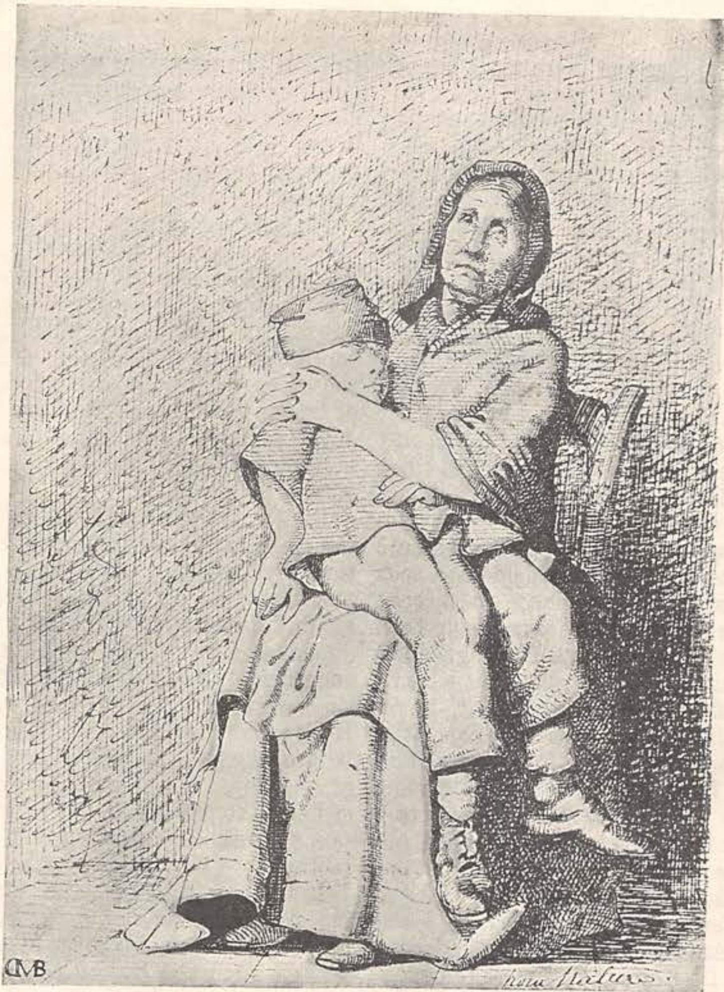


IN BOHEMIA WITH DU MAURIER.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ARTIST LIFE IN THE FIFTIES.

WITH SKETCHES BY DU MAURIER.

WE first met in Antwerp, in the class-rooms of the famous academy. I was painting and blaguing, as one paints and blagues in the storm-and-stress period of one's artistic development. It had been my good fortune to begin my studies in Paris, where, in the Atelier Gleyre, I had cultivated the essentially French art of chaffing, known by the name of «la blague parisienne,» and I now was able to give my less lively Flemish friends and fellow-students the full benefit of my experience. Many pleasant recollections bound me to Paris, so when I heard one day that a «nouveau» had arrived straight from my old Atelier Gleyre I was not a little impatient to make his acquaintance.

The newcomer was Du Maurier. I sought him out, and, taking it for granted that he was a Frenchman, I addressed him in French. We were soon engaged in lively conversation, asking and answering questions about comrades in Paris, and sorting the threads that associated us both with the same place. «Did you know *un nommé Poynter?*» he asked, exquisitely Frenchifying the name for my benefit. I mentally translated this into equally exquisite English, my version naturally being «a man called Poynter.» Later on an American came up, with whom I exchanged a few words in his and my native tongue. «What the deuce are you? English?» broke in Du Maurier. «And what the deuce are you?» I re-

joined. And we then and there made friends on a sound international basis.

It seemed to me that at this first meeting Du Maurier took me in at a glance—the eager, hungry glance of the caricaturist. He seemed struck with my appearance, as well he might be. I wore a workman's blouse that had gradually taken its color from its surroundings. To protect myself from the indiscretions of my comrades I had painted various warnings on my back, as, for instance, «Bill-stickers, beware!» «It is forbidden to shoot rubbish here,» and the like. My very black hair, ever inclined to run riot, was encircled by a craftily conceived band of crochet-work, such as only a fond mother's hand could devise, and I was doubtless coloring some meerschaum of eccentric design.

It has always been a source of legitimate pride to me to think that I should have been the tool selected by Providence to sharpen Du Maurier's pencil. There must have been something in my «verfluchte Physiognomie,» as a very handsome young German whom I used to chaff unmercifully called it, to reveal to Du Maurier those dormant capacities which had been betrayed in his eager glance.

