

MOZART.

BY EDVARD GRIEG.

EDVARD GRIEG, the author of the following article in THE CENTURY'S series of articles on great musicians, is the foremost exponent of Scandinavian music. His life has been given to building up the artistic movement in Scandinavia, which has found expression in all forms of art, though perhaps most powerfully in letters. In artistic convictions and principles, and most powerfully in patriotic instinct, Grieg has necessarily found himself opposed to the Wagnerian propaganda. The present review of Mozart is perhaps more sympathetic because Mozart, in awakening the spirit of German music, did what Grieg proposed to himself and accomplished for his own native land. Grieg as a musician is discussed in Dr. William Mason's article in THE CENTURY MAGAZINE for March, 1894.—THE EDITOR.



WHAT kind of face would Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart make after hearing an opera by Wagner?» asks an English writer. I shall not attempt to answer for the first three, but it is safe to say that Mozart, the universal genius whose mind was free from Philistinism and one-sidedness, would not only open his eyes wide, but would be as delighted as a child with all the new acquisitions in the departments of drama and orchestra. In this light must Mozart be viewed. To speak of Mozart is like speaking of a god. When *Gretchen* asks *Faust*, «Do you believe in God?» he answers, «Who dares name him, who confess him?» In these profound words of Goethe I would express my feelings toward Mozart. Where he is greatest he embraces all times. What if this or that generation be sufficiently *blasé* to desire to overlook him? Beauty is eternal, and the edicts of fashion can obscure it only for a moment. As far as our day is concerned, it is well that Wagner has engraved Mozart's name on his shield. His belief in Mozart is unmistakably attested in his writings, and he has thereby placed himself in emphatic opposition to the musicians of our time, who are so advanced that they care no longer to hear Mozart's music, and reluctantly grant it a place in their concert programs. It is to be hoped that this arrogant ignorance has not found a root in the healthy musical youth of the free West, and I therefore speak to my honored readers under the presumption of their sympathy with the unapproachable master.

In using the word «unapproachable» I may possibly hurt the feelings of some. For what shall we say, then, of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner? In a certain sense Mozart is, even compared with these heroes, unapproachable. In Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner we admire principally the depth and energy

of the human mind; in Mozart, the divine instinct. His highest inspirations seem untouched by human labor. Unlike the masters cited, no trace of struggle remains in the forms in which he molded his material. Mozart has the childish, happy, Aladdin nature which overcomes all difficulties as in play. He creates like a god, without pain.

Let us dwell a moment on that world of beauty which we call Mozart. His life extended from 1756 to 1791. What a short span of time! What an ocean of works! Had Mozart spent his whole life doing nothing but writing music, the quantity of it would be astounding. But when we realize how much time was taken up by professional tours, we have the best proof of the incomparable rapidity of his workmanship. Schubert, who did not live even as long as Mozart, equals him in this respect; but Schubert's life was quiet and secluded.

Next to the remarkable talent of the child Mozart his precocity first excites our wonder. No less surprising than his concert performances on the piano is his early mastery of the technic of composition. The phenomenon can be explained only by his education. Such a training perhaps no other composer, not even Mendelssohn, has had. We know that Mozart's father, who was himself an excellent musician, devoted his whole life and activity to the task of making, first of all, a man of his son, while at the same time guiding and developing his artistic gifts. When we find young Mozart writing in a letter, «After God, papa comes at once,» we understand how he appreciated this father; and in his touching filial love we find one of the pillars on which rests the purity of his art. His early mastery of technic and of the pure beauty of form he thus doubtless owes to the education he received in his loving home. His early and perfect mastery of the technic of composition suggests an interesting

