeats sent to reviewers on 9 November 1891 (CL1 270) were of the "second edition."¹⁴ It thus seems virtually certain that, as was to happen with *The Wind Among the Reeds* a few years later, the two "editions" were printed simultaneously, the only difference being the cover and title page.

It is therefore rather likely that the accepted figure of 2,000 copies for the first edition (1,644 paper, 356 cloth) may well encompass at least both the first and second "editions."¹⁵ This possibility complicates the question of Yeats's profits from *John Sherman and Dhoya*. Just before the book was published, Yeats told O'Leary that "Garnett says £30 probably which will be very good indeed for my first story" (CL1 269). On 28 November he received £10 for the American edition, his only documented income (CL1 274, 276). On 1 May 1892 he asked Unwin to "get the clerk to find out what may be due to me for 'John Sherman & Dhoya' & send me the amount some time this week" (CL1 294). Unwin obviously did not respond, as Yeats wrote again on 23 August: "There are I believe a few pounds still due to me as royalties for 'John Sherman' at least so I heard when I received the £10 for the American edition. It would be very convenient if you could send them to me now" (CL1 309). At some point in 1892, Unwin issued a third "edition," perhaps in conjunction with his publication of *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics* in September. Yeats makes no mention of this "edition" in the extant correspondence, and it is likely to have consisted of a small number of copies.¹⁶

Thus, Joseph Hone's claim in his authorized biography of Yeats that *John Sherman and Dhoya* "earned £40 for the author" seems rather high.¹⁷ In any case, Yeats was concerned not only with his finances but also with the reviews: these might best be described as mixed but on the whole favorable. The earliest notice of the dozen which have so far been traced was also one of the most negative. Yeats was presumably amused to find that "L.F.A." of the *Illustrated London News* for 12 November 1891 concluded that "the author ... is evidently a lady," but he was probably less delighted with the review as a whole, which ignores *Dhoya* and offers the following suggestion:

... I entreat Mr. Unwin to impress upon this pseudonymous lady that even a jilt who throws herself into the arms of a curate may perform that astonishing feat without accessories which would certainly startle most of the curates with whom I have the honor to be acquainted, (p. 667)

However, on 24 November 1891 an anonymous reviewer in the Manchester *Guardian* was rather more favorable. The volume was adjudged a "good addition" to the Pseudonym Library, and *John Sherman and Dhoya* was found to show "very considerable talent": "The story is nothing; the telling a good deal" (p. 7). An anonymous critic in the *Athenaeum* (26 December 1891) was less impressed, arguing that *Dhoya* "has a vague charm of atmosphere, but little else that a reader can seize upon," while *John Sherman and Dhoya* exhibited "a certain grace of style which atones in part for the extreme thinness of ... matter" (p. 859).

Perhaps the most complimentary review of *John Sherman and Dhoya* was published anonymously in the prestigious *Saturday Review of Literature* (5 December 1891):

John Sherman and Dhoya, by "Ganconagh" (Fisher Unwin), must charm all who appreciate artistic

work that is delicate, unobtrusive, and intuitive. Of material that has been a thousand times employed in fiction, and often grievously marred in the using, the author of *John Sherman* has called forth a new heaven and a new earth—"Ganconagh," in brief, has the creative faculty and the imagination that vitalizes the gift. Each of the four chief characters in this short story is in its way an excellent study after nature. Clever as *John Sherman* is, cleverness seems almost an odious quality to ascribe to a pathos so unassertive, humour so delicate, and observation so penetrative. To "tell" the story by way of abstract or paraphrase would be an offence to the artistic conscience, and at best could convey little or nothing of its peculiar charm. *Dhoya* is not a story, and is far slighter. It is an Irish legend, a apologue, of the days when there were giants in the land, and fairies, and magical influences. If there are any admirers of *Ossian* that yet remain among us, we would ask them to read *Dhoya*, and perpend there-upon. (p. 650)

It is easy enough to understand why it was an extract from this review that was used as a blurb for *John Sherman and Dhoya* when it was advertised in *The Celtic Twilight*.

Another very favorable English assessment was the last to appear, in the *Westminster Review* for February 1892:

... the first story, *John Sherman*, is not at all like the ordinary run of fiction, either in its incidents or its characters, and it maintains throughout a pleasant subdued interest. *Dhoya* is a wild imaginative legend of a fiercely raging Irish giant... His sad story is very skilfully told; the treatment and the accessories are large and heroic; there is none of that *mièvrerie* which often mars such attempts at jarring, in its modern sentimentalism, like a false note. (p. 225)

As might be expected, the Irish reviewers were consistently positive; thanks to Yeats's campaign, they were also aware of the identity of the author. An anonymous critic in *United Ireland* for 28 November 1891 went so far as to compare Yeats with the continental masters, finding in *John Sherman* a style "quiet, and admirably restrained":

The story of *John Sherman* is slight. There is not much power in it, and not much plot. But Mr. Yeats has fashioned his style after the serious Russian model, and holds his reader.... Mr. Yeats has succeeded in producing a book to some extent unique in English literature; not, all the same, let me say, a brilliant book, nor a very remarkable one, but a book displaying very great possibilities in the author.