This was, I believe, in 1857. Not feeling over sure as regards that date, I refer to a bundle of Du Maurier's letters before me, but they offer me no assistance. There is but one dated, and that one merely headed, «Düsseldorf, 19th Cent.» Well, in 1857 then, let us take it, the Antwerp Academy was under the direction of De Keyser, that most urbane of men and painters. Van Lerius, well known to many American and English lovers of art, her Majesty included, was professor of the painting class, and among the students there were many who rapidly made themselves a name—as Tadema, M. Maris, Neuhuys, Huysmans, and the armless artist whose foot-painted copies after the masters in the Antwerp gallery are well known to every tourist. The teaching was of a sound, practical nature, strongly imbued with the tendencies of the colorist school. Antwerp ever sought to uphold the traditions of a great past. In the Atelier Gleyre you might have studied form and learned to fill it with color, but here you would be taught to manipulate color and to limit it by form. A peculiar kind of artistic kicks and cuffs was administered to the student by Van Lerius as he went his rounds. «That is a charming bit of color you have painted in that forehead,» he said to me on one occasion; «so delicate and refined. Do it again,» he added, as he took up my palette-knife and scraped off the «delicate bit.» «Ah, you see, *savez-vous*, you can't do it again; you got it by fluke—some stray tints off your palette, *savez-vous?*» And taking the biggest brush I had, he swept over that palette and produced enough of the desired tints to cover a dozen foreheads.

The comrade without arms was a most assiduous worker. It was amusing to watch his mittened feet step out of their shoes and at the shortest notice proceed to do duty as hands. His nimble toes would screw and unscrew the tops of the color-tubes, or handle the brush, as steadily as the best and deftest of fingers could handle it. Very much unlike any of us, he was most punctilious in the care he bestowed on his paint-box, as also on his personal appearance.

Du Maurier was soon installed in the painting class, and made a vigorous start. I particularly recollect a life-size, full-length painting of an old woman and a boy, a pen-and-ink drawing of which is in my father's album (see page 105), that showed talent enough and to spare; but his artistic aspirations were soon to meet with a serious check. His eyesight began to give him trouble, and before long put a stop to his studies in atelier or academy. He was not to become a painter, as he had fondly hoped, but, as we now know, was to work out his destiny in another direction.

In those days we called all that caricaturing, and caricature he certainly did, mainly of me and himself. From the first he imagined he saw a marked contrast between us. His nose was supposed to be turned up and mine down, whereas really neither his nor mine much deviates from the ordinary run of noses; my lower lip certainly does project, but his does not particularly recede. But the imaginary contrast inspired him in the earliest days of our acquaintance, and started him on the war-path of pen and ink. He drew us in all conceivable and in some inconceivable situations. «Moscheles and I,» he says on one page, «if we were artistically beautiful»; then again, «if we were of the fair sex, or soldiers, or, by way of showing our versatility, if we were horses.» In that page he seems to have focused the essence of our characteristics while appearing only to delineate our human and equine possibilities.

In consequence of the growing trouble with his eyes, Du Maurier left Antwerp for Mechlin, to place himself under the care of an eminent oculist who resided within easy reach of that city. In those days railway traveling was not as rapid as it is now, but one could get from Antwerp to Mechlin in about an hour, a cir-

cumstance which I frequently turned to account. Du Maurier's mother had come to live with him, his sister joining them for a short time, and the home in quiet old Mechlin soon became a sort of haven of rest. I spent many a happy day and night there, on which occasions I am bound to say that the piano, requisitioned by me for some special purposes of musical caricature, detracted somewhat from the restfulness of the haven. However that may have been, such intrusion was never resented: my qualifications as a basso profondo or a brass-bandsman were always treated with the greatest indulgence by the

«M. & I, IF WE WERE OF THE FAIR SEX.»

ladies, and my high soprano reached unknown altitudes under the beneficent sunshine of their applause. (For all that, I never attempted Chopin's «Impromptu.»)

Then Du Maurier would sing the French «romance» or the English song, or he would «dire la chansonnette»; and what with his sympathetic tenor and his intuitive knowledge of music he seemed to be able to express more than many who had had the advantage of a musical training. A few old letters of his remind me that we were audacious enough to write verses and music, he doing the former, I the latter.

Here 's something I particularly want you to do [he writes]. Take strong coffee, inspire yourself, think of your «ideal,» and compose some very pretty music to the inclosed words with which Rag's ideal flame has inspired Rag; *surtout*, let it be as good as possible, with accompaniment *à l'avenant*.

(How Du Maurier came by the name of «Rag» and I by that of «Bobtail» I must tell later on.) Then follow the words:

CHANSON.

(D'après un barde Britannique.) [1]

Les sources vont à la rivière,
Et la rivière à l'océan;
Les monts embrassent la lumière,
Le vent du ciel se mêle au vent;
Contre le flot, le flot se presse;
Rien ne vit seul; tout semble ici,
Se fondre en la commune ivresse—
Et pourquoi pas nous deux aussi?

Vois le soleil étreint la terre,
Qui rougit d'aise à son coucher;
La lune étreint les flots qu'éclaire
Son rayon doux comme un baiser;
Les moindres fleurs ont des tendresses
Pour leurs pareilles d'ici-bas,
Que valent toutes ces caresses
Si tu ne me caresses pas?

Soon afterward he sends me another poetical effusion, and writes:

DEAR BOBTAIL: I send you the serenade composed *tant bien que mal* last night, not «*entre la poire et le fromage*,» but between the tea and the pears. I am afraid you will not find it as dramatic as you wished, but I don't feel it otherwise, and as Mahomet can't write words to the mountain's music, the mountain must try and adapt its music to the verses of Mahomet.

SÉRÉNADE APRÈS LA SIESTE.