comparison with Wagner. Both these masters won immortality with their operas. Both threw themselves with all the enthusiasm of youth into this branch of art. Wagner's experience, acquired by early activity as a conductor, has its counterpart in the strict training Mozart received through his travels begun in childhood as a musician. The result in each case is clearness. Both these musicians are from the outset complete masters of the complicated apparatus required for the writing of an opera—an apparatus which most composers learn to control only by long and laborious effort, with hard struggles and disappointments. Let us place the two juvenile masterworks, «The Elopement from the Seraglio» and «Tannhäuser,» side by side. There is no wavering in either, but perfect certainty in aim and in choice of means. On the basis of this technical mastery the individuality of each master develops with wonderful rapidity. The step from «Tannhäuser» to «Lohengrin» is just as great as that from the «Elopement» to «Figaro.» «Lohengrin» and «Figaro!» The warm light of fully conscious personality is diffused from every bar of these two masterworks. If we review further the creative activity of their composers, what melancholy seizes us in contemplating Mozart's fate! All the principal works of Wagner were yet to be written; also, it is true, the two greatest of Mozart's—«Don Juan» and «The Magic Flute»; but after these his life was cut short at the beginning of his manhood. The death of Mozart before he had passed his thirty-fifth year is perhaps the greatest loss the musical world has ever suffered. Of modern masters the one who in respect to form most resembles Mozart—Mendelssohn—lived only a little longer; and it was lucky for him that he died then, for he had already reached his zenith. How different with Mozart! To his last hour his genius continued to develop. In «The Magic Flute» and the «Requiem» we have a presentiment that new hidden springs are on the point of bursting forth. That Mozart learned to know and love Bach so late in his life must be regarded as a leading circumstance in connection with this fact. With what deep fervor he allowed this man—of whom Beethoven said, «Not Bach [brook], but Ocean, should be his name»—to strike root in his own personality, we see, among other things, in the delightful fugued choral in the last act of «The Magic Flute.» It was Wagner's polyphonic power that secured him his later triumphs;

and this same power would have led Mozart to new victories if he could have been permitted to live longer. For it was this power which, notwithstanding the influence of the Italian school, lay in the depth of his German soul, and which Bach first helped him to find in the privacy of his own personality.

It is said that unprincipled persons took unfair advantage of Mozart in the last years of his life, and thus accelerated his death. The author of the more than dubious libretto of «The Magic Flute,» Schikaneder, certainly helped to secure to the world this masterwork of Mozart's. But if he was, as is said, one of those who dared to exploit Mozart for their selfish purposes and thus draw him down to their own level, then woe to him and his memory! In that case we can understand why, when he heard of Mozart's death, he went about like one possessed, exclaiming, «His ghost pursues me everywhere—stands always before my eyes!» Yet even if he helped to break down Mozart's health and thus to shorten his life, he did not succeed in clouding his ideal imagination, as «The Magic Flute» proves. Schikaneder is mere superficiality. With Mozart even the superficial becomes symbolical, and a deep ethical spirit pervades the whole work.

When I hear people exclaim, «Yes; but the wretched text!» I answer, «Very true; but do you not understand that the text is recomposed by the music, ennobled by it, and raised high above triviality?» If music did not possess this capacity, many of its greatest masterworks would be entirely unpalatable. I can well understand that a bright man of letters, who is unable to hear how the text is refined and vivified by the tones, who looks at it from a purely literary point of view, may find it a disagreeable task to listen to «The Magic Flute»—nay, even to operas with much better texts. A great composer understands how to animate any detail of the poem, be it ever so dull; and he who attends an operatic performance with a predominating literary interest runs the risk of losing the most inspired moments. For, strange as it may sound, such passages often are built up most impressively on the most ordinary literary substratum. There are excellent texts which absolutely demand music. It is related of a great modern poet who for the first time heard Wagner's «Tristan and Isolde,» and had gone to the theater free from all prejudice, that after he had gazed for a while with the most serious and expectant face on the scene which, by its duration, is capable of producing, on one to whom it is not idealized by the

music, an impression which is not only fatiguing, but positively parodistic, he suddenly, in spite of the tragic situation, was unable to suppress a smile. This smile changed into laughter which at last shook the bench, so that a friend who accompanied him had to whisper in his ear, «But, X—, we can go away!» «Yes, we can go away,» groaned the poet, who at that moment realized the painful situation. And in the midst of the act the two men made their way through the parquet. May this episode furnish food for thought to those in particular who listen to an opera like «The Magic Flute» first from a literary, then from a musical, point of view! «Yes; but the text!» We must get so far in our understanding of the stage-work, compounded of words and tones, that at a certain moment the music supplements the words, or *vice versa*; otherwise works like «The Magic Flute» will remain to many a book with seven seals.

