

WALTER PATER REDIVIVUS.

BY ROBERT SHAFER.

IT is somehow odd in this year to come upon what purports to be a new volume of essays by Walter Horatio Pater. Much water has run under the bridge since those middle years of the eighteenth-nineties when Mr. C. L. Shadwell gathered together the floating remnants of Pater's legacy, and in a manner fixed the canon of his friend's work. Pater has, too, during this time been evaluated, placed, one might almost say disposed of, by critics and scholars. We consider his estheticism to be dead: most would say well dead: yet none would deny that, though it be like an apparition from another age, the appearance of a new book by him would be an event of importance.

Sketches and Reviews,¹ however,—in its appropriate yellow boards, reminiscent of the great "esthetic" quarterly of the 'nineties—does not contain material as new as its editor believed. This gentleman says in his introduction that none of the pieces he has gathered has ever been printed in book form. But the book's first essay, "Aesthetic Poetry," was reprinted by Pater himself in the first edition of *Appreciations* in 1889. The following year it was dropped from the second edition, the paper on "Feuillet's *La Morte*" taking its place. The other essays in this "new" volume, all save one, appeared in 1903 in the little book called *Uncollected Essays*, published by Mr. T. B. Mosher of Portland, Maine. The exception, "Coleridge as a Theologian," is the weightiest review in this "new" collection. It might alone justify the volume, had not Pater long ago incorporated the essence of the review as well as many passages verbatim into his essay on Coleridge in *Appreciations*.

Some devout followers may welcome *Sketches and Reviews* in spite of its more than doubtful newness, though they will not easily forgive its many typographical errors. The craftsman too,

¹ A volume of essays by Pater, published in their "Penguin Series" by Messrs. Boni and Liveright, New York, 1919.

or perhaps the scholar, may take an innocent pleasure in comparing the two essays on Coleridge—a kind of exercise not without usefulness, but already possible for the curious in Pater's three Wordsworth essays. To others the need for this "yellow book" may not be so apparent. Yet its publishers will have performed a real service if in this way they cause some of us to reflect anew upon Walter Pater's interpretation of life and its meaning. Such reflections are not of merely historical interest, for they bring into view a connection between Pater and ourselves—his way of thinking and ours of to-day—such as apparently not many persons suspect.

The words are famous in which Pater defined the good or, as he put it, successful life. "To burn always with this hard gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life":—and the flame and ecstasy are just the eagerness with which one welcomes experience of the outside world for its own sake. These words from the "Conclusion" in *The Renaissance*, with their context, give one the essence of Pater's view-point, maintained consistently from the beginning to the end of his career; and through pondering them alone one might come to understand well enough what was his conception of life. But in *Marius the Epicurean* he has written out at once a fuller and a more considered statement of the same position, and by scrutiny of the "sensations and ideas" of the young Marius we may best understand his creator in, at any rate, his not least important aspect.

Pater emphasizes in this romance, as it has been called, the resemblances, more than superficial, between the age of Marcus Aurelius and the the end of the nineteenth century. "That age and our own," he says, "have much in common—many difficulties and hopes"—and he warns the reader that at moments he may appear to have his own time in mind rather than that of Marius. The fact is important for any complete understanding of the book—a picture of a youth brought up carefully in his ancestral religion who, upon coming into contact with the great world, feels compelled to forsake his old religion for a form of hedonism, a materialistic sensationalism which further contact with the world illogically modifies, but in no way destroys. Pater has elsewhere noted some part of those conditions in the nineteenth century which suggested the bare framework of his "romance." "For one born in eighteen hundred and three," he says in his essay on Mérimée, "much was recently become incredible that had at least warmed the imagination even of the skeptical eighteenth century. . . . A great outlook had lately been cut off. After Kant's criticism of the mind, its pretensions to pass

beyond the limits of individual experience seemed as dead as those of old French royalty. And Kant did but furnish its innermost theoretic force to a more general criticism, which had withdrawn from every department of action, underlying principles once thought eternal. A time of disillusion followed." Energetic souls, however, he goes on to say, attempted to recover themselves in a changed world;—"Art: the passions, above all, the ecstasy and sorrow of love: a purely empirical knowledge of nature and man: these still remained, at least for pastime, in a world of which it was no longer proposed to calculate the remoter issues."