Berthe aux grands yeux d'asur, ouvre donc ta paupière,
Chasse les rêves d'or de ton léger sommeil—
Ils sont là, nos amis; cêde à notre prière.
Le trône préparé n'attend que ton réveil;
Le soleil a cessé de régner sur la terre;
Viens régner sur la fête et sois notre soleil.
Réponds à nos accords par des accents plus doux.
Au jardin des Amours viens, oh! viens, avec nous!

Au jardin des Amours ta place est réservée
Parmi des feux de joie et des lilas en fleurs.
Viens réveiller en nous de nouvelles ardeurs;
Descends avec la nuit, ainsi que la rosée.
Tant que l'astre d'argent sourit à la vallée,
Toi bel astre d'amour, viens sourire à nos cœurs!

[1] See Shelley's «Love's Philosophy.»

«MOSCHELES OR MEPHISTOPHELES, WHICH?»

Réponds à nos accords par des accents plus doux.
Au jardin des Amours, Berthe, viens, oh! viens, avec nous!

Viens avec ta couronne, et viens avec ta lyre;
Tes chants pour nos amis, tes doux regards pour moi!
Déjà j'entends les jeux de la foule en émoi
Sur des gazons fleuris—oh, le joyeux délire!
Si tu ne descends pas, hélas! on pourra dire,
«Berthe aux grands yeux d'asur, on a chanté sans toi!»
Réponds à nos accords par des accents plus doux.
Berthe aux grands yeux d'asur, viens, oh! viens, avec nous!

What the result of his appeal to my inspiration may have been I do not remember, but I find this is what he writes on the subject:

CARISSIMO: In vain have I taxed Rag's inventive powers to alter the last stanza; we must e'en stick to «*Ce baiser-la.*» The lines I have underlined mean that I don't quite approve the part of the music that comes just there, as in the musical phrase you have set to it I fancy there is a want of tenderness. All the rest is stunning; the more I hums it the more I likes it, but I can't exactly come your accompaniment.

No wonder, for my accompaniments were usually rather indefinite quantities, subject to the mood of the moment. «Moscheles or Mephistopheles, which?» he asks, as he depicts me at the piano, perhaps evolving some such accompaniment from the depths of «untrained inner consciousness.» Another drawing there is, of a somewhat later period, which he calls «Inspiration Papillotique.» Again I am at the piano, my eyes raised to the «she» in curl-papers who floats as a vision in the clouds issuing from my ever-puffing cigar, while at my feet is stretched the meditative form of my friend, and under them is crushed some work of our immortal colleague Beethoven.

And who was «she» thus to inspire us? On the supposition that most people are, like myself, interested in the «shes» that can inspire, I may permit myself to say something about the attractive young lady who was able to lead us by easy stages from the vague «inspiration papillotique» to an admiration which might be said to culminate in flirtation. I don't remember that either of us ever tried to cut the other out. We rather shared fraternally in the enjoyment of her good graces.

These occasions were productive of a great number of drawings and sketches illustrating our little adventures, and all plainly showing that the incidents recorded occurred to us at that pleasant time of life when bright illusions and buoyant spirits lead the way, and when sorrow itself has more of the rose-color than many a rose of a later day.

Mechlin was, and perhaps is still, a dull, deserted city, at best up to the date of the last

INSPIRATION PAPILLOTIQUE.

century, beating the record for dry-as-dustiness, with little blades of grass between its cobblestones. It boasts a great many churches and a great many more priests. In addition to these attractions there was, however, a factor of paramount interest to us. Then and there, just as now and elsewhere, there were pretty girls about; and I need not say that, as both of us were studying art and devoting our best energies to the cult of the Beautiful, we considered it our duty to take special notice of these pretty girls wherever we came across them. It is probably the conscientious performance of his duty in that direction which enabled Du Maurier to evolve those ever attractive and sympathetic types of female beauty with which we are all so familiar. Nor would it have been becoming in me, who had everything to learn, to lag behind or to show less ardor in the pursuit of my studies.

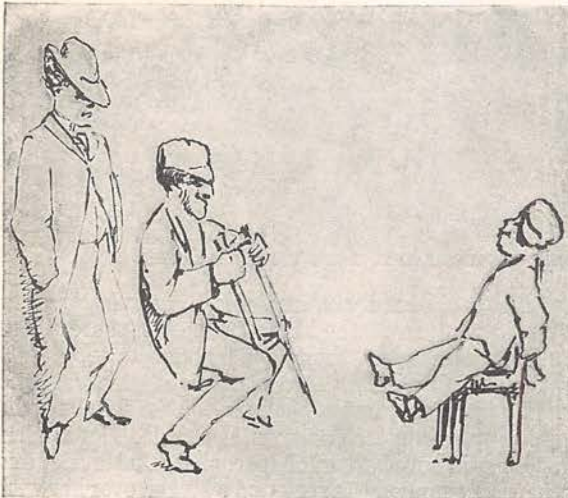
Thus, while Du Maurier's facile pen was throwing off black-and-white sketches of Miss Carrie, it was reserved for me to paint her portrait in oils. Her real name was not Carrie; that appellation we had most unceremoniously and unpoetically derived from «Cigar.» All else about her we invested, if not with ceremony, with a full amount of poetry. And certainly there was a subtle quality in Carrie well worthy of appreciation, a faculty of charming and being charmed, of giving and taking, of free-and-easiness coupled with ladylike reserve. She seemed to have been born with the conviction that there was only one life worth living, that of the Bohemian, and to be at the same time well protected by a pretty reluctance to admit as much. She was seventeen, and had a rich crop of brown curly hair, very blue, inquisitive eyes, and a lithe figure.