When we compare Mozart and Wagner, the truth of the proverb that «extremes meet» forces itself upon us. That these two masters represent «the extremes» is easily understood by any lover of music, but it may perhaps be necessary to indicate where they «meet.» Truly Weber must be regarded as Wagner's immediate predecessor; but if Gluck is named, and not improperly, as the man on whose shoulders Wagner stands, then we must not forget how much he owes to Mozart. For the greatness of Mozart lies in the fact that his influence in the dramatic part of music extends to our time. I have in mind, for example, the developed recitative where Mozart more and more trod paths which it remained for Wagner to develop in his dialogue still further for the modern music-drama. Certain recitatives of *Donna Anna* and *Elvira* in «Don Juan» are the originals after which our whole conception of the recitative has been modeled. That Wagner also understood how to appropriate Mozart directly is, oddly enough, proved by a passage in «Lohengrin» which, although genuinely Wagnerian in coloring, yet in its conception has its musical counterpart in «Don Juan.» Compare, for instance, in the second act of «Lohengrin,» *Ortrud's* words,

Stärkt mich im Dienste eurer heil'gen Sache,
Vernichtet der abtrünnigen schnöden Wahn!¹

with the close of the first act of «Don Juan,» the music to the words of *Donna Anna* and the chorus, «Bebe, schwarzer Missethäter!»²

¹ Strike them with death who profane your altars!
And strengthen my soul to avenge your wrongs!

² «Tremble, wretched evil-doer!»

I mention this casually in order to show that the messieurs Wagnerites would do well to whisper softly when they talk about ignoring Mozart. This ignoring would be too ridiculous to consider, were it not that so many of the best operatic conductors of our time are one-sided Wagnerians. How often have I heard in Germany perfect performances of Wagner's music-dramas under the direction of the same conductors who huddle a Mozart opera in a workaday manner! Nay, here and there these operas are even intrusted to second-rate conductors, the chief being reserved for Wagner. Under such circumstances it is asking too much to expect to come away from a Mozart performance with an impression corresponding even approximately to the value of the opera. It is enough to drive one to despair to think that such a state of affairs is tolerated—nay, even approved. But what a satisfaction it is, too, to be able to mention exceptions! As one of the most eminent of these I name Arthur Nikisch. To him the great is great, whether its name is Wagner or Mozart. His masterly interpretations of Wagner's «Ring of the Nibelungs,» of «Tristan,» of the «Meistersinger,» will live in the memory of all who were so lucky as to reside in Leipsic during the period of his conductorship at the opera. But no less assuredly will they remember his performance of «Don Juan,» his devoted interpretation and careful attention to details, not least in the elaborated recitatives. On these occasions the house resounded with the same rejoicings that one hears after a Wagner opera. May the time come soon when at least those masters who belong to history will be treated with equal justice by their sole representatives, the musical directors, in whose hands their fate is placed! May these gentlemen be brought to a realizing sense of their great responsibility! If our generation acts as if it had outgrown Mozart, we find here the main secret of that attitude. If a Wagner opera were done as negligently as Mozart's often are, not only musically but scenically, we should see strange things; and such things we shall see when the inevitable reaction sets in. Then Wagner will get what is Wagner's, and Mozart what is Mozart's. Let but a more objective and reverential period displace the Wagnerian agitators! All art that belongs to history should be viewed historically. All acquisitions of our time, such as orchestration, harmony, etc., had their counterparts in Mozart's time. He too was once new—so new that his boldness aroused a strong opposition among many con-

temporary musicians; and Wagner will some day be viewed at the same distance, and judged historically. Then it will be shown how much it means to stand firm like Mozart in spite of changing times. It is not difficult to stand if one is surrounded by the complete sympathy, the full appreciation, of the whole young generation—a generation, moreover, which has been educated for the task of making converts to the master's cause, and not resting until his ideas have been impressed on all.

Mozart had no pupils, and he had to leave his works to the accidental caprices of posterity. A new generation found new tasks in the sphere of the musical drama. Not alone was Mozart neglected: we know, alas! how his operas were performed in the European opera-houses. The scandalous production of «The Magic Flute» in Paris showed that Mozart had no one to champion his cause and his ideals. Mozart's operas had a fate similar to that of the superb Catholic architectural works of the middle ages, which after the Reformation were brutally plastered over by the Protestants. Posterity did all it could to mar their beauty.

But, you may ask, whence comes this lack of reverence for Mozart in so many talented young musicians? Here is the heart of the matter. Many of us have in our early youth loved—nay, worshiped—Mozart, but afterward we ate of the modern fruit of knowledge, an indulgence which, like that in the garden of Eden, drove us from our paradise. Some of us, luckily, avoided a complete surfeit, and found the way back. I frankly confess that I too suffered this change: I loved Mozart, then for a time lost him, but found him again, nevermore to lose him. A modern musician can easily find the cause of these changes in the attitude of young people toward drawing and color. We begin our artistic schooling by learning the lines. Our teachers exhibit to us the great masters of the past, who are unexcelled in this matter. We study them, and learn to love and imitate them. Modern art is still unknown to us, and is, indeed, kept from us as much as possible. But when we gain our first peep, behold! the vivid, brilliant colors to which our time has given the place of honor appeal temptingly from every canvas. We are intoxicated, completely enthralled, forget former ideals, and deliver ourselves over unconditionally to the seductions of sense-enchanting colors. This is what happened to the last generation, and the newest of the new composers more than ever find