These generalizations reflect their light upon the young Marius's questionings and search for the true way of life. We are given to understand that this youth, with all his capacity for feeling and the store that he set on sentiment, possessed also an independent intelligence. Early set free of the associations and restrictions of his country home, he found himself in the very different atmosphere of a school of rhetoric in Pisa. The town itself, in its insistent new sights and varied gayness, all in vivid contrast with the quiet monotone of his earlier years, seemed forcibly to thrust in upon him new ideals of brilliant color, "absolutely real, with nothing less than the reality of seeing and hearing," while the old ideals of country piety grew "how vague, shadowy, problematical!" Marius soon began to suspect, "though it was a suspicion he was careful at first to put from him," that his cherished ancestral religion "might come to count with him as but one form of poetic beauty, or of the ideal, in things: as but one voice, in a world where there were many voices it would be a moral weakness not to listen to." The religious claim was still strong, but was beginning to yield to another, "proposing to him unlimited self-expansion in a world of various sunshine." The tendency was strengthened by the companionship of a schoolfellow with personality of compelling charm and strength, Flavian, who never hesitated in the pursuit of "various sunshine." And Flavian gave Marius the benefit not only of his own vivid example, but also "the writings of a sprightly wit, then very busy with the pen, one Lucian." Naturally the time was not long until Marius had to come to some settlement with himself, in an attempt to determine what for him were the respective claims of his new life and his old religion. In this moment of parting ways he "instinctively recognized" that "in vigorous intelligence, after all, divinity was most likely to be found a resident." He could maintain his integrity, find his own way of life, only through "the honest action of his own untroubled, unassisted intelligence" in all

fields; and this conclusion was made attractive to him by "the feeling. . . of a poetic beauty in mere clearness of thought, the actually esthetic charm of a cold austerity of mind."

Applying, then, his unaided reason to the search for truth, Marius found it quickly enough; and found it, as had been fore-ordained, in the words of Aristippus of Cyrene, that pupil of Socrates who brought the skeptical inquiries of his master to a nihilistic conclusion and contrived to build upon the latter a philosophy of pleasure. Aristippus had rigidly confined his speculations about the world and life, had indeed attempted not to speculate at all about anything, but merely to interpret human life in terms of immediately known certainties. He was one of those who wished to teach men how to live, believing that all else which philosophers concerned themselves with was a species of nonsense. Moreover, for this purpose he took life, practically speaking, at its worst; he looked only outside of and around himself, and he concluded that since things and persons are but doubtful shadows, never continuing a moment in one stay, knowledge about them—the truth—is impossible, knowledge being something fixed and permanent, and the search for it a mere vanity or delusion. But instead of allowing this conclusion to depress him he turned it into a "stimulus toward every kind of activity and prompted a perpetual, inextinguishable thirst after experience." It was, Pater thinks, Aristippus's rich and genial nature which thus transformed his initial material—giving "the spectacle of one of the happiest temperaments coming, so to speak, to an understanding with the most depressing of theories: accepting the results of a metaphysical system which seemed to concentrate into itself all the weakening trains of thought in earlier Greek speculation, and making the best of it, turning its hard, bare truths, with wonderful tact, into precepts of grace, and delicate wisdom, and a delicate sense of honor. Given," Pater continues, "the hardest terms, supposing our days are indeed but a shadow, even so, we may well adorn and beautify, in scrupulous self-respect, our souls, and whatever our souls touch upon—these wonderful bodies, these material dwelling-places through which the shadows pass together for a while, the very raiment we wear, our very pastimes and the intercourse of society."