But the reviewer was even more impressed with *Dhoya*, correctly predicting that it would be the model for Yeats's further efforts in fiction:

The story of *Dhoya* is a delightful love tale, and Mr. Yeats tells it with true poetic instinct. This is much the better performance of the two; indeed, we have no hesitation in saying that 'Dhoya' runs a very good chance of becoming literature.... [L]egendary tales of this kind are much more in Mr. Yeats' line than 'John Sherman.' (p. 5)

Writing in the *Irish Monthly* (December 1891), Father Matthew Russell followed Yeats's wishes in his letter of early November 1891, not only identifying the author but also noting that "it is an additional surprise to find that this novel does not deal with anything wild or fantastical, but is a pleasant narrative touching of ordinary persons and events.... The descriptions both of scenery and characters are full of quaint little touches of very subtle observation. The style is perhaps most remarkable for its dainty simplicity, lit up now and then by a striking thought and even a brilliant aphorism" (pp. 66-63). Tynan likewise complied with Yeats's petition that she describe *John Sherman* as "Irish" when reviewing the work anonymously in both the *Dublin Evening Telegraph* (29 December 1891) and the *Irish Daily Independent* (4 January 1892), noting in the first that "Mr. Yeats in creating 'John

Sherman' has shown us a type Irish and pathetic which none of our other novelists has hit upon. Where in all the world but Ireland would you find John Sherman ... ?" (p. 2).

In light of the reviews, then, the "London correspondent" for *United Ireland* was surely correct when he wrote in the issue for 23 January 1892 that "Mr. Yeats' recent book in the Pseudonym Library—'John Sherman and Dhoya'—has greatly raised his already high reputation, and is selling very well ..." (p. 5). Yeats had told Father Russell that "I shall probably write other stories but of a more dramatic & stirring kind if this goes at all well" (CL1 268), and the reviews and sales alone might have been encouragement enough. But William Ernest Henley, editor of the *National Observer*, provided a crucial incentive. Yeats told AE on 20 November 1891 that "Henley has written to me about 'Sherman & Dhoya'. He likes them very much but likes Dhoya best" (CL1 271). Within a few days he could inform O'Leary that the *National Observer* "have asked me, by the way for stories like Dhoya if I can make them short enough to fit their pages. I doubt it can be done but mean to try" (CL1 272). Yeats not only tried but succeeded. Beginning in November 1892, Yeats would publish in Henley's *National Observer* and, later, *New Review* well over half of the stories which would comprise *The Secret Rose* (1897), his single most important collection of fiction. Yeats's decision to include *Dhoya with John Sherman*, then, was to play an important role in the shape of his career in the 1890s. As the *United Ireland* reviewer had noted, *Dhoya* was "much more in Mr. Yeats's line," and in the event it became the progenitor of the bulk of his published fiction.

If in *Dhoya* Yeats had turned to Irish mythology, for *John Sherman* he looked rather closer to home. As he informed Tynan on 5 March 1891, "There is more of myself in it than any thing I have done" (CL1 245-46). In the fullest study of the autobiographical level of the novelette, William M. Murphy has cogently argued that "One begins to suspect that if one only knew even more about the daily life of the Yeatses, one could assign to every person, object, and incident in the novel a corresponding equivalent in [Yeats's] own life."¹⁹ Though none of the characters is a mimetic representation of a particular individual, it is clear that Sherman is based primarily on Yeats himself, with some aspects of his cousin Henry Middleton. Howard draws extensively on the Reverend John Dowden, brother of Edward. Moreover, the relationship between Sherman and Howard adumbrates Yeats's theory of the divided self, what he would later describe with such terms as the Self versus the Anti-Self. Margaret derives from Laura Armstrong, also the model for Vivien in an early play which Yeats never published. Tynan is surely the primary source for Mary Carton.

Even the minor characters have their real-life counterparts. For instance, at the end of the First Part of *John Sherman*, Sherman describes "a very dirty old woman sitting by a crate of geese" on the steamship to Liverpool, who criticizes him for abandoning Sligo for London. Yeats has combined a remark made by his aunt Agnes Pollexfen with another childhood memory:

When I was a little boy, an old woman who had come to Liverpool with crates of fowl made me miserable by throwing her arms around me, the moment I had alighted from my cab, and telling the sailor who carried my luggage that she had held me in her arms when I was a baby.²⁰

Not only the characters but also the themes of *John Sherman* have their analogues in Yeats's own thought. Yeats told O'Leary that the "motif" of the work was "hatred of London" (CL1 110), and Sherman's attitude toward the English capital is parallel to Yeats's. Writing to Tynan on 25 August 1888, Yeats noted that he would "get back to my story in which I pour out all my grievances against this meloncholy London—I sometimes imagine that the souls of the lost are compelled to wander through its streets perpetually. One feels them passing like a whiff of air" (CL1 92). On 21 December 1888, Yeats linked his composition of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" to his work on John Sherman: "In my story I make one of the characters when ever he is in trouble long to go away and live alone on the

Island—an old day dream of my own. Thinking over his feelings I made these verses about them . . . (CL1 120-21). Then follows a draft of what many consider one of Yeats's finest early poems, the result of the interaction between life and art.