their joy in drowning themselves in the color-sea, in which no ideas or forms or lines can save them any more, or prevent them from sinking deeper and deeper. «Color, color, and again color,» seems to be their motto. It is true that with great search one may still recognize some lines, but sadly out of drawing, as a rule. But there are signs of an impending change. A small minority already feels the craving for pure lines so strongly that we may hope before long to see it lead to some result. I do not mean that the art that is to come will, like a Rinaldo, shrink from color as from a seductive siren who, at the sound of the plain, chaste melody of the knights of the cross loses all her charms. No; this new art will, first of all, preach the gospel of the true joy in life, will unite lines and colors in marriage, and show that it has its roots in all the past, that it draws sustenance from old as well as from new masters.

What I have so far written relates, in the first place, to Mozart's dramatic works, although it may with full justice be applied also to his orchestral works. In the complicated conditions of our time it is natural to become a specialist. Thus we see Wagner concentrating himself entirely on the opera. The older school was more comprehensive, and it is true of Mozart in particular that his greatness as an operatic composer must not mislead us into neglecting the other sides of his activity. Here we have a new proof of Mozart's universality. In church music, chamber music, in the concert-hall, everywhere, he is equally great. Luckily, in the lapse of time Mozart has been less mutilated in the concert-hall than in the theater, thanks, in the first place, to the worthy virtuosi, many of whom were also excellent musicians. Under the protection of these masters several of the most beautiful piano-forte concertos, sonatas, string quartets and quintets of Mozart have been able to keep their place in the minds of concert-goers as revelations of the highest beauty. Yes, even in the sphere of the romanza, in which new times have produced new masters who opened new paths for it, a little song like «The Violet» can hold its own victoriously in comparison with Schubert, Schumann, Franz, and Brahms.

Divers composers of our time have attempted, by subjecting Mozart to a modernizing process, to make him more palatable to a public jaded by strong spices. A dangerous undertaking! Thus the Russian master Tschaikowsky has, with admirable discretion

and refined taste, united into an orchestral suite, in a modern instrumental garb, a group of Mozart's piano and choral pieces, some of them comparatively unfamiliar. The writer of this article has himself attempted, by using a second piano, to impart to several of Mozart's pianoforte sonatas a tonal effect appealing to our modern ears; and he wishes to add, by way of apology, that he did not change a single one of Mozart's notes, thus preserving the respect we owe to the great master. It is not my opinion that this was an act of necessity; far from it. But provided a man does not follow the example of Gounod, who transformed a Bach prelude into a modern, sentimental, and trivial show piece, of which I absolutely disapprove, but seeks to preserve the unity of style, there is surely no reason for raising an outcry over his desire to attempt a modernization as one way of showing his admiration for an old master. Mozart's orchestral works, however, show us that he has colors fresh enough to captivate the ear to-day and probably for an immeasurable time to come. From Mozart's instrumentation we can still learn much as regards clearness and euphony. Those who wish to study beauty of tone may open Mozart's scores wherever they please, and they will find rich profit. And this orchestral tone-beauty has the invaluable property of not being the one essential. An orchestral score of Mozart's transferred to the piano is not reduced to absolute nothingness (like, for example, a score of Berlioz and his imitators), for his music is of such a nature that it can be deprived of its colors without losing its attractiveness. A glance at his three wonderful symphonies in E flat major, G minor, and C major (this last being called by posterity the Jupiter Symphony, because it appears perfect, as if created by a god) proves this completely. They show us the master at the height of his power. All three were written in the summer of 1788—that is, three years before his death. It is difficult to decide which of these symphonies deserves the most admiration. We note at once the great step from Haydn's to Mozart's treatment of this the highest of instrumental forms, and our thoughts are involuntarily transferred to the young Beethoven, who, without any specially noteworthy break, rises from where Mozart left off to those proud summits which none but he was destined to reach. In the introduction to the E flat major symphony, just before the first allegro, we come upon harmonic combinations of un-

precedented boldness. They are introduced in so surprising a way that they will always preserve the impression of novelty. The minutest of this symphony, as arranged for the piano, has made the tour of the world on the concert programs of many virtuosi. In the G minor symphony Mozart shows himself to us in all his grace and sincerity of feeling. It is worth noting what astonishing effects he gets here by the use of chromatic progressions. Excepting Bach, who here, as everywhere, is the fundamental pillar on which all modern music rests, no one has understood as well as Mozart how to use the chromatic scale to express the highest effect in music. We must go as far as Wagner before we find chromatic harmonies used for the expression of ardent feeling (*Innigkeit*). In the case of Spohr, who made extensive use of them, and who in so many respects followed Mozart, they remain without any deep significance.