Carrie was the daughter of an organist who had held a good position in one of the principal churches of Mechlin. When he died he left but a small inheritance to his widow. With what she could realize she purchased the good-will of the small shop of a tobacconist and set up in business. Neither the mother nor the daughter had much previous knowledge of the concern they had started, and they were consequently not very discriminating in the selection of their brands; but what was lacking in connoisseurship was fully made up for by the widow's obliging manners and by Carrie's blue eyes. Customers soon came, and for a time the little business was as flourishing as anything could well be in Mechlin. The average citizen of so ecclesiastically conservative and hereditarily stationary a city could hardly be expected to encourage a new venture of the kind. Still, even there, there were some young men about town, a sort of *jeunesse dorée*, not of eighteen-carat gold perhaps, but a jeunesse quite equal to the pleasant task of courting Carrie. Her mother did her share of chaperoning; Du Maurier and I supplied the rest, and watched over her with chivalrous if not quite disinterested devotion. We differed in every respect from the type of the young man of the period above mentioned, so naturally we were bright stars in Carrie's firmament. She looked upon us as superior beings, and from her points of comparison not without cause: Du Maurier could draw and I could paint; he could sing and I could mesmerize; and could n't we both talk just beautifully! We neither of us encourage hero-worship now, but then we were *bons princes*, and graciously accepted Carrie's homage as due to our superior merits. Above is a

THE KNIGHTS SALUTING THE FAIR TOBACCONIST.

drawing illustrative of that chivalrous if not quite disinterested devotion of ours, showing us as knights saluting the fair tobacconist.

Mesmerism—or, as the fashion of to-day calls it, hypnotism—formed so frequent a topic of conversation and speculation between Du Maurier and me that it takes a very prominent place in my recollections. In Paris I had had opportunities of attending some most interesting séances, in consequence of which I soon proceeded to investigate the mesmeric phenomena on my own account. Now I have not touched the fluid for some thirty years: I swore off because it was taking too much out of me; but I look back with pleasure on my early experiments,—successes, I may say,—for I was fortunate enough to come across several exceptional subjects. Du Maurier was particularly interested in one of these,—Virginie Mersaudon,—and had a way of putting puzzling questions concerning her faculties and my mesmeric influence. Virginie was a *femme de ménage* of the true Parisian type, a devoted, elderly creature, who performed the duties of charwoman and housekeeper. I was not yet eighteen when I first went to Paris to study under my cousin, the eminent painter Henri Lehmann. At his studio I found Virginie installed as the presiding genius of the establishment, using in turn broom or tub, needle, grill, or frying-pan, as occasion might require. The wide range of her powers I further extended by making a truly remarkable mesmeric subject of her. My début in Paris was that of the somewhat bewildered foreigner, speaking but very indifferent French; and she had from the first done what she could to make me feel at home in the strange city, treating me with truly motherly care and devotion. How completely she took possession of me is shown by a passage in a letter she wrote when I was ill in Leipsic, where I had gone on a visit to my parents. After expressing her anxiety and her regret at not being there to nurse me, she emphatically says: «Je rends madame votre mère responsable de votre santé.»[1] It needed but little to lead her on from a state of docile and genial dependence to one of unconscious mesmeric subjection; and so, a few passes shaping her course, I willed her across the boundary line that separates us from the unknown—a line which, thanks to science, is daily being extended. Mme. Mersaudon was herself an incorrigible disbeliever in the phenomena of mesmerism, but as a subject her faculties were such as to surprise and convert many a scoffer.



A HYPNOTIC EXPERIMENT.

At the séances, to which I invited my friends and a few scientific outsiders, I always courted the fullest investigation, taking it as the first duty of the mesmerizer to show cause why he should not be put down as a charlatan. So we had tests and counter-tests, evidence and counter-evidence; there were doctors to feel the pulse and to scrutinize the rigidity of the muscles, experts to propound scientific «ifs» and «buts,» and wiseacres generally to put spokes in the wheel of progress, as is their playful way wherever they find that wheel in motion. It was doubly satisfactory, then, that the good faith of subject and mesmerist could be conclusively proved.

One of these séances led to a rather amusing incident. One night I was awakened from first slumber by a sharp ring at my bell, and when, after some parleying, I opened the door, I found myself confronted by two persons. One I recognized as an «inquirer» who had been brought to my rooms some time before; the other was a lad I had not seen before. The inquirer, I ascertained, having carefully watched my *modus operandi* on the occasion of his visit, had next tried experiments of his own. In this instance he had succeeded in mesmerizing a lad, but had found it impossible to recall him to his normal condition. So, securing him by a leather strap fastened round his waist, he led him through the streets of Paris to my rooms. There we both tried our

[1] «I make your mother responsible for your health.»