After *John Sherman*, Yeats would make one more attempt at realistic and autobiographical fiction. But though he worked on *The Speckled Bird* for several years, he failed to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion, and it was to remain unpublished during his lifetime. Yeats also began to register his dissatisfaction with *John Sherman and Dhoya*. As early as January 1895 he described it as “youthful and “languid” (CL1 425). In October 1902, though, the work may well have been a topic of discussion during Yeats's first meeting with James Joyce.²¹ In December of the same year he inscribed a copy of *John Sherman and Dhoya* to Lady Gregory (now in the Emory University Library) with a note of wistful regret:

I don't think any of my Sligo relations—except possibly George Pollexfen—has ever read this Sligo story. One apologised to me every summer for not reading it, for several years. She used to say ‘I had a copy once but somebody borrowed it[.]’ I am sure that copy was given her. She would never have spent a 1/- on such a purpose.

In March 1904 he inscribed a copy of *John Sherman and Dhoya* with the notation “all Sligo Hammersmith.”²² Seven months later he inscribed another copy “Written when I was very young and knew no better.”²³

Thus, when Yeats began in 1907 to plan the contents and order of *The Collected Works in Verse and Prose*, it seems clear that he was hesitant to include *John Sherman and Dhoya*. However, by 12 July 1907 Yeats had agreed that one of the volumes would contain “The Secret Rose, John Sherman and Dhoya. (Very careful verbal revision necessary and two new stories desirable.)”²⁴ Eventually, *John Sherman and Dhoya*, with the subtitle *Two Early Stories*, appeared in volume seven of the *Collected Works*, published in December 1908; Yeats noted in a new preface that he had been “persuaded” to include them, “somewhat against my judgment.”²⁵

As copy for the new edition, Yeats asked the publisher to supply him with the 1891 text (L 491) which he then revised and submitted to the press on 14 November 1907, the date of the preface. A substantial portion of this material survives in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.²⁶ As these pages show only some of the changes in the printed version, Yeats must have made further revisions on the proofs. He was adamant that “I will not have one word printed that I have not seen and passed. . . . This will be my final text for many years, and I refuse to have any portion of that text settled by any person but myself” (L 485-86), and the version in the *Collected Works* is virtually devoid of error.

Although the revisions to *John Sherman and Dhoya* for the *Collected Works* do not significantly alter either story, they demonstrate that, as usual, Yeats did not neglect an opportunity to revise his work. In *John Sherman*, for instance, foreign words are eliminated: “*recherché*” becomes “distinguished” (Li); the Gaelic “*gluggerabunthaun*” (I.1), meaning more or less “empty-rattling-arse,” disappears. The fictional “Inniscrewin” of 1891 is replaced by the real Innisfree (IV.1).²⁸ Other revisions produce a more restrained tone in the story. For instance, in 1891 “a clothes-moth in an antimacassar thought the end of the world had come and fluttered out”; in 1908 “a clothes-moth fluttered out” (II.i). Likewise, “wildly” and “with a wild leap” are dropped from the account of Dhoya rushing to his death in the penultimate paragraph of the tale. Other changes are as minor as having a beetle crawl out of “its hole” rather than “his hole” (*John Sherman* I.ii).

After the appearance of the revised *John Sherman and Dhoya* in the 1908 *Collected Works*, Yeats for all intents and purposes exiled the stories from his canon. Although he was reminded of the work

least twice, inscribing copies of the first edition in 1920 and again ca. 1937,²⁹ there is no evidence that he gave any consideration to including *John Sherman and Dhoya* in *Early Poems and Stories* (1925) or in the Macmillan Edition de Luxe or the Scribner Dublin Edition of the 1930s. Nevertheless, having “read them for the first time these many years,” he acknowledged in the 1908 preface that “They have come to interest me very deeply....” If nothing else, Yeats’s renewed “interest” is perhaps sufficient justification for the inclusion of *John Sherman and Dhoya* in the present Collected Edition of the Works.

