

GERALDINE AND JANE

By Virginia Woolf

GERALDINE JEWSBURY would certainly not have expected anybody at this time of day to bother himself about her novels. If she had caught any one pulling them down from the shelf in some library, she would have expostulated. "They're such nonsense, my dear," she would have said. And then one likes to fancy that she would have burst out in that irresponsible, unconventional way of hers against libraries and literature and love and life and all the rest of it with a "Confound it!" or a "Damn it all!" for Geraldine was fond of swearing.

The odd thing about Geraldine Jewsbury was the way in which she combined oaths and endearments, sense and effervescence, daring and gush. ". . . Defenceless and tender on the one hand, and strong enough to cleave the very rocks on the other"—that is how Mrs. Ireland, her biographer, puts it. Or, again: "Intellectually she was a man, but the heart within her was as womanly as ever daughter of Eve could boast". Even to look at, there was, it would seem, something incongruous, queer, provocative about her. She was very small and yet boyish, very ugly, yet attractive, qualities that are almost extinguished, in the only portrait we have of her, by the flowing skirts and the sweeping table-cloth of the professional photographer. There she sits, reading, with her face half-turned away, defenceless and tender at the moment rather than cleaving the very rocks.

But what had happened to her before she sat at the photographer's table, reading her book, it is impossible to say. Until she was twenty-nine we know nothing of her except that she was born in the year 1812, was the daughter of a merchant and lived in Manchester or near it. In the first part of the Nineteenth Century a woman of twenty-nine was no longer young. She had lived her life or she had missed it. And though Geraldine was in many ways an exception, still it cannot be doubted that something very tremen-

dous had happened in those dim years before we know her. Something had happened in Manchester. An obscure male figure looms in the background—a faithless but fascinating creature who had taught her that life is treacherous, life is hard, life is the very devil for a woman. A dark pool of experience had formed in the back of her mind into which she would dip for the consolation or for the instruction of others. "Oh! it is too frightful to talk about! For two years I lived only in short respites from this blackness of darkness," she exclaimed from time to time. There had been seasons "like dreary calm November days when there is but one cloud, but that one covers the whole heaven". She had struggled, "but struggling is no use". She had read Cudworth through. She had written an essay upon materialism before giving way. For, though the prey of so many emotions, she was also oddly detached and speculative. She liked to puzzle her head with questions about "matter and spirit and the nature of life" even while her heart was bleeding. Upstairs there was a box full of extracts, abstracts and conclusions. Yet, what conclusion could a woman come to? Did anything avail a woman when love had deserted her, when her lover had played her false? No—it was useless to struggle; one had better let the wave engulf one, the cloud close over one's head. So she meditated, lying often on the sofa with a piece of knitting in her hands and a green shade over her eyes. For she suffered from a variety of ailments—sore eyes, colds, nameless exhaustion; and Greenheys, the suburb outside Manchester where she kept house for her brother, was very damp. "Dirty, half-melted snow and fog, a swampy meadow, set off by a creeping cold damp"—that was the view from her window. Often, she could hardly drag herself across the room. And then there were incessant interruptions; somebody had come unexpectedly for dinner; she had to

jump up and run into the kitchen and cook a fowl with her own hands. That done, she would put on her green shade and peer at her book again, for she was a great reader.

She read metaphysics, she read travels, she read old books and new books—Carlyle's books among them. She gave little parties where she discussed literature rather boldly, with a cigar in her mouth, and life and morality, for she was always being loved or not being loved—whichever it was; passion played a great part in her life.