«THE MIDNIGHT PRESENCE OF THE UNCANNY.»

powers upon him, the result being very unsatisfactory. The youth, feeling himself freed from one operator and not subjected by the other, refused allegiance to either, and being of a pugnacious temperament, squared up and began striking out at both of us. It was not without considerable difficulty that I remesmerized him completely; and then, having previously prepared his mind to account naturally for his presence in my rooms, I succeeded in awakening him, and all ended happily. The inquirer was duly grateful, the youth went home strapless and none the worse for the adventure, and I proceeded to do some very sound sleeping on my own account.

I would say more of my séances and all the recollections they evoke were I not impatient to get back to Du Maurier and to Mechlin. Using the privilege of the mesmerist, I elect to will the reader—that is, if natural slumber has not before this put him beyond my control—across the frontier into the back parlor of the widow's tobacco-shop. There I am operating on a boy—such a stupid little Flemish boy that no amount of fluid could ever make him clever. How I came to treat him to passes I don't remember: probably I used him as an object-lesson to amuse Carrie. All I recollect is that I gave him a key to hold, and made him believe that it was red-hot and burned his fingers, or that it was a piece of pudding to be eaten presently, thereby making him howl and grin alternately.

But mesmerism meant more than incidental amusement or even scientific experiment to us in those Antwerp and Mechlin days. And it was on one or the other of these excursions, I feel confident, that Du Maurier picked up and was inoculated with the germs that afterward developed in his novels. No wonder, then, if in more than one of his letters and sketches he embodies bold dreams and fancies, or if on one occasion he depicts himself with fixed gaze and hair erect, sitting bolt upright on my hospitable sofa, thrilled and overawed by the midnight presence of the uncanny, which I had evoked for his benefit. Of this he wrote to me:

Yes, governor; it 's all very well to ask a nervous fellow to Antwerp, and amuse him and make him ever so jolly and comfortable. . . . But why, when the bleak November wind sobs against the lattice and disturbs the dead ashes in the grate, when everything is —— queer and dark, and that

«RACHEL» IN THE STUDIO.

sort of thing, you know,—*why* should you make a nervous fellow's flesh creep by talk about mesmerism, and dead fellows coming to see live fellows before dying, and the Lord knows what else? Why, Gad! it 's horrid!

My rooms in Antwerp were the scene of many a festive gathering. We always spoke of them in the plural; it sounded better, but in reality there was only one room with two small alcoves. Studies and sketches covered the walls or littered the floor, and the genial figure of a skeleton in very perfect condition stood in the corner by the piano. We had music, recitation, and acting, mostly of an improvised, home-made character. Among the milder forms of entertainment was my impersonation of Rachel. That great actress I had often seen in Paris, and more than once had shivered in my shoes as she annihilated the tyrant, pouring forth the vials of her wrath in the classical language of Racine or Corneille. With those accents still ringing in my ear, I came to Antwerp, and there, surrounded by sympathetic friends, the spirit would sometimes move me, and I would feel—excuse the conceit of youth—as if I too could have been a great female tragedian had fate not otherwise disposed of me. In such moments I would drape myself in the classical folds of the bed-sheet, seize the blade of the paper-knife, use the blood of the beet-root, and denounce the tyrant, hissing fearful hexameters of scorn and vituperation into his ears, and usually winding up with a pose so magnificently triumphant that it would bring down any house which was not of the most solid construction.

The celebration of one of my birthdays was an event rescued from oblivion by Du Maurier's pencil. His sketch contains striking likenesses of the friends assembled on that occasion. They had come together in the evening, much in the same spirit that had led them under my windows in the morning with a brass band and an enormous bouquet of cabbages, carrots, and cauliflowers. There on the left is Van Lerius with his hands in his pockets; next to him, Du Maurier; then Huysmans, Bource, and the other chums, and, though last not least, the proud bearer of the steaming punch-bowl. What a set of jolly good fellows! It is quite a pleasure to pore over the sketch, and contemplate Du Maurier's phiz expressing his unbounded capacity of enjoyment. I can see him taking points that fell flat with the other fellows. Quite a pleasure, too, to think of Huysmans's big nose and Van Lerius's bald head, of the tall and the short, of spindle-shanks and chubby face. Where shall I find them now, those friends and boon companions of my Bohemian days?

I WELL remember a certain *barrière* that protected the level crossing just outside the

Mechlin station. It was there one evening that we adopted our never-to-be-forgotten aliases, «Rag» and «Bobtail.» We had chanced upon a chum of ours, named Sprenk, lounging across that old barrière; and some fortuitous circumstance having revealed the fact that his preceding initials were T. A. G., we forthwith dubbed him «Tag.» Out of that very naturally grew the further development, Rag, Tag, and Bobtail.

Tag was an Englishman, strong and hearty, and considerably taller than either of us. That alone would have sufficed to secure him the friendship of Du Maurier, who worshiped at the shrine of physical greatness. He loved to look up to the man of six feet something, or to sit in the shadow of the woman of commanding presence, his appreciation of size culminating in the love of «Chang,» that dog of dogs, whom we have all learned to admire as we followed his career through the volumes of «Punch.»