NOTES

- 1 *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats: Volume One, 1865-1895* , ed. John Kelly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 33. Hereafter cited as CL1.
- 2 *Memoirs* , ed. Denis Donoghue (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 31. Yeats described this work as “first rough draft of Memoirs made in 1916-17” (p. 19n1).
- 3 The Christmas issue probably contained a fairly long poem by Yeats , “How Ferencz Renyi Kept Silent,” so to have included *Dhoya* as well would have been awkward. *The Gael* ceased publication shortly thereafter, possibly with the issue for 7 January 1888. See John S. Kelly, “Aesthete among the Athletes: Yeats’s Contributions to *The Gael*,” *Yeats* 2 (1984): 138.
- 4 *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, I: First Reviews and Articles, 1886-1896* , ed. John P. Frayne (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 104. Hereafter cited as UP1.
- 5 *Letters to the New Island* , ed. George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 12. Hereafter cited as LNI. Cf. “There is no great literature without nationality, no great nationality without literature” (LNI 30).
- 6 W. G. Wood-Martin , *History of Sligo, County and Town* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1882-92), III: 221.
- 7 Reprinted from *The Gael* (27 April 1887) in “Aesthete among the Athletes,” p. 91.
- 8 Either John Sherman was then rather different from the text that survives; or, more likely, Yeats was overstating his difficulty of avoiding symbolism in the narrative.
- 9 In another letter of the same month, the story is called “the Midnight Rider” (CL1 253). Yeats may have rejected the earlier titles when he recalled (or was reminded) that one of the tales in Lady Wilde’s *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (London: Ward and Downey, 1888) is called “The Midnight Ride.”
- 10 Edward Dowden had briefly mentioned *John Sherman and Dhoya* while reviewing another work in the *Fortnightly Review* for November 1891. Father Russell’s copy (a second edition, in paper) is preserved in the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Inscribing it, Yeats put quotation marks around “Ganconagh” and signed his name beneath. In order to be doubly sure that Father Russell would not forget the identity of the author of *John Sherman and Dhoya*, he also added the quotation marks and his signature on the front wrapper.
- 11 Reviewing a collected edition of William Allingham’s poems in *United Ireland* ten days later, Yeats noted that his work “enshrined that passionate devotion that so many Irishmen feel for the little town where they were born, and for the mountains they saw from the doors they passed through in childhood.... He will always ... be best loved by those who, like the present writer, have spent their childhood in some small Western seaboard town, and who remember how it was for years the centre of their world, and how its enclosing mountains and its quiet rivers became a portion of their life for ever” (UP1 210).

12 This copy, now at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, inscribed with the following poem:

We poets labour all our days
To make a little beauty be,
But vanquished by a woman's gaze
And the unlabouring stars are we:
So I—most lovely child of Eire—
Rising from labour, bow the knee
With equal reverence to the fire
Of the unlabouring stars and thee.

The inscription is framed by a drawing by George W. Russell (AE). When Yeats copied the poem into a vellum manuscript book which he presented to Maud Gonne, called *The Flame of the Spirit*, he entitled it “Dedication of ‘*John Sherman and Dhoya*.’” (For a transcription of that text as well as other manuscript versions, see George Bornstein’s forthcoming edition of *The Early Poetry: Volume Two* the Cornell Yeats.)

Earlier in the summer of 1891, Yeats may well have been hoping that *John Sherman and Dhoya* would be his engagement present to Maud; however, his proposal on 3 August 1891 was not accepted. Ironically, some years later Yeats’s friend John Masefield would inscribe a copy of the first edition to his fiancée (collection of Richard J. Finneran).

13 The volume was published in New York as part of Cassell’s “‘Unknown’ Library.” It was entered for copyright at the Library of Congress on 2 October and received there on 10 November 1891. There are some puzzling substantive differences between the 1891 London and New York editions. The most likely explanation is that the English text includes revisions which Yeats made on the proofs and which were not forwarded to America. *John Sherman and Dhoya*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), includes a collation of the variants between the 1891 and 1908 printings.

14 The anonymous review in *United Ireland* for 28 November 1891 was of the “second edition,” a fact which doubtless explains the comment that “the volume has already had a very considerable success” (p. 5). As noted above, the review copy sent to Father Russell was also a “second edition.”

15 Allan Wade, *A Bibliography of the Writings of W. B. Yeats*, 3rd ed., rev. Russell K. Alspach (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), p. 24. The information presumably derives from A. J. A. Symonds, *A Bibliography of the First Editions of Books by William Butler Yeats* (London: The First Edition Club, 1924), p. 3.

16 The third edition is not in the British Library, the National Library of Ireland, or Yeats’s own library. Copies can be found at the University of Washington and at Yale University. Its existence was not fully attested to until the 1958 second edition of Wade’s *Bibliography*. In the 1951 first edition, Wade could only note that “a third edition was advertised in 1894” (p. 22). It is possible that Symonds’s citation of 2,000 copies includes this edition as well.

17 *W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 77. The biography was first published in 1943.

The note on Yeats's income in CL1 269 n2 not only is based on an unlikely royalty of nearly 2 percent but also ignores the £10 from America as well as the lack of any royalty on the first 1,000 copies. Assuming that the second thousand of the first and second "editions" consisted of 177 hardcover and 822 paperback, Yeats would have earned slightly less than £8 with a 10 percent royalty or slightly less than £10 with a 12.5 percent royalty. In short, he probably earned ca. £18-20 from the British and American 1891 editions combined. For Hone's £40 to be correct, then, Yeats would have had to have earned another £20 on the third edition, which is extremely improbable.

18 The review has been identified as "probably by John F. Taylor" (CL1 272n3). If so, Yeats was initially unaware of that fact, asking O'Leary on ca. 4 December 1891, "Have you heard what Taylor thought of Sherman? (CL1 276). However, on 23 August 1892 he told Unwin "If you would send a copy of 'the Countess Kathleen' to J F Taylor ... he will review it in the Manchester Guardian" (CL1 309), which may indicate that by then he knew. Yeats and Taylor, however, were shortly to quarrel over the New Irish Library, and *The Countess Kathleen* was not reviewed in the *Manchester Guardian*.