Aristippus's "hard, bare truth" was of course what nowadays would be termed the "subjectivity of knowledge." He considered that one could never learn the truth about things because things would never remain still long enough for one to examine them. While one looked they changed from instant to instant under one's

eyes, and nothing under the sun was for two seconds the same thing. But there is no need of going on; everybody knows these famous old arguments against the possibility of any knowledge of reality, or the "thing-in-itself." They have been wonderfully revived and enlarged in modern times, though in essentials they have scarcely changed. The problem raised for one—alike for an Aristippus or a child of the present century—who fancies he has thus dissolved away all possibility of knowledge, is whether any kind of basis for certitude in the conduct of life can still be found. Knowledge being impossible, are we not set down in an all-pervasive fog where one man's guess, about any question, is as good as another's?—where all standards disappear and at the most one can say with Pater that "nothing is intrinsically great or small, good or evil"? So of course Pater's Marius concluded, yet thought he discerned an escape from universal blankness in the reflection that what any individual directly feels is his own, that, whatever it be worth, such feeling requires, at least, no proof. It is just "there." And this reflection thus became the cornerstone for a theory which makes life consist wholly of "direct sensation," as being the one immediate and unquestionable certainty of existence.

Thus the "grace and delicate wisdom" of Aristippus and of Marius lay in the "apprehension that the little point of this present moment alone really is, between a past which has just ceased to be and a future which may never come": and Marius appropriately resolved "to exclude regret and desire, and yield himself to the improvement of the present with an absolutely disengaged mind." "With a sense of economy, with a jealous estimate of gain and loss," he would "use life, not as the means to some problematic end, but, as far as might be, from dying hour to dying hour, an end in itself—a kind of music, all-sufficing to the duly trained ear, even as it died out on the air." He would aim at every possible kind of experience. He would attempt to set all his faculties free, by "clearing the tablet of his mind" from all doctrines or theories which might set up any interference with this aim. And so would he impartially "burn with a hard, gemlike flame."

Marius was, then—as Pater more than once explicitly says—a materialist, and conceived life as exclusively an affair of the five senses, "which certainly never deceive us about themselves, about which alone we can never deceive ourselves." All things pleasurable became grist for Marius's unexhaustible mill. But Pater was of course not satisfied to stop here; taking beauty to express for himself the Epicurean or, as it was called in his century, utilitarian

concept of pleasure, he attempted to answer the question, what is beautiful, or pleasant? On these principles, as is well known, one can differentiate between pleasures only in terms of quantity, not of kind or quality, and Pater did not, like Mill, at this point give his position away. "Our one chance," he says in the "Conclusion" of *The Renaissance*, "lies in expanding that interval [of life], in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. Great passions may give us this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, the various forms of enthusiastic activity, disinterested or otherwise, which come naturally to many of us. Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake."

It was well enough, as an assertion or as kindly meant advice, thus to represent the sensations derivable from the arts as making up the quantitatively pleasantest or most perfect life; but by the very terms of this creed, wherein "nothing is intrinsically great or small, good or evil," the restriction could not hold good save for Pater himself. Each individual—"ringed round by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to him, able only to conjecture that which may be without"—each so isolated person must prove for himself by the path of impartial experiment what sensations yield him the greatest amount of pleasure;—and we have only to look round us to see how diverse, putting it mildly, are the felt pleasures of humanity. To this fact Pater was not at all blind—he at times insisted upon it—yet he seems never quite to have taken in its consequences for his theoretic position. When later, however, he wrote *Marius the Epicurean* he had come at any rate to see that the creed of sensation perforce dissolved into nothingness both morals and religion. This he was very far from wishing. The fair orderliness, both personal and social, of which a traditional morality is the groundwork, and the observances and associations of an old religion, both meant much to Pater in his personal experience. Hence he was constrained to include them, somehow—make some place for them that would at least seem real—within the materialist's world of sensation.