Tag was engaged, or at least he was generally just about to be engaged, in some business, and while waiting for the opportune moment to begin operations he would settle down to an expectant present. The golden opportunity he was looking for was plainly visible on his horizon, but it had a way of remaining stationary; and as it was contrary to Tag's nature to move unless under great pressure, the two never met. In the mean while Tag was one of our trio. He was a good deal with us when we were out and about bent on storming the world or climbing Parnassus: we did the climbing, he the looking on, the parts thus being distributed to our common satisfaction. He was always pleasantly acquiescent, and had the rare gift of making himself useless agreeably. A common bond of interest we had in the Colorado claro and oscuro, whether the fair or dark applied to the friendly weed or the still more friendly fair sex. These lines of Du Maurier's describe him and our chumship much better than any words of mine can do. He says:

TO BOBTAIL.

In the sunshine of April, the April of life,
  You and I and our Tag make three;
And few will deny that for such close chums
  A queer set of fellows are we.

For I walk slowly, and you walk fast,
  And Tag lies down (not to fall);
You think of the present, *I* think of the past,
  And Tag thinks of nothing at all.

Yet who shall be lucky and who shall be rich?
  Whether neither, or both, or all three
Is a mystery which Dame Fortune, the witch,
  Tells neither Tag, Bobtail, nor me!

RAG.

Apropos of plans and prospects on Tag's distant horizon, I find a passage in one of his letters dated November, 1857, which is well

A RAINY DAY.

MISS CLARA MOSCHELES.

worth recording. I quote it to give myself and my fellow-Europeans an opportunity of rejoicing that Tag's scheme belonged to those that were not to be realized. It runs thus:

As Du Maurier's eye, though better, will most probably not allow him to resume his profession as a painter, we have determined to try our fortune together in Australia, and mean to start from here early in February. He hopes to obtain employment by drawing sketches, caricatures, etc., for the Melbourne « Punch » and other illustrated papers. You know how eminently suited he is for that kind of work, and we hear that an artist of talent of that description is much wanted out there, and would be sure to do exceedingly well. I of course do not intend to start in that line, but hope to be able to support myself for the first few years, after which I shall establish myself in business on my own account; and I trust, with luck, I may return home in the course of from ten to fifteen years, if not with immense riches, at all events with enough to enable me to pass the remainder of my « old age » in peace and comfort.

Did Tag ever go, I wonder? Did he come back, and has he perhaps been enjoying his old age somewhere over here for the last thirty years? I wish you would say what *has* become of you, my dear Tag. I 'm sure we should be chums again.

That music of a certain spontaneous kind, the music within us which we were ever longing to bring to the surface, was a bond of union between Du Maurier and me I have already mentioned; but that bond was to be greatly strengthened by the music that great musicians on more than one occasion lavished on us. First came Louis Brassin, the pianist. He had studied under Moscheles at the Conservatory of Leipsic, the city of Bach and Mendelssohn; and there from the days of his boyhood he had belonged to the little circle of intimates who frequently gathered about the master at his house. When, a few years later, he came to Belgium on a concert tour, he and I found no difficulty in taking up the old friendship contracted in my father's house just where we had left it. The boy had become the man, the student had developed into the artist and thorough musician. There was something decidedly interesting about Brassin's looks, but his figure gave one the impression of having been very carelessly put together. When he walked his head went back on his shoulders and his hat went back on his head, his long arms dangled pendulum-like by his sides, while his lanky legs, dragging along anyhow, were ever lagging behind each other. But when he opened the piano and put hands and feet to keys and pedal he was not the same person. He would turn on nerve- and muscle-power, and would hurl avalanches of music at his audience till he in his turn was overwhelmed with thunders of applause. In the accompanying drawing Du Maurier shows him at the piano entertaining us on « A Rainy Day.»

Ah, Felix, *amico mio* [he says], may thy room be always as jolly, thy coffee be ever as sweet, as on that happy morning! May Brassin's fingers be ever as brilliant and inspired! May Tag be ever as lazy, and with equal satisfaction to himself! And may I never be blinder! Amen.

The pianist was certainly a fine subject for Du Maurier, whom I always looked upon as a sort of vivisector of musicians, of their methods and their moods. Brassin's brilliant career was suddenly and unexpectedly cut off by his death some ten years ago, at the age of forty-four.

In 1858 my father came on a visit to Antwerp with my mother and my youngest sister, Clara. Wherever my father took up his abode, even temporarily, a grand piano in the natural course of events would gravitate toward him, and a select circle of art lovers would soon be grouped around it. Among the friends in the Antwerp circle were Van Lerius, Tadema, Baron Leys, Huysmans, and Bource. My sis-

ter at that time was a bright and happy creature, not long out of her teens, full of hopes, alas! never to be realized, and of talents never to be matured. The large dark eyes—they seemed the gift of her godmother, the famous Malibran—reflected the artist's soul, and a grand soprano voice spoke its powerful language. Du Maurier and she were soon on a brother-and-sisterly footing, and they ever remained so.