19 "William Butler Yeats's *John Sherman*: An Irish Poet's Declaration of Independence," *Irish University Review* 9:1 (Spring 1979): 93.

20 *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 49. See p. 27 for the remark about Sligo versus London. Murphy (p. 101) has identified Agnes Pollexfen as the speaker.

21 Joyce's copy of *John Sherman and Dhoya* is inscribed "Jas A Joyce. Dublin 1902." See the sale catalogue, *Modern Literature from the Library of James Gilvarry*, Christie's (New York), 7 February 1986, item #393, p. 149; present whereabouts of this copy unknown.

The fullest account of the meeting is in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 100-104. Yeats's unpublished account of the occasion, at first intended as a Preface for *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903), recapitulates the contrast developed in *John Sherman* between the town, especially "big towns like London," and the country, especially "Ireland and in places where the towns have not been able to call the tune" (p. 103).

Without, I think, knowing that Joyce owned a copy of *John Sherman and Dhoya*, Brendan O'Hea once commented that "I could not but wonder if the young Joyce's naughty alleged remark that Yeats was too old to be helped by him was not, if true, stimulated by Yeats's stories. Certainly the author of *Dubliners* was more advanced in technique than the author of *John Sherman*, whereas the author of *Chamber Music* could have nothing valuable to say to the poet Yeats" (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 16 January 1970).

22 *Modern Literature from the Library of James Gilvarry*, item 468, p. 181; present whereabouts unknown.

23 Quoted in Wade, *Bibliography*, p. 24. The inscription was in Paul Lemperly's copy; present whereabouts unknown.

24 *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 488. Hereafter cited as L. The full text of Yeats's letter of 8 July 1907 to Bullen—of which Wade prints only a fragment (L 486-87)—makes it clear that "two new stories desirable" refers to potential replacements not for *John Sherman and Dhoya* but for two of the tales in *The Secret Rose* (National Library of Ireland MS. 30,568).

25 In a diary used as a notebook, preserved in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (ER 136/74), A. H. Bullen (the publisher of the 1908 *Collected Works*) either composed or copied a favorable commentary on *John Sherman*: “not merely a clever story of the artistic temperament,” “something more subtle, more elusive, and of more lasting value” (entry for 24-26 June). It thus seems likely that the “persuasion” was his. Yeats, on the other hand, was insistent about the subtitle “Two Early Stories,” telling Bullen in an undated letter that *John Sherman and Dhoya* “comes last in the book & are to be labelled early work—that is essential” (University of Kansas Library).

26 Catalogued as ER 136/63, the unbound pages lack pp. 47-48, 77-112, 131-42, and all of *Dhoya* (pp. 171-95). Conrad A. Balliet’s *W. B. Yeats: A Census of the Manuscripts* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1990) incorrectly states that the archive includes “revised proofs” (p. 26).

27 Brendan O Hehir has provided the following analysis of *gluggerabunthaun*: “To say what it literally means requires first its analysis into Irish words, and analysis unfortunately produces two disjunct possibilities. It is either *glagar a’ buntáin* or *glagairebuntán*. *Glagar* means primarily ‘rattle’—the sound of rattling, a rattling sound. By figurative extension it means ‘boasting,’ ‘prating.’ *Glagaire* is anything that rattles—a toy rattle, an addled egg, a pod or husk containing loose seeds—and by figurative extension “boaster, prater.” *Bun* means “bottom” in a generally neutral sense, but it can mean ‘fundament’ or ‘anus.’ *Bundún* means, among other things, a prolapsed anus or the prolapsed fundament of a fowl consequent upon egg-laying. *Buntán* can very readily appear as a dialect variation of *bundún*. The suffix *-[t]an*, however, often indicates, in a somewhat derogatory sense, a thing or person characterized by the attribute suggested by the word to which it is attached. *Buntán* therefore could mean a thing or person having a *bun*, it could also overlay *bundún*, so that possibly in some dialect a *buntán* might be say a goose with a prolapsed fundament. The first phrase above therefore might be interpreted as ‘rattle of a prolapsed anus’ or ‘rattle of a person-with-a-prolapsed-anus’—‘rattle’ possibly meaning ‘boasting’ in either case. The second phrase might be interpreted as ‘person-with-a-rattling-arse’ or ‘rattle-arse’ or ‘rattle-prolapsed fundament’ or ‘rattle-prolapsed-fundament-ist.’ Throughout the notion of farting is perhaps not absent. If forced to a single interpretation I would say: An approximate translation would be ‘empty-rattling-arse’” (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 18 January 1968).

In his seminal “Yeats and the Irish Language,” *Yeats* 1 (1983): 92-103, O Hehir has further commented that “When Yeats used the word he probably had no idea of its meaning anything much more derogatory than ‘Jack o’Dreams’—perhaps as a Gaelic synonym. But before 1908 he had grown wind—if I may so put it—of the term’s true sense, and found it too crude an epithet to apply to his own surrogate: another instance of Gaelic harshness beneath the mellifluous syllables” (p. 97).

