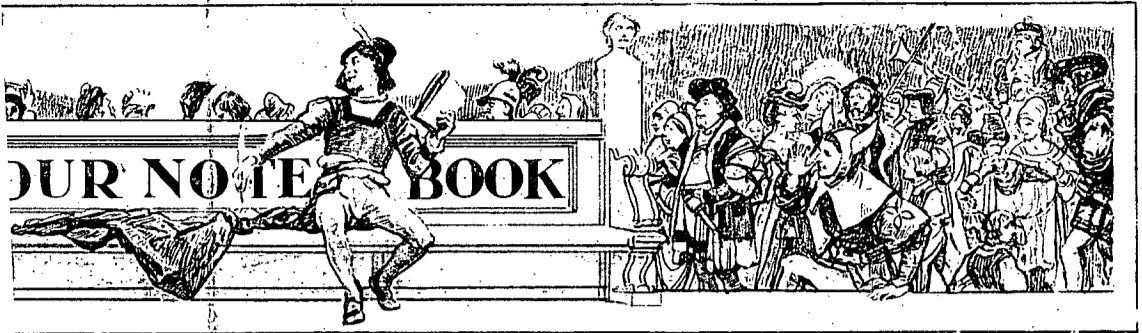


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By G. K. CHESTERTON.

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find the drug, but he does not really find the formula. The power granted to him, like that granted to Macbeth, is a power really given capriciously for a moment and vanishing of itself when its corrupting work upon his soul is done. This seems to me quite sound in a spiritual sense, or what we are now required to call a psychological sense (for it is a mark

of modernity to say it in ancient Greek instead of relatively modern Latin). It seems to me spiritually true, and all the more spiritual and the more true because the spirits do not appear. For the witches of this Macbeth are invisible. Yet Jekyll was really killed by Hyde, as much as Macbeth was killed by Macduff. So we might almost say that one of the dark extravagant conditions was fulfilled here also, and he was slain by a man that never was born of woman. The idea of the doctor finding that the formula itself is faulty, even after fortune has permitted it to succeed for once, seems to me a quite legitimate and convincing modern version or variation on this ancient and profound theme of the devil and the disappointed man. Nor do I think less of Stevenson's story because it is only original in its treatment and only traditional in its moral.

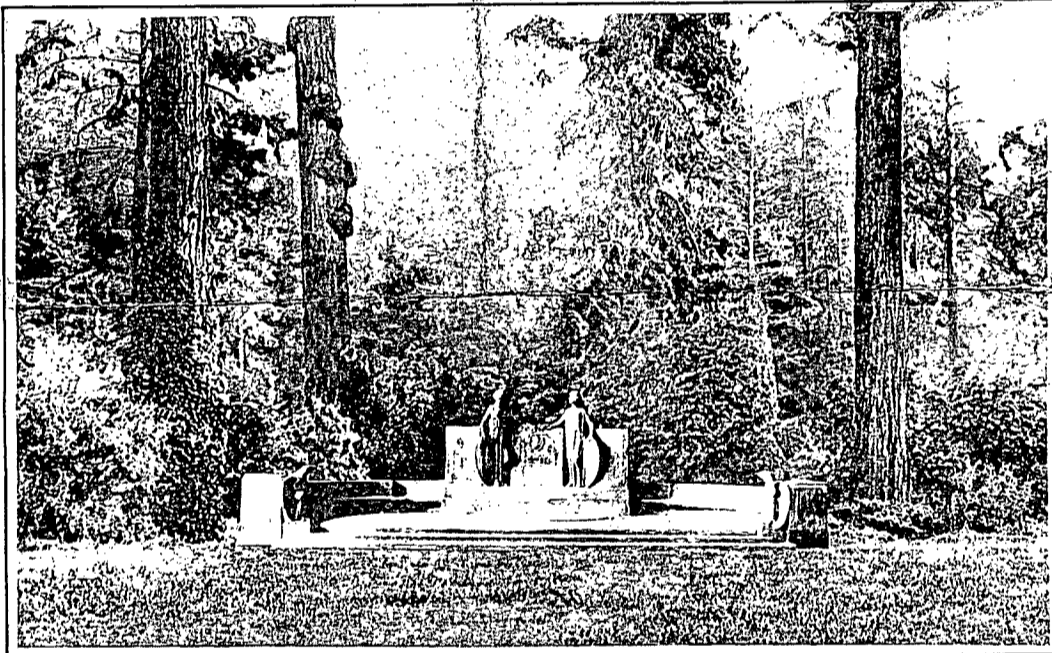
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Mr. Benson complains, for instance, that all Stevenson's characters talk like Stevenson, and adduces the example of an ordinary modern medical man like Dr. Jekyll saying that "The amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned." Now every novelist's characters talk a special language, sometimes amounting to a secret language. But there are many great novelists of whom it is much more manifestly true than it is of Stevenson. To take an obvious example, it is much more true of Meredith. A certain amount of that delicate distortion in the mirror of a single mind is inevitable. It is what somebody meant when he said that art is life seen through a temperament. It is what Stevenson himself meant when he said that true fiction, and even true biography, demand "the invention (yes, invention) perpetuation of a certain key in dialogue." But it is true of more robust and unconscious geniuses who cared nothing about all this tenderness of technique in the culture of the 'nineties. Dick Swiveller and Fred Bayham are both florid and festive Bohemian talkers, but nobody could doubt which of them is Thackeray quoting Horace and which of them is Dickens better acquainted with the works of Tom Moore.