Of the pleasant evenings we of the circle spent together I recall one in particular. My sister had been singing one song after another, my father was engaged in an animated conversation with Stefani, the pianist, on the relative merits of Mendelssohn and Schumann. Du Maurier and I had been sitting at the farther end of the room, talking of his eyes. At that time one doctor held out hopes; another, a great authority, had considered it his painful duty not to conceal «the truth» from his patient, and with much unction and the necessary complement of professional phraseology had prepared him for the worst: the sight of one eye had gone, that of the other would follow. Those were anxious days both for him and for his friends; but whatever he felt, he could talk about his trouble with perfect equanimity, and I often wondered how quietly he took it, and how cheerfully he would tell me that he was fearfully depressed. That evening I had been putting the chances of a speedy recovery before him, and making predictions based, I am bound to admit, on nothing more substantial than my ardent hopes. But Du Maurier was too much of a philosopher to be satisfied with such encouragement as I could give, and said: «No; I had better face the enemy and be prepared for the worst. If it comes, you see, my dear fellow, there is nature's law of compensation. I firmly believe that one cannot lose one faculty without some great gain elsewhere. I suppose one gets to see more inside as things grow darker outside. If he can't paint, he must do something else—write perhaps—that is, as long as he can; and then if the steam accumulates, and he wants a safety-valve to let it off, dictate.» Happily, to this day he writes, and need not have recourse to dictation.

When we joined our friends we found Van Lerius and Huysmans making sketches for my sister's album. Du Maurier took up a pencil, and with a few characteristic touches drew that sister's eyes, and wrote underneath his sketch:

> Quand je les vois j'oublie les miens. (Reflection d'un futur aveugle.)

Or in English:

> When I see them I forget mine. (Reflection of a man going blind.)

Soon the main business of the evening was resumed. Was it Beethoven's sonata for piano and violin or a mighty improvisation on classical themes that came first? I do not recollect; but I remember that Du Maurier's rendering of Balfe's «When other lips and other hearts,» with my scratch accompaniment, was warmly greeted by all lips and hearts present. When these pleasant evenings had come to an end the friendly intercourse was not allowed to drop, and so a number of sketches by her new friends found their way into my sister's album.

«AN INDISCREET FELLOW.»

Du Maurier's talent manifested itself not only in a desire to illustrate this or that incident or adventure, but also in his inexhaustible capacity for making something out of nothing.

DU MAURIER AT WORK.

DEAR BOBTAIL: I will never write without sending my compliments to thine album.

He starts a short missive with a sketch of himself seated in his trunk, pipe in mouth, and says:

I write to you out of sheer idleness, so as to have an excuse not to pack up for the next half hour.

Or he draws himself looking over my shoulder while I am writing to my sister, and puts the supposed context of my letter thus:

BOBTAIL writes (in German of course): «I won't write any more, because there 's an indiscreet fellow looking over my—»

RAG: «It 's not true, I swear!»

Another time he asks me to send him some brushes and various other painting-materials; among which he enumerates, «Oh, and a little thing like this for oil to do the thing cheesy.» He depicts himself quite elated. His eyes seemed so much better that he had once more resumed work in the studio of his friend Goyers.

Another drawing shows what happened when, for once in a way, he presumed to accept the homages of the fair.

One fine morninge, earlie, at ye café de la Plage, Blankenberghe, ye celebrated Rag, deeming himself alone, treateth himself to a private performance of ye padre furioso e figlia infelice, in imitatione of his illustrious friende Felix Bobtailo. Presentlie a voice exclaimeth behind him, «Monsieur, permettez moi de vous féliciter,» and a ladie politelie maketh him complimente on his talente. Rag replieth that she must not be surprised thereat, as hys life has been spent among ye great musicians, and that therefore he can scarcelie helpe being a consummate musician himselfe. Shortly after, as he lighteth hys cigarre at ye barre, he enquireth bumptiously: «Who might that good ladie be?» «She is the prima donna of the Munich Opera, monsieur.» Whereupon ye soul of ye humiliated Rag sinketh into hys bootes, and he retireth for ever under a perpetual extinguisher.

Ye hero of ye above unfortunate adventure presenteth hys compliments to Miss Clara Moscheles, and beggeth she will deigne to accepte ye sketche in acknowledgment of ye last box of «accidulated lemon-flavoured droppes» entrusted to her brother's care (need he remark that they have not yet reached their destination?).

Miss Clara is invited to observe how cunninglie ye profile of Rag is made to imitate that of her talented brother.

Du Maurier's stay in Blankenberghe was but short. He soon went to Düsseldorf to put himself under the treatment of a famous oculist who resided not far from there, at Gräfrath. He wrote in high spirits:

Spent yesterday in Gräfrath; jolly place, lots of beauties, plenty of singing and sketching, and that

THE BEAM IN HER EYE.

sort of thing, you know. Long walks in beautiful valleys; most delightful. The fact is, I 'm so merry I only want your periodical visits, and permission to have my fling on Saturday nights, to be in heaven. Doctor says *he* 'll do me good; have to go to Gräfrath once a week. *Ça me botte joliement.*

He had met some old acquaintances and fraternized with some English and American artists, had got into the swim of Gräfrath society, such as it was, and was soon placed on a pedestal while sundry beauties sat at his feet and, to the best of my belief, sighed.

thirty-six periodical papers which I have got for you. In haste, BOBTAIL.» Eyes the same as ever. Write soon, and tell all about that portrait.

The letter is headed by a drawing representing me soaring heavenward, while he, chained to the spot, is philosophically consulting the cards on his prospects of release.