Early in the year 1841 she came to London and secured an introduction to the great man whose lectures she had so much admired. She met Mrs. Carlyle. They must have become intimate with great rapidity. In a few weeks Mrs. Carlyle was "dearest Jane". They must have discussed everything. They must have talked about life and the past and the present and certain "individuals" who were sentimentally interested or were not sentimentally interested in Geraldine. Mrs. Carlyle flung off anecdote after anecdote; how she had worked; how she had baked; how she had lived at Craigenputtock. For directly Geraldine returned to Manchester, she began writing long letters to Jane which echo and continue the intimate conversations of Cheyne Row. "A man who has had *le plus grand succès* among women, and who was the most passionate and poetically refined lover in his manners and conversation you would wish to find, once said to me . . . 'It may be that we women are made as we are in order that they may in some sort fertilise the world. We shall go on loving, they (the men) will go on struggling and toiling, and we are all alike mercifully allowed to die—after a while.' I don't know whether you will agree to this, and I cannot see to argue, for my eyes are very bad and painful."

Probably Jane agreed to very little of all this. For Jane was eleven years the elder. Jane was not given to abstract reflection upon the nature of life. Jane was the most caustic, the most concrete, the most clear-sighted of women. But it is perhaps worth noting that when she first fell in with Geraldine, she was beginning to feel those premonitions of jealousy, that uneasy sense that old relationships had shifted and that new

ones were forming themselves, which had come to pass with the establishment of her husband's fame. 'No doubt in the course of those long talks in Cheyne Row, Geraldine had received certain confidences, heard certain complaints and drawn certain conclusions. Besides being a mass of emotion and sensibility Geraldine was a clever, witty woman who thought for herself and hated what she called "respectability" as much as Mrs. Carlyle hated what she called "humbug". In addition Geraldine had from the first the strangest feelings about Mrs. Carlyle. She felt "vague undefined yearnings to be yours in some way. . . . You will let me be yours and think of me as such, will you not?" she urged again and again. "I think of you as Catholics think of their saints," she said. ". . . You will laugh, but I feel towards you much more like a lover than a female friend." No doubt Mrs. Carlyle did laugh; but she could scarcely fail to be touched by the little creature's adoration.

Thus, when Carlyle himself early in 1843 suggested unexpectedly that they should ask Geraldine to stay with them, Mrs. Carlyle, after debating the question with her usual candor, agreed. She reflected that a little of Geraldine would be "very enlivening", but on the other hand much of her would be very exhausting. Geraldine dropped hot tears on one's hands; she watched one; she fussed one; she was always in a state of emotion. Then, "with all her good and great qualities", Geraldine had in her "a born spirit of intrigue" which might make mischief between husband and wife, though not in the usual way; for, Mrs. Carlyle reflected, her husband had the habit of preferring her to other women, "and habits are much stronger in him than passions". On the other hand, she herself was getting lazy, intellectually; Geraldine loved talk and clever talk; with all her aspirations and enthusiasms it would be a kindness to let her come; and so she came.

She came on the first or second of February, and she stayed till Saturday, the eleventh of March. Such were visits in the year 1843. And the house was very small, and the servant was inefficient. Geraldine was always there. All the morning she

scribbled letters. All the afternoon she lay fast asleep on the sofa in the drawing room. She dressed herself in a low-necked dress to receive visitors on Sunday. She talked too much. As for her reputed intellect—"she is sharp as a meat axe, but as narrow". She flattered. She wheedled. She was insincere. She flirted. She swore. Nothing would make her go. The charges against her rise in a crescendo of irritation. Mrs. Carlyle almost had to turn her out of the house. She was unable to hide her annoyance. At last they parted. Geraldine was in floods of tears but Mrs. Carlyle's eyes were dry. Indeed, she was immensely relieved to see the last of her visitor. Yet, when Geraldine had driven off and she found herself alone, she was not altogether easy in her mind. She knew that her behavior to a guest whom she herself had invited had been far from perfect. She had been "cold, cross, ironical, disobliging". Above all, she was angry with herself for having taken Geraldine for a confidante. "Heaven grant that the consequences may be only *boring*—not *fatal*," she wrote. But it is clear that she was very much out of temper, and with herself as much as with Geraldine.