28 Brendan O Hehir has offered the following analysis of “Inniscrewinn”: “As it stands it looks dubious to me. ‘Innis’—that is to say *Inis*—means ‘island.’ Innisfree is *Inis Fraoigh*, ‘Heather Island,’ but if Inniscrewinn is a real name some word has been distorted beyond recognition into ‘crewinn.’ *Cruan* is an adjective meaning red or orange; *cruinn* (pronounced *krin*, however) an adjective meaning circular or complete. There is a Loughcrew in Meath: *Loch Craoibhe*, where *craoibhe* means ‘branchy,’ but I see no way to get that *-in* on the end. Cruninish is an island in Lough Erne in Co. Fermanagh (about 4 miles east of Sligo town) and is possibly *crón inis* (copperbrown island)” (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 18 January 1968). Further, “‘Inniscrewinn’ could be ‘Crewinish’ turned around, but with the median *-in* syllable repeated. This would make sense if Yeats was somehow aware that ‘Crewinish’

meant ‘branchy island’—an apt substitution for ‘Innisfree,’ ... but unfortunately garbled in the transposition. So I adopt two contrary hypotheses—1) Yeats reached for an Irish-sounding name, with no sense or the dimmest sense of its possible meaning; 2) with somebody’s aid he concocted an ingenious (but erroneous) disguise for Sligo” (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 27 January 1968).

Eamonn de hOir of the Ordnance Survey Office, Dublin, has offered an alternative commentary on “Inniscrewin”: “In form Inniscrewin immediately suggests the town of Inishcrone in the west of County Sligo on the shore of Killala Bay. Although some distance from Sligo town, this was and is a well known holiday resort and would certainly have been known to Yeats, at least by name. The name derives from Irish *inis eiscir* (or, *eiscreach*) *abhann*, ‘the inis of the esker (=sand or gravel ridge) of the river.’ There is now no island here and it seems more probable that *inis* in this case means ‘milking-place’ or a ‘river meadow.’ ... [O]ne late 16th century form we have noted of the name Inyschrewin, ... is very like the form used by Yeats. Although it does not seem that *inis* means ‘island’ in the case of Inishcrone, that would be the first meaning to spring to mind and Yeats may well have thought it meant ‘island’ here as in many other cases of which he would be aware” (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 31 January 1968).

Even though Yeats admitted in the new preface that “Sligo ... is Ballah,” he continued to use “Ballah” in the 1908 text. In part, “Ballah” is a more typical Irish placename than Sligo. As O Hehir has noted, “two of the towns near Sligo are called Balla and Ballina, and “Ballagh, Ballah, and Bally, meaning respectively ‘way,’ ‘fordmouth,’ and ‘town,’ are frequent elements in the names of Irish towns and villages” (letter to Richard J. Finneran, 27 January 1968). In addition, “Ballah” may have been retained because of its echoes of Blake’s “Beulah,” described by Yeats and Edwin John Ellis in *The Works of William Blake* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893) as “a place of repose, ante-chamber of Inspiration, and dwelling of the muses” (I: 260).

[29](#) See Balliet, *Census*, p. 26.

*The *Collected Letters* is faithful to Yeats’s erratic spelling.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The copy-text for this edition is *John Sherman and Dhoya: Two Early Stones* in volume seven of *The Collected Works in Verse & Prose*, published in December 1908 by the Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-on-Avon. As Yeats carefully read proofs for that edition, only five emendations have been required, all to *John Sherman*. In I.ii (seventeenth paragraph, first sentence), a comma has been added after “Sherman,” as in the 1891 American edition. In I.iii (ninth paragraph, second sentence), “longer” has been emended to “longer,” as in the 1891-92 printings. In III.iii (fifteenth paragraph, first sentence), a double quotation mark has been corrected to a single quotation mark. In IV.iii (second paragraph, penultimate sentence), “illusion” has been emended to “allusion,” as in the 1891-92 printings. In V.ii (third paragraph, first sentence), “beside” has been emended to “besides,” as in the 1891 American edition.

In the present edition, all compound words hyphenated at line-end are to be considered hyphenated forms. Ambiguous line-end hyphenation in the copy-text has been adjudicated based on the occurrence of the word elsewhere in the 1908 and/or 1891 editions. In three instances where such evidence was inconclusive, the hyphenated form of the copy-text has been retained: “vine-trees” ([Preface], last sentence); “house-maid” (*John Sherman* II.ii, second paragraph, last sentence); “quicken-berry” (*Dhoya* III, penultimate paragraph, eleventh sentence).

The text of “Ganconagh’s Apology,” which was not reprinted in the *Collected Works*, has been taken from the first 1891 English edition. No emendations have been required.

Superscript numbers in the text refer to the editor’s explanatory notes.

John Sherman

AND

Dhoya

[PREFACE]

Having been persuaded somewhat against my judgment to include these early stories, I have read them for the first time these many years. They have come to interest me very deeply; for I am something of an astrologer, and can see in them a young man—was I twenty-three? and we Irish ripen slowly¹—born when the Water-Carrier was on the horizon, at pains to overcome Saturn in Saturn’s hour, just as I can see in much that follows his struggle with the still all-too-unconquered Moon, and at last, as I think, the summons of the prouder Sun.² Sligo, where I had lived as a child and spent some months each week of every year till long after, is Ballah, and Pool Dhoya is at the river mouth there,³ and he who gave me all of Sherman that was not born at the rising of the Water-Carrier has still the bronze upon his face, and is at this moment, it may be, in his walled garden, wondering, as he did twenty years ago, whether he will ever mend the broken glass of the conservatory, where I am not too young to recollect the vine-trees and grapes that did not ripen.⁴

W. B. YEATS.

November 14th, 1907.