Before his final return to England we met once more in Antwerp and Mechlin. And that takes me back to Carrie. We found her changed to her advantage—so at least the world of Mechlin thought. We were not quite

«IMITATIONE OF HIS ILLUSTRIOUS FRIENDE.»

Among his sketches sent to me at this time was one called «A New Adaptation from the New Testament.» He and a charming «she» sit waiting their turn at the oculist's door. He is looking into her eyes, and she into his. «Really, I don't see the slightest mote in your eyes,» says she. «No; but I can see the beams in yours,» he replies.

In Paris I was probably absorbed in some work I had in hand, and must have neglected Du Maurier, for he writes:

DEAR BOBTAIL: Est-ce que tu te donnes le genre de m'oublier par hazard? I have been expecting a letter from you every day running thus: «DEAR RAG: Come to Paris *immediately* to illustrate

so sure that the change would prove altogether to her advantage. She had been quite pretty enough before, and we thought she could well have done without developing further physical attractions. She had always known how to use her eyes, not unfrequently shedding their beneficent light on two persons at the same time, and we considered that that number should not be exceeded.

«Now, Bobtail,» said Rag, as we walked along the sober old streets of Mechlin discussing the state of Carrie's mind and heart [he has omitted the streets, but has put us into our very best medieval suits]—«now, Bobtail, what do you think? Is she in love? And if so, with whom?»

«OUR VERY BEST MEDIEVAL SUITS.»

«She may be, or she may be not,» said Bobtail, with oracular discretion; «but if she is, it can be with only one of us. She would not waste her sentiment on a native while we were within reach.»

«But which of us is it?» asked Rag, somewhat alarmed.

«I know not; but I hope neither,» answered the oracle thus appealed to; «but the state of her mind I believe is this: if she were to marry you she would fall in love with me, and if she were to marry me she would fall in love with you.»

This dictum must have impressed Du Maurier, for it started him on a series of drawings with accompanying text in illustration of it. There were to be two volumes. The first, in which I figure as the husband, was rapidly produced; the second, in which he was to be the husband, never saw the light. It was shelved *sine die*, a proceeding I always thought particularly unfair, as he never gave *me* a chance of being loved. I am compensated, however, by the possession of the first volume of the «Noces de Picciola,» or «Cari-catures,» as they are called. Suffice it to show how Félix and Georges produced the portrait of Picciola. Félix put all his talent and Georges all his good-will into it; for, once completed, Picciola was to select a husband from the two suitors. After much cogitation she decides for Félix while offering her friendship to Georges, who seems but moderately satisfied with this arrangement; and then, when husband and wife leave for distant countries, Georges, who cannot bear the thought of being parted from his dear Picciola, enters the service of the young couple, and accompanies them on their honeymoon. This mythical journey gives the author opportunities for the subtle psychological analysis of a young lady's heart strongly inclined to revolt against some of the conventions laid down by society for its regulation.

But it was not to be, for Carrie married a young doctor, a Southerner of the French meridional type, excitable and impulsive, and went to Paris. We only knew, and that we learned in a roundabout way, that she was the happiest little wife in Paris. Once, and only once, she wrote to us to tell us how complete was her happiness in the birth of a child. It was not till three years later that I was in Paris, and succeeded in picking up the thread of Carrie's story. One morning the young

HOW FÉLIX AND GEORGES PRODUCED THE PORTRAIT OF PICCIOLA.

doctor, hale and hearty, overflowing with health and happiness, had gone to his work at the hospital. That night he came home blood-poisoned, to die in his wife's arms.

Du Maurier's stay on the Continent came to a close some time before mine, and to that circumstance I owe several letters in which he speaks of his first experiences in London. He reveled in the metamorphosis he was undergoing, and illustrated the past and the present for my better comprehension. There on one side of the Channel he shows the dejected old lion of Mechlin gnawing his tobaccoless clay pipe, and then on the other the noble beast stalking along jauntily with tail erect and Havana alight. He wrote in high spirits:

«ACCOMPANIES THEM ON THEIR HONEYMOON.»

How strange to think of such a change! I 'm leading the merriest of lives, and only hope it will last. Living with Henley, No. 85 Newman street; very jolly and comfortable. Chumming with all the old Paris fellows again; all of them going ahead. There 's Whistler, already one of the great celebrities here; Poynter getting on. This is a very jolly little village, and I wish you were over here. They do make such a fuss with an agreeable fellow, like you or me, for instance. I think you would precious soon get more portraits than you could paint here; but if you are getting on so well in Paris, of course it would be madness to leave. But I do not like the idea of your not being one of us —such a band of brothers full of jolly faults that dovetail beautifully. It was quite a freak of mine coming over here; I did it against everybody's advice. Came over with a ten-pound note, and made the rest. « Your friend Bobtail seems to be the only man who had no doubt of your talent,» writes my mother. *Enfin c'est prouvé que je suis au moins bon à quelquechose.* Do you go much into the world? I go knocking about as happily as possible, singing, and smoking cigars everywhere. Jimmy Whistler and I go « tumbling » together, as Thackeray says. Would you were here to tumble with us! *Enfin, mon bon, écris moi vite.*

When at last I too returned to London, I was privileged to take my humble share in the « tumbling,» as also in the steady process that was gradually to wean us from Bohemia.

Felix Moscheles.