Geraldine was well aware that something was wrong. Estrangement and silence fell between them. People repeated malicious stories to which she half listened. But Geraldine was the least vindictive of women; "very noble in her quarrels", as Mrs. Carlyle herself admitted, and, if foolish and sentimental, neither conceited nor proud. Above all, her love for Jane was sincere. Soon she was writing to Mrs. Carlyle again "with an assiduity and disinterestedness that verge on the superhuman", as Jane commented with a little exasperation. She was worrying about Jane's health and saying that she did not want witty letters, but only dull letters telling the truth about Jane's state. For—it may have been one of the things that made her so trying as a visitor—Geraldine had not stayed for four weeks in Cheyne Row without coming to conclusions which it is not likely that she kept entirely to herself. "You have no one who has any sort of consideration for you," she wrote. "You have had patience and endurance till I am sick of the virtues, and what have they done for you?

Half-killed you." "Carlyle", she burst out, "is much too grand for every-day life. A sphinx does not fit in comfortably to our parlour life arrangements." But she could do nothing. "The more one loves, the more helpless one feels," she moralized. She could only watch from Manchester the bright kaleidoscope of her friend's existence and compare it with her own prosaic life, all made up of little odds and ends, but, somehow, obscure though it was, she no longer envied Jane the brilliance of her lot.

Had it not been for the Mudies, they might have gone on indefinitely corresponding in a desultory way at a distance—"I am tired to death of writing letters into space", Geraldine had exclaimed, "one only writes, after a long separation, to oneself, instead of one's friend". The Mudies and Mudieism, as Geraldine called it, played a vast, if almost unrecorded, part in the obscure lives of Victorian Englishwomen. The Mudies, by whatever name they might be called, were always the same. They were unfortunate; they were deserving; they must be helped. They came at inconvenient hours. They waited in the hall and sometimes had sandwiches and a glass of wine brought out to them on a tray. In this case the Mudies were two girls, Elizabeth and Juliet, "flary, staring, and conceited, stolid-looking girls", Carlyle called them, the daughters of a Dundee schoolmaster, who had written books on natural history and died, leaving a foolish widow and little or no provision for his family. Somehow the Mudies arrived in Cheyne Row inconveniently, if one may hazard a guess, just as dinner was on the table. But the Victorian lady never minded that; she put herself to any inconvenience to help the Mudies. The question at once presented itself: what could be done for them? Who knew of a place? Who had influence with a rich man? Geraldine flashed into Mrs. Carlyle's mind. Geraldine was always wishing she could be of use. Geraldine might fairly be asked if there were situations to be had for the Mudies in Manchester. Geraldine acted with a promptitude that was much to her credit. She placed Juliet at once. Soon she had heard of another place for Elizabeth. Mrs. Carlyle, who was in the Isle of Wight,

at once procured stays, gown and petticoat for Elizabeth, came up to London, took Elizabeth all the way across London to Euston Square at half-past seven in the evening, put her in charge of a benevolent-looking fat old man, saw that a letter to Geraldine was pinned to her stays and returned home, exhausted, triumphant, yet, as happens often to the devotees of Mudieism, with some secret misgivings. Would the Mudies be happy? Would they thank her for what she had done? A few days later the inevitable bugs appeared in Cheyne Row and were ascribed, with or without reason, to Elizabeth's shawl. What was far worse, Elizabeth herself appeared four months later, having proved herself "wholly inapplicable to any practical purpose", having "sewed a black apron with white thread" and, on being mildly scolded, having "thrown herself on the kitchen floor and kicked and screamed". "Of course her immediate dismissal is the result." Elizabeth vanished—to sew more black aprons with white thread, to kick and scream and be dismissed—who knows what happened eventually to poor Elizabeth Mudie? She disappears from the world altogether.