FIRST PART

JOHN SHERMAN LEAVES BALLAH

In the west of Ireland, on the 9th of December, in the town of Ballah, in the Imperial Hotel¹ there was a single guest, clerical and youthful. With the exception of a stray commercial traveller, who stopped once for a night, there had been nobody for a whole month but this guest, and now he was thinking of going away. The town, full enough in summer of trout and salmon fishers, slept all winter like the bears.

On the evening of the 9th of December, in the coffee-room of the Imperial Hotel, there was nobody but this guest. The guest was irritated. It had rained all day, and now that it was clearing up night had almost fallen. He had packed his portmanteau; his stockings, his clothes-brush, his razor, his dressing-shoes were each in their corner, and now he had nothing to do. He had tried the paper that was lying on the table. He did not agree with its politics.

The waiter was playing an accordion in a little room over the stairs. The guest's irritation increased for the more he thought about it the more he perceived that the accordion was badly played. There was a piano in the coffee-room; he sat down at it and played the tune correctly, as loudly as possible. The waiter took no notice. He did not know that he was being played for. He was wholly absorbed in his own playing, and besides he was old, obstinate, and deaf. The guest could stand it no longer. He ran for the waiter, and then, remembering that he did not need anything, went out before he came.

He went through Martin's Street and Peter's Lane, and turned down by the burnt house at the corner of the fish-market, picking his way towards the bridge. The town was dripping, but the rain was almost over. The large drops fell seldomer and seldomer into the puddles. It was the hour of ducks. Three or four had squeezed themselves under a gate, and were now splashing about in the gutter of the main street. There was scarcely anyone abroad. Once or twice a countryman went by in yellow gaiters covered with mud and looked at the guest. Once an old woman with a basket of clothes, recognizing the Protestant curate's *locum tenens*,² made a low curtsy.

The clouds gradually drifted away, the twilight deepened and the stars came out. The guest, having bought some cigarettes, had spread his waterproof on the parapet of the bridge and was now leaning his elbows upon it, looking at the river and feeling at last quite tranquil. His meditations, he repeated to himself, were plated with silver by the stars. The water slid noiselessly, and one or two of the large stars made little roadways of fire into the darkness. The light from a distant casement made also a roadway. Once or twice a fish leaped. Along the banks were the vague shadows of houses, seeming like phantoms gathering to drink.

Yes; he felt now quite contented with the world. Amidst his enjoyment of the shadows and the river—a veritable festival of silence—was mixed pleasantly the knowledge that, as he leant there with the light of a neighbouring gas-jet flickering faintly on his refined form and nervous face and glancing from the little medal of some Anglican order that hung upon his watchguard, he must have seemed—there had been any to witness—a being of a different kind to the inhabitants—at once rough and conventional—of this half-deserted town. Between these two feelings the unworldly and the worldly tossed a leaping wave of perfect enjoyment. How pleasantly conscious of his own identity it made him when he thought how he and not those whose birthright it was, felt most the beauty of these shadows and this river! For him who had read much, seen operas and plays, known religious experiences, and written verse to a waterfall in Switzerland, and not for those who dwelt upon its borders for the whole lives, did this river raise a tumult of images and wonders. What meaning it had for them he

could not imagine. Some meaning surely it must have!

As he gazed out into the darkness, spinning a web of thoughts from himself to the river, from the river to himself, he saw, with a corner of his eye, a spot of red light moving in the air at the other end of the bridge. He turned towards it. It came closer and closer, there appearing behind it the while a man and a cigar. The man carried in one hand a mass of fishing-line covered with hooks, and in the other a tin porringer full of bait.

‘Good evening, Howard.’

‘Good evening,’ answered the guest, taking his elbows off the parapet and looking in a preoccupied way at the man with the hooks. It was only gradually he remembered that he was in Ballah among the barbarians, for his mind had strayed from the last evening flies, making circles on the water beneath to the devil’s song against ‘the little spirits’ in *Mefistofele*.³ Looking down at the stone parapet he considered a moment and then burst out—

‘Sherman, how do you stand this place—you who have thoughts above mere eating and sleeping and are not always grinding at the stubble mill? Here everybody lives in the eighteenth century—the squalid century. Well, I am going to-morrow, you know. Thank Heaven, I am done with your grey streets and grey minds! The curate must come home, sick or well. I have a religious essay to write and besides I should die. Think of that old fellow at the corner there, our most important parishioner! There are no more hairs on his head than thoughts in his skull. To merely look at him is to rob life of its dignity. Then there is nothing in the shops but school-books and Sunday-school prizes. Excellent no doubt, for anyone who has not had to read as many as I have. Such a choir! such rain!’