In the matter of morality, Marius was led by contemplation of "the ethical charm of Cornelius," his Christian friend who in another place had served to reinforce his materialism, to question the exclusion of moral sanctions from the creed of sensation. "The

noble and resolute air, the gallantry, so to call it, which composed the outward mien and presentment of his strange friend's inflexible ethics," called into Marius's mind a suspicion of the graceless contradiction between his own "standards" and those of traditional morality, which might make him in other men's eyes an outlaw; that is, the contradiction might rudely take from him some social pleasure, and might also defeat, socially, the impression his creed *ought* to make! Consequently, if his creed were not to figure for others as different from what it seemed to himself, he had to discover some way of forcing duty and righteousness into the Cyrenaic scheme of things. The "way," Marius found, lay in "the purely esthetic beauty of the old morality." He came to see it "as an element in things, fascinating to the imagination, to good taste in its most highly developed form, through association—a system or order, as a matter of fact, in possession, not only of the larger world, but of the rare minority of *élite* intelligences; from which, therefore, least of all would the sort of Epicurean he had in view endure to become, so to speak, an outlaw." In other words, Marius would conform to the morality of his day on the ground that it would be in bad taste not to; and he would so be more comfortable in plucking Epicurean roses within the limitations of other men's standards of approval.

It is much the same with religion. Christianity gained Marius's pleased approbation—no other words quite so express it—but not his inner assent. When he was first taken to the "curious house" of Cecilia, not yet knowing that she and those about her were Christians, he was enchanted by the sound of singing, coming from he knew not where; and he felt that "it was the expression not altogether of mirth, yet of some wonderful sort of happiness—the blithe self-expansion of a joyful soul in people upon whom some all-subduing experience had wrought heroically, and who still remembered, on this bland afternoon, the hour of a great deliverance." Clinging to all that he saw there was a quiet, astringent beauty, and in this retired, wonderfully confident new way of life Marius found a grand appeal, exactly in its atmosphere of deliverance. For "in truth, one of his most characteristic and constant traits had ever been a certain longing for escape—for some sudden, relieving interchange, across the very spaces of life, it might be, along which he had lingered most pleasantly—for a lifting, from time to time, of the actual horizon. It was," Pater goes on to explain too well, "like the necessity under which the painter finds himself, to set a window or open doorway in the background of his

picture; or like a sick man's longing for northern coolness, and the whispering willow-trees, amid the breathless evergreen forests of the south." Marius was soothed by the mere sympathetic contemplation of the strange way in which other folk could be moved by this remarkable religion. He felt that the sight of it might serve for him, not as the cure, but probably "the solace or anodyne of his great sorrows—of that constitutional sorrowfulness, not peculiar to himself perhaps, but which had made his life certainly like one long 'disease of the spirit.'"

There is inconsistency in this insistence, for a special purpose, upon Marius's great sorrowfulness; and indeed any careful reader may perceive for himself several loose ends—contradictions not merely phraseological—in this so carefully written book, which indicate that Pater's hold upon the task he had set himself was partial and inconstant. Yet one cannot say that he was inconsistent in his treatment of morality and religion. He could not admit as valid any of the real claims of either—and he can be under no suspicion of having done so! Mrs. Humphry Ward in her recently published *Recollections* says that while Pater, having before 1870 relinquished all belief in the Christian religion, never returned to it in the "intellectual sense," still, "his heart returned to it," and "he became once more endlessly interested in it, and haunted by the 'something' in it, which he thought inexplicable." Exactly so; and herein lies the difference which Mrs. Ward speaks of between the "Conclusion" in *The Renaissance* and *Marius the Epicurean*; but it should be completely evident that Pater's theoretic position remains in the later book in all respects unchanged by the perceptible—but for this purpose ineffective—beatings of his new heart. Though his mind did not remain entirely cold to his heart's call, it did remain unconvinced; and at the best Pater has shown that the "right kind of person," the fastidious man of "a hieratic refinement," will so feel the purely esthetic appeal of morality and religion as not to ignore the one nor to trample down the other.² With the fact that both would swiftly perish from the earth under such patronage Pater does not attempt to deal. One was to become the "right kind of person" and a patron of traditional morality and religion through the kindly offices of a purely secular culture, and yet this secular culture had come precisely to take the place of