In the Jupiter Symphony we are astounded, above all, by the playful ease with which the greatest problems of art are treated. No one who is not initiated suspects in the finale, amid the humorous tone gambols, what an amazing contrapuntal knowledge and superiority Mozart manifests. And then this ocean of euphony! Mozart's sense of euphony was, indeed, so absolute that it is impossible, in all his works, to find a single bar wherein it is sacrificed to other considerations. Not so with Beethoven, who, indeed, never hesitated to push aside euphony for the sake of reaching higher ends. With him began the new era, the motto of which might be expressed in the words, «Truth first, then beauty.» And here we find Schumann as the first who followed in Beethoven's footsteps.

Of Mozart's chamber compositions we single out for special admiration the string quartet in G minor (note the wonderful chromatics of the first theme), the pianoforte quintet in E flat major, and the pianoforte quartet in G minor. It is a curious fact that whenever Mozart conceives a movement in G minor he always surpasses himself. In the beautiful middle movement of the pianoforte quintet it pleased him to introduce the motive of *Zerlina's* aria in «Don Juan,» «Wenn du fein fromm bist, will ich dir helfen,»¹ and how bright is this reverie! Of his string quartets the so-called six famous ones are justly admired. The introduction to the C major quartet also contains bold chromatic effects, which even liberal musi-

¹ If you are real good I will assist you

cians of his time were unable to digest. The musical historian Fétis won for himself the fame of

The aspiring youth that fired the Ephesian dome,

by his foolhardy attempt to change this introduction, which he considered «impossible»: a typical critic, who lies down like a wet dog on just the best places!

Of the pianoforte concertos the one in D minor is the most famous and beautiful. I should advise, by the way, to use Mozart's original, and not Hummel's edition, which is provided with superfluous ornamentations and other arbitrary changes. A characteristic illustration of Mozart's method of workmanship may be introduced here. Not long ago I saw in Vienna the manuscript of the concerto in question. In the finale Mozart was in some way or other interrupted in his writing. When he again took up his pen he did not continue where he had left off. A stroke of the pen over the excellent piece, a new finale, the one which we all know! No laborious search for the lost thread! It seems as if Mozart preferred to complete a large form in a single large mood. No wonder, therefore, that even the most practised eye and ear cannot discover the subtlest points of connection. The simple large mood and the simple large line are, too, most intimately allied. We can only wonder at this method of workmanship, which it is given to only a few of the select to employ.

In his pianoforte trios Mozart took a sort of siesta, if I may so express myself. On the other hand, he has often given us his best in his sonatas for the violin, and no less in those for the pianoforte. We are amazed at the great step from the naïveté of Haydn to the depth of thought in Mozart. That he is not always equally deep must not surprise us; quite the reverse. We read in Mozart's biography of his desperate situation, which compelled him to write for the Cherethites and the Pelethites, seldom from an inner impulse.

Before bringing this paper to a close, I shall dwell a moment on Mozart's swansong, the work which, vital with the spirit of eternity, was conceived and born when the cold hand of death was already extended toward the master; his «Requiem,» even in its incompleteness, shows us, as perhaps no other work of his does, what incalculable treasures he took with him to his grave. Which parts of this work are Mozart's, and which not, is a question that may now perhaps be considered settled. Yet, in face of all the jewels which the

«Requiem» contains, we cannot help expressing our surprise that the same master who could write a «Requiem æternam,» a «Rex tremendæ,» a «Recordare,» a «Confutatis,» a «Lacrymosa,» whose nobility is beyond all description—that this same master could incorporate in the same work a number like the «Tuba mirum,» with its more than modest beginning, with the really desperate obbligato trombone (or bassoon), and its thoroughly worldly pomp. If this is really Mozart, only one explanation seems possible—that he used a fragment composed in a much earlier period in order to save trouble. This number seems also to show a strong Italian influence.