‘You need some occupation peculiar to the place,’ said the other, baiting his hooks with worms out of the little porringer. ‘I catch eels. You should set some nightlines too. You bait them with worms in this way, and put them among the weeds at the edge of the river. In the morning you find an eel or two, if you have good fortune, turning round and round and making the weeds sway. I shall catch great many after this rain.’

‘What a suggestion! Do you mean to stay here,’ said Howard, ‘till your mind rots like our most important parishioner’s?’

‘No, no! To be quite frank with you,’ replied the other, ‘I have some good looks and shall try to turn them to account by going away from here pretty soon and trying to persuade some girl with money to fall in love with me. I shall not be altogether a bad match, you see, because after she has made me a little prosperous my uncle will die and make me much more so. I wish to be able always to remain a loungeur. Yes, I shall marry money. My mother has set her heart on it, and I am not, you see, the kind of person who falls in love inconveniently. For the present—’

‘You are vegetating,’ interrupted the other.

‘No, I am seeing the world. In your big towns a man finds his minority and knows nothing outside its border. He knows only the people like himself. But here one chats with the whole world in a day’s walk, for every man one meets is a class. The knowledge I am picking up may be useful to me when I enter the great cities and their ignorance. But I have lines to set. Come with me. I would ask you to come home, but you and my mother, you know, do not get on well.’

‘I could not live with anyone I did not believe in,’ said Howard; ‘you are so different from me. You can live with mere facts, and that is why, I suppose, your schemes are so mercenary. Before the beautiful river, these stars, these great purple shadows, do you not feel like an insect in a flower? As for me, I also have planned my future. Not too near or too far from a great city, I see myself in

cottage with diamond panes, sitting by the fire. There are books everywhere and etchings on the wall. On the table is a manuscript essay on some religious matter. Perhaps I shall marry some day. Probably not, for I shall ask so much. Certainly I shall not marry for money, for I hold that when we have lost the directness and sincerity of our nature we have no compass. If we once break it the world grows trackless.'

'Good-bye,' said Sherman, briskly; 'I have baited the last hook. Your schemes suit you, but a sluggish fellow like me, poor devil, who wishes to lounge through the world, would find them expensive.'

They parted; Sherman to set his lines and Howard to his hotel in high spirits, for it seemed to him Howard had been eloquent. The billiard-room, which opened on the street, was lighted up. A few young men came round to play sometimes. He went in, for among these provincial youths he felt distinguished. Besides, he was a really good player. As he came in one of the players missed and swore. Howard reproved him with a look. He joined the play for a time, and then catching sight through a distant doorway of the hotel-keeper's wife putting a kettle on the hob he hurried off, and, drawing a chair to the fire, began one of those long gossips about everybody's affairs peculiar to the cloth.

As Sherman, having set his lines, returned home, he passed a tobacconist's—a sweet-shop and a tobacconist's in one—the only shop in town, except public-houses, that remained open. The tobacconist was standing in his door, and, recognizing one who dealt consistently with a rival at the other end of the town, muttered: 'There goes that Jack o' Dreams; been fishing most likely. Ugh!' Sherman paused for a moment as he repassed the bridge and looked at the water, on which now a new-risen and crescent moon was shining dimly. How full of memories it was to him! what playmates and boyish adventures did it not bring to mind! To him it seemed to say, 'Stay near to me,' as to Howard it had said, 'Go yonder, to those other joys and other sceneries I have told you of.' It bade him who loved stay still and dream, and gave flying feet to him who imagined.

The house where Sherman and his mother lived was one of those bare houses so common in country towns. Their dashed fronts mounting above empty pavements have a kind of dignity in their utilitarianism. They seem to say, 'Fashion has not made us, nor ever do its caprices pass our sanctified doorsteps.' On every basement window is the same dingy wire blind; on every door the same brass knocker. Custom everywhere! 'So much the longer,' the blinds seem to say, 'have eyes glance through us'; and the knockers to murmur, 'And fingers lifted us.'

No. 15, Stephens' Row, was in no manner peculiar among its twenty fellows. The chairs in the drawing-room facing the street were of heavy mahogany with horsehair cushions worn at the corners. On the round table was somebody's commentary on the New Testament laid like the spokes of a wheel on a table-cover of American oilcloth with stamped Japanese figures half worn away. The room was seldom used, for Mrs. Sherman was solitary because silent. In this room the dressmaker sat twice a year, and here the rector's wife used every month or so to drink a cup of tea. It was quite clean. There was not a fly-mark on the mirror, and all summer the fern in the grate was constantly changed. Behind this room and overlooking the garden was the parlour, where cane-bottomed chairs took the place of mahogany. Sherman had lived here with his mother all his life, and their old servant hardly remembered having lived anywhere else; and soon she would absolutely cease to remember the world she knew before she saw the four walls of this house, for every day she forgot something fresh. The son was almost thirty, the mother fifty, and the servant near seventy. Every year they had two hundred pounds among them, and once a year the son got a new suit of clothes and went into the drawing-room to look at himself in the mirror.

On the morning of the 10th of December Mrs. Sherman was down before her son. A spare, delicate featured woman, with somewhat thin lips tightly closed as with silent people, and eyes at once gentle

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