² It is but fair to remind the reader that Edward Dowden in his sympathetic summary of Pater's thought has said it is "an erroneous criticism which represents Marius as only extending a refined hedonism so as to include within it new pleasures of the moral sense or the religious temper." The reader must judge for himself whether or not this assertion is substantiated by the explanation which follows it (*Essays Modern and Elizabethan*, pp. 17-19).

traditional morality and religion. Such inconsequence may not have troubled Pater, but it must give pause to less gifted souls.

The grounds of Pater's position are not very far to seek. Of course they lay, first of all, in his own temperament. This is the case, as Pater himself has rightly insisted, with each one of us; and Pater's deeply grained yet economical sensuousness, his "lust of the eye," would in any age have sealed him of the children of this world who contentedly follow the counsels of Horace, moderated and refined as those were from Horace's Epicurean teachers. Pater's affinity, too, with Ruskin, and with Morris and Rossetti, is obvious and has been much talked of. All of these men and some others of their time had in common, though with varying degrees of consciousness, a profound desire to save from impending destruction, in the swirl of nineteenth-century industrialism, the artistic values of life. Their salutary effort was to bring men back to a sense of the enrichment—the pleasure and the good which come from the fair adornment of life itself and of all the instruments of life. The question why their attempts met with comparative failure is as interesting as it is complex; but it cannot be considered here save as Pater's part in it may shed light upon the whole movement.

What must be noticed is that Pater essayed to go further than the rest in linking his position with the intellectual currents of his day. It can in a sentence be written down that Pater's life-long attempt was, in substance, to save and find some valid sanction for the rewards and fruits of culture on the terms imposed by scientific naturalism. His effort was, accepting to the full the conclusions of the natural science of his time, still to provide a sure basis for the personal life of the individual particularly in its highest aspects. He betrays no sense of the difficulty of such a task, and probably felt none—for here his sensuous and uncritical temperament made the path he inevitably chose seem also the naturally "right" and perfect one. To many, of course, it will seem a strange, perhaps outlandish, thing thus to link Pater's name with that of Auguste Comte and possibly with Herbert Spencer's also. Yet the relationship is clear and needs not for proof the evidence of Mr. Humphry Ward concerning the "Comtean" quality of Pater's college lectures; and the more one ponders it the more does it seem the key to any right understanding of what Pater stood for and tried to do.

How deeply impressed Pater was with the negative or restrictive aspect of Kant's criticism of the mind is made clear in a passage already quoted from his essay on Mérimée. He was but one out of very many in his century who believed, as result not only of