It is no reproach to a novel by Stevenson that we know it is a novel by Stevenson, and that in this sense each of a novelist's characters is only the novelist in disguise. Nor is it true, in the instance given, that the fantastic yet finished diction is only appropriate to the author and not to the character. Dr. Jekyll was very far from being an ordinary medical man, a common or garden doctor in Harley Street. He was a man who had shocked all the ordinary medical men, and shut the doors of Harley Street in horror against him, by his utter abandonment to the wildest psychical adventures and the most bottomless metaphysical speculations. If ever there was a man who must have waded through libraries of modern mysticism, and had his head buzzing with transcendental terms and symbolical images, it must have been that unfortunate physician. There is nothing in the least improbable about his writing a psychological self-analysis referring to the mystery of sin and the amorphous dust. But the particular point I wished to raise was not this one, but another from the same criticism. And even that I only raise for the sake of a larger question, which goes beyond Mr. Benson, and even beyond Stevenson.

The critic considers it a deadly defect in the construction of the same story that Dr. Jekyll, when he



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IF I return for a moment to the matter of Stevenson, and the criticisms written by Mr. E. F. Benson, it is not with reference to any of the more personal matters I discussed in criticising that criticism. It is only because it happens to contain a text for some rambling meditations on a merely literary question. I will not pretend to have changed my view that there was something curiously captious about that criticism as it affected the reader; but I can readily believe that no such purpose appeared to the writer. But even its purely literary condemnations often seem to me unjust.

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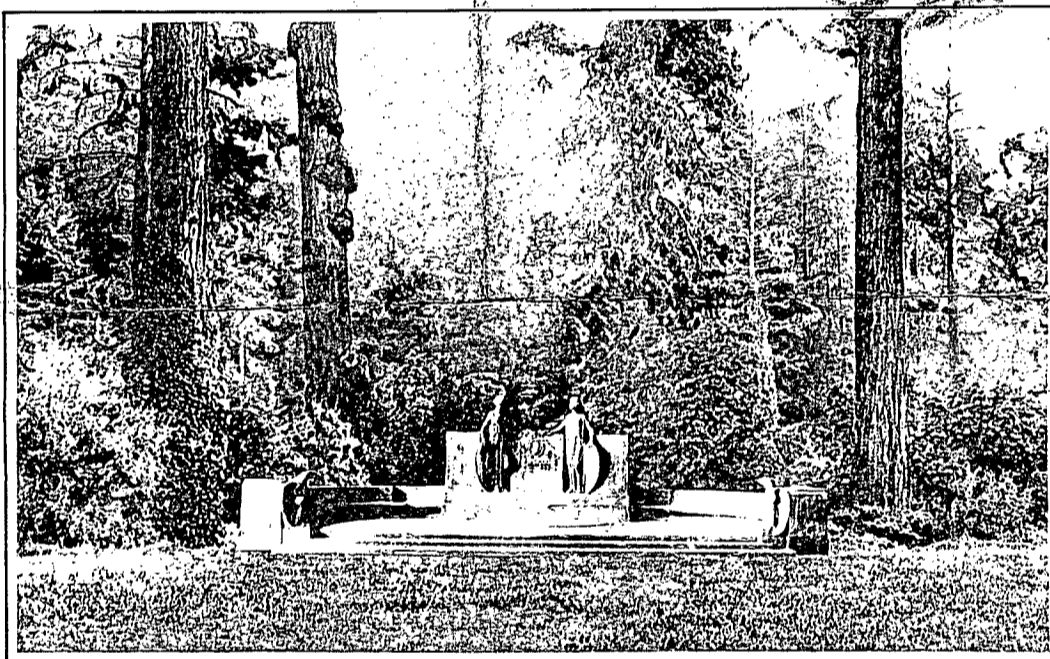
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## NOW IN INDIA WITH KING ALBERT AND SHORTLY TO CELEBRATE THEIR "SILVER WEDDING": THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS—A NEW PORTRAIT BY PHILIP A. DE LASZLO.

Queen Elisabeth and King Albert will celebrate their "silver wedding" on October 2, the twenty-fifth anniversary of their marriage, which took place at Munich in 1900. They are at present travelling in India, having sailed from Marseilles on August 28, in the S.S.

"Rampura." This fine portrait of the Queen of the Belgians was painted recently by Mr. Philip A. de Laszlo, to whom so many royalties have sat, while her Majesty was staying at Welbeck Abbey as a guest of the Duke and Duchess of Portland.

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