Mozart stands before us like an embodiment of childish joy in life, amiable benevolence, and unpretentiousness. He was able to conduct his «Magic Flute» in Schickaneder's «board theater» without compromising his artistic dignity. Could he look down to us, he would surely say: «Ye modern masters, why all this commotion? Why clothe yourselves with this mail of outward dignity? It does nothing for your art; it merely kills genuine human feeling, which is the real salt of art.»

Though Mozart was not esteemed at his true value while he lived, posterity has placed him in its pantheon as one of the greatest masters of all times. If, therefore, in discussing him and his relation to our time, I have intimated that he is not yet esteemed as he ought to be, I repeat that my remarks are aimed only at that class of modern musicians who have both the power and the capacity to produce his greatest works in a superior style in the theaters, and who nevertheless do not do it. Beethoven is more fortunately situated. The trinity, Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, has been placed by the new romantic school as an article of faith in its catechism. But this leaves Mozart short of his deserts, and a considerable time will probably elapse before neoromanticism will resolve to adopt Mozart into its alphabet. The young band of neoromanticists reminds me, in its blind one-sidedness, of Andersen's fairy-tale «The Snow Queen,» in which we are told of a magic mirror with which a flock of demons flew through the air. Up there they indulged in all sorts of pranks, and finally, in their wantonness, let the mirror drop to the earth, where it broke into a million fragments. One of these pieces flew into the eye of a good little boy, and resulted in his seeing everything distorted, not only with his bodily, but with his mind's eye. The beautiful seemed to him ugly, the great small, while his healthy senses were disor-

dered by precocious knowledge, finicalness, and a hypercritical spirit. One might almost fancy that many of our influential young musicians have a piece of that magic mirror in their eyes, which prevents them from see-

ing the beauty of Mozart in its full light. May their fate, then, be like that boy's! A lucky accident removed the fragment. The precocious goblin disappeared, and the child spirit again took up its abode in his soul.



ON THE RE-READING OF BOOKS.

BY JOHN BURROUGHS.



AFTER one has passed the middle period of life, or even long before that, it is interesting to note what books he spontaneously recurs to and re-reads. Do his old favorites retain anything of their first freshness and stimulus for him, or have they become stale and dead, or completely outgrown? On taking down for the third or fourth time a favorite author the present winter, I said to myself, «There is no test of a book like that: can we, and do we, go back to it?» If not, is it at all probable that future generations will go back to it? One's own experience may be looked upon as the experience of the race in miniature. If one cannot return to an author again and again, is it not pretty good evidence that his work has not the keeping qualities? One brings a different self, a different experience, to each re-reading, and thus in a measure brings the test of time and humanity. Yet there is always some difficulty in going back. It is difficult to go back, after some years, to live in a place from which one has once flitted. Somehow things look stale to us. Is it our dead selves that we encounter at every turn? Even the old homestead has a certain empty, pathetic, forlorn look. In the journey of life there is always more or less pain in going back; and I suppose it is partly because in every place in which we have lived we have had pain, and partly because there is some innate dislike in us to going back; the watchword of the soul is onward. If the book has given us pain, we cannot return to it; and our second or third or fourth pleasure in it will be in proportion to the depth and genuineness of our first. If our pleasure was in the novelty

or strangeness or unexpectedness of the thing, it will not return, or only in small measure. Stories of exciting plots, I find, one can seldom re-read. One can go back to the «Vicar of Wakefield»; but can he read a second time «The Woman in White»? In such books there can be only one first time. Pluck out the heart of a mystery once, and it never grows again. Curiosity and astonishment make a poor foundation to build upon. The boy tires of his jumping-jack much sooner than of his top or ball. Only the normal, the sane, the simple, have the gift of long life; the strained, the intemperate, the violent, shall not live out half their days. We never outgrow our pleasure in simple, common things; if we do, so much the worse for us; and I think it will be found that those books to which we return and that stand the test of time have just this quality of simple, universal, every-day objects and experiences, with, of course, some glint of that light that never was on sea or land—the light of the spirit. How many times does a reading man return to Montaigne, not to make a dead set at him, but to dip into him here and there, as one takes a cup of water from the spring! Human nature is essentially the same in all ages; and Montaigne put so much of his genuine, unaffected self into his pages, and put it with such vivacity of style, that all men find their own in his book; it is forever modern. We return to Bacon for a different reason—the breadth and excellence of his wisdom, and his masterly phrases. The excellent is always modern; only, what is excellent?

A man of my own tastes re-reads Gilbert White two or three times, and dips into him many times more. It is easy to see why such a book lasts. So much writing there is that