this but of almost innumerable other opinions, "demonstrations," "proofs," that the purely empiric method supposed to be followed by natural scientists was the unique path to such tentative knowledge as mortal man may hope to attain. The great gain—or loss!—of this acclaimed method was that it seemed to clear away so much rubbish on which men had foolishly based their lives for centuries. Not merely was historic Christianity or any other religion of moving power swept away, but much else, along with the greater part of the human mind—as all thinking persons know. In actual practice the interplay of assumption and evidence made the new dispensation, in the hands of most men, different in its pretensions rather than in its reality from the old, abandoned methods of inquiry. In actual practice the new gospel of Natural Uniformity was not less dogmatic than less inhuman gospels of our naive forefathers had been. But all men except a few village curates were in that day too busy, and too enchanted, with the mere surface of their novel wisdom to perceive this. All forward-looking spirits were ready to believe anything these benefactors of the race might say, whether in explanation of "the new truth" or in praise of themselves, as when Renan in his *Life of Jesus* wrote: "By our extreme scruple in employing means of conviction, by our absolute sincerity and our disinterested love of the pure idea, we have created (all of us who have devoted our lives to science) a new ideal of morality." This new thing along with the rest the wholly virtuous scientist would provide. Pater, fascinated, believed that already the world had been "proved" to be a self-sufficient mechanism, where chance evidences of intelligence should be smiled at by the enlightened. "The 'positive' method. . . makes very little account," he says in his essay on Coleridge, "of marks of intelligence in nature: in its wider view of phenomena, it sees that those instances are a minority, and may rank as happy coincidences: it absorbs them in the larger conception of universal mechanical law." In any age, Pater says in the same essay, "the clearest minds abandon themselves to" the time-spirit—to the newest notions, apparently, that they may find at hand; and to him the vision of "universal mechanical law" seemed "like the harmony of musical notes, wrought out in and through the series of their mutations." A beautiful conception, no doubt; yet to a reflective person the beauty might seem hardly skin-deep, for the conception means also that we are parts of an entirely pre-determined world, deluded if we think ourselves other than helpless mechanisms.

It is more than doubtful whether Pater ever saw this, because

it was of course the "mutations" themselves—not their orderly relationships—which enchanted him. This he everywhere emphasized. And settling himself—if I may be pardoned the contradiction—in the ceaseless ebb and flow of inconstant appearances, with all else cleared away by natural science, he preached in the creed of sensation, with his own addition of an esthetic twist, the only "way of life" possible on such premises. "Here at last," he says, "is a vision, a theory, *θεωρία*, which reposes on no basis of unverified hypothesis, which makes no call upon a future after all somewhat problematic; as it would be unaffected by any discovery of an Empedocles (improving on the old story of Prometheus) as to what has really been the origin, and course of development, of man's actually attained faculties and that seemingly divine particle of reason or spirit in him." This "vision," too, reinforces "the deep original materialism or earthliness of human nature itself, bound so intimately to the sensuous world."

And Pater's "vision," elaborated with such grace and refinement of phrase as has rarely been achieved in English, thrives amongst a great and increasing number of people to-day. The esthetic turn which he strove to give it has disappeared. But I have endeavored to point out how fragile, in theory no less than in fact, was the link which Pater took great pains to forge between the materialist creed of sensation and his own personal application of the creed. Setting up the higher life of the individual, moral, religious, poetic, as of the greatest esthetic charm was a superior sort of ornamentation but could not be made an integral part of the Epicurean way of life; for any classification of pleasures could hold good only for the person who himself made it. Consequently, while, among the many, pleasures are reckoned differently as to worth, sensationalism itself—the essence of Pater's "vision"—flourishes as the only credible gospel of our modern age.

The reasons are fairly simple. It is probable that most people who accept as explanatory the scientific hypothesis of a mechanical world never reflect that on such terms their "choosing" any "way of life" whatever is equally a delusion. Even those, however, who are conscious of the meaning of this hypothesis have on their hands, so to say, a belief so at variance with their nature that in practice they *act* from day to day as if they were not mere predetermined mechanisms. Almost none, nevertheless, regards the notion of a mechanical world as simply a piece of interesting although disheartening speculation. It is true that a few men, such as Sir Oliver Lodge, still argue ably and plausibly against the acceptance

of this bleak hypothesis, but no weight seems, with the many, to attach to their effort. Yet even if numerous persons were convinced by the arguments of a Sir Oliver Lodge, they would be convinced only of the possibility of a mild theism—and people do not act on possibilities. They act alone on what they take to be certainties. And they believe readily in their half-perceptions of scientific "truth" because of the seemingly irrefragable proof offered by the practical triumphs of natural science. The modern uses of steam and electricity, the phonograph, the automobile, the aeroplane—these countless new things which are revolutionizing the earth seem overwhelming evidence that the assumptions of natural science are at long last rock-bottom truth. These assumptions, moreover, in the eyes of most, exclude everything for which men in other ages have lived except immediate sensations grasped from dying moment to dying moment—except these and the pursuit, on the part of a smaller number, of power in the shape of great wealth. And while to some these exclusions make life an empty mockery, to many others they come as a grateful release. With comprehensible joy the "natural man" welcomes pronouncements which make his inclinations respectable—a creed which both positively and negatively makes over the world in his own image, "reinforcing the deep original materialism or earthliness of human nature itself, bound so intimately to the sensuous world." This is the creed to which, probably, the vulgar man in any age most easily takes. And in an age secular and equalitarian, where the tyranny of the masses is keenly felt, the cheering message of "do-as-you-please-and-don't-care-a-damn" is bound to appear. The crowd would like nothing better, and at the same moment the high priests of our age, its men of science, providentially seem to give the message official sanction and the weight of their authority.

Other gospels are much talked of. Very recently we have had altogether remarkable examples of the way in which patriotism may fire whole nations; but the emptiness of patriotism as a permanent way of life and its efficacy for only a brief period of great emergency were at the same time proved with equal clearness. And no one can seriously doubt that, however much fine talk we hear of hopeful substitutes for an out-of-date morality and an out-of-date religion, the hopeful substitute actually in use among a very great number of us is the materialist creed of sensation. Proof lies everywhere around us. It is to be found in every aspect of the daily life of the nations. It is vividly reflected in our newspapers, our periodicals, our novels. From great wealth of material a single

illustration may be cited, but one the more striking that the author of *Saint's Progress*, Mr. John Galsworthy, is generally supposed to represent, as far as family and nurture and fastidious high-mindedness go, the best our age can do. Readers of this gentleman's books pride themselves upon having "the best." They feel, too, that their author improves as well as amuses them, since he is widely known as a moralist. Well, there is nothing to complain of in the plot of this recent novel. What there is in it to the present purpose lies entirely in Mr. Galsworthy's presentation of the heroine, Noel Pierson, and the clergyman her father. The poor clergyman is pictured as stupidly not believing in life, while his daughter engagingly does. There is no need of summarizing the story to make the point clear; I shall simply quote the meditations of Noel upon receiving a letter from her "saintly" father—a letter in which he expresses the wish that she should not marry a man, James Fort, who has, or has just had, a cousin of Noel's (Leila) for mistress: "He wanted *her* to pass the time—not to live, not to enjoy! To pass the time. What else had he been doing himself, all these years, ever since she could remember, ever since her mother died, but just passing the time? Passing the time because he did not believe in this life; not living at all, just preparing for the life he did believe in. Denying everything that was exciting and nice, so that when he died he might pass pure and saintly to his other world. He could not believe Captain Fort a good man, because he had not passed the time, and resisted Leila; and Leila was gone! And now it was a sin for him to love some one else; he must pass the time again. 'Daddy doesn't believe in life,' she thought. . . . 'Daddy's a saint; but I don't want to be a saint, and pass the time. He doesn't mind making people unhappy, because the more they're repressed, the saintlier they'll be.'"

And there you obviously are! The words themselves say just how real is the higher life, as it was once called, to either Noel or Mr. Galsworthy. To live the higher life—as Mr. Galsworthy plainly shows in his portraiture of the Reverend Edward Pierson—is simply not to live at all, is just "to pass the time." This writer apparently does not realize that there can be other than a purely negative side to the life of a man of principles. To live means to enjoy—in this case to indulge one's sexual appetite for its own sake, which is manfully taking the bull by the horns. For, of course, on such terms there can be no other Epicurean roses that are not worth plucking.

Indeed, where the materialist creed of sensation leads is not

doubtful, nor is its ending-place a new discovery. Long ago Plutarch remarked that a man had better be a pig than an Epicurean; that, in other words, a healthy pig approaches the Cyrenaic ideal more closely than a being endowed with human faculties can. For man unfortunately, even with the best intentions, cannot escape some occasional thoughts of past and future, of death and its pain and mystery, of "real good and real evil," and the like. This, alas, is still true; yet I do not mean by implication to commend asceticism. For better, for worse, we are in and of this present world, here and now, and we are not ourselves unless we make the most of it. But I do mean that there is more in human nature than the sensationalist or his bosom-friend, the popularizer of natural science, perceives, and that the stream of man's experiences turns sooner or later to ashes in his mouth unless he directs his life of sensation to some end beyond itself. And I do mean that there is in human nature the capacity to judge of ends. The Dauphin of France says, after the battle near Angiers in *King John*:

"There's nothing in this world can make me joy:
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;
And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste,
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness."

So it ever was and ever must be with the man who abandons himself to the stream of outward experience, even though for a space all may seem to go marvelously well with him. This gospel indeed is a gospel of the despair of life, no matter how cunningly a Pater or an Aristippus of rich and genial temperament may disguise the fact. And thoughtful materialists do not rest their case on its "exciting and nice" aspects, but on its supposed ineluctable truth no matter how tragically inhuman it be. No man of sense, moreover, can deny the substantial truth of the descriptive formulas of natural science in their own sphere. And none wishes to. But the personal world of the individual—precisely that world in which the sensationalist does take refuge after a fashion—is a different sphere which natural science does not and cannot know. The inner world of his own being is an immediate reality which no living man can doubt in his activity from day to day; yet science can subsist only by framing hypotheses which disregard or deny this world. The significance of the fact is plain, and cannot long remain obscured as now it seems to be. Its meaning can be none other than that man, as far as he is conscious of himself, is different, not in degree, but in kind, from all phenomena of the natural world. This striking,

central fact of human nature is of momentous import, and it is a fact certain and incontrovertible. The sensationalist is at one with wiser men when he tells us that only in proportion as man makes the utmost of the material of his own inner world does he really live, is he fully a man. But there is more within us than sensations. We give as much to our perceptions as we take from them; and we live lives perilously at variance with our real selves if we do not follow this primary truth to the discovery, as far as may be, of the meaning and substance and weight of our inner selves. Even the young Marius was aware of a "loyal conscience. . . . deciding, judging himself and every one else, with a wonderful sort of authority"; he had intuitions, too, of "a fierce opposition of real good and real evil around him." These things were without meaning and absurd according to his own philosophy, yet Pater was betrayed into speaking of them just because they are our unique heritage as human beings and are immediately known by all of us, the more clearly as we let them speak. Nor only this; for in that "other world" of the individual's inner self lies—in the "particle of spirit" in him not "seemingly" but truly divine—his only secure direction through life's perplexed paths;—the only certain guide for even the proudest man, to save him from ultimate emptiness and disillusion in the wreck of earthly hopes.

Walter Pater certainly felt the unique quality of the individual. And if he felt this rather than saw its meaning, it still entered to good purpose into the character of all his work. It saved him from any attempt to elaborate a rigid philosophical "system"; it kept his presentment of his thinking ever literary or concrete in form, rather than abstract. And I cannot end without saying any word about this and other great excellences which color all his writing. I have been concerned only to examine afresh Pater's interpretation of life. About this I have felt bound to speak plainly. Yet incidentally his books are full of the rare charm and rightness of an altogether distinguished mind. Such excellences can hardly palliate or excuse Pater's central weakness; but the humanity of the man, the unobtrusiveness of his scholarship, his scrupulous, never-failing good taste with its perfection of manner, his gift—amounting to genius—for the precise expression of his meaning, his lessons of comeliness and grace so needed by the age—these things and more tinge one's judgment with profound regret. Would that one could finally say of him without misgiving: "He had understanding of righteousness, and discerned great and marvelous wonders: and he prevailed with the Most High, and is numbered among the saintly company."