Juliet, however, remained. Geraldine made Juliet her charge. She superintended and advised. The first place was unsatisfactory. Geraldine engaged herself to find another. She went off and sat in the hall of a "very stiff old lady" who wanted a maid. The very stiff old lady said that she would want Juliet to clear-starch collars, to iron cuffs and to wash and iron petticoats. Juliet's heart failed her. All this clear-starching and ironing were beyond her. Off went Geraldine again, late in the evening, and saw the old lady's daughter. It was arranged that the petticoats should be "put out" and only the collars and frills left for Juliet to iron. Off went Geraldine and arranged with her own milliner to give her lessons in quilling and trimming. And Mrs. Carlyle wrote to cheer her up and sent her a packet. So it went on, with more places and more bothers and Juliet wrote a novel, which a gentleman praised very highly, and Juliet told Miss Jewsbury that she was annoyed by a gentleman who followed her home from church; but still she was a very nice girl and everybody spoke

well of her until the year 1849, when suddenly, without any reason given, silence descends upon the last of the Mudies. It covers, one cannot doubt, another failure. The novel, the stiff old lady, the gentleman, the caps, the petticoats, the clear-starching—what was the cause of her downfall? Nothing is known. "The wretched stalking block-heads," wrote Carlyle, "stalked fatefully, in spite of all that could be done and said, steadily downwards towards perdition and sank altogether out of view." For all her endeavors, Mrs. Carlyle had to admit that Mudieism was always a failure.

But Mudieism had unexpected results. Mudieism brought Jane and Geraldine together again. Jane could not deny that "the fluff of feathers" whom she had served up, as her way was, in many a scornful phrase for Carlyle's amusement had "taken up the matter with an enthusiasm even surpassing my own". She had grit in her as well as fluff. Thus when Geraldine sent her the manuscript of her first novel, *Zoe*, Mrs. Carlyle bestirred herself, and with surprising success, to find a publisher. ("For," she wrote, "what is to become of her when she is old without ties, without purposes?") Chapman and Hall at once agreed to publish the book which, their reader reported, "had taken hold of him with a grasp of iron". The book had been long on the way. Mrs. Carlyle herself had been consulted at various stages of its career. She had read the first sketch "with a feeling little short of *terror!* So much power of genius rushing so recklessly into unknown space". But she had also been deeply impressed. "Geraldine in particular shows herself here a far more profound and daring speculator than ever I had fancied her. I do not believe there is a woman alive at the present day, not even George Sand herself, that could have written some of the best passages in this book . . . but they must not publish it . . . decency forbids!" Mrs. Carlyle complained that there was an indecency or "want of reserve in the spiritual department" which no respectable public could stand. Presumably Geraldine consented to make alterations, though she confessed that she "had no vocation for propriety as such"; the book was re-written; and it ap-

peared at last in February, 1845. The usual buzz and conflict of opinion at once arose. The least moral people, according to Mrs. Carlyle, were the most shocked. The most moral, like Erasmus Darwin and Arthur Helps, either admired it or said nothing. A prim Scotch Puritan like Miss Wilson owned that though "*avowedly* the book of an audacious *esprit forte* . . . I think it very clever and amusing" while "old and young roués of the Reform Club almost go off into hysterics over—its *indecenty*". The publisher was a little alarmed; but the scandal helped the sale and Geraldine became a lioness.

And now, of course, as one turns the pages of the three little yellowish volumes, one wonders what reason there was for approval or disapproval, what spasm of indignation or admiration scored that pencil mark or bent that leaf, what mysterious emotion pressed violets, now black as ink, between the pages of the love scene. Chapter after chapter glides amiably, fluently past. In a kind of haze we catch glimpses of an illegitimate girl called Zoe; of an enigmatic Roman Catholic priest called Everhard; of a castle in the country; of ladies lying on sky-blue sofas; of gentlemen reading aloud; of girls embroidering hearts in silk. There is a conflagration. There is an embrace in a wood. There is incessant conversation. There is a moment of terrific emotion when the priest exclaims: "Would that I had never been born!" and proceeds to sweep a letter and a parcel into a drawer and all because Zoe has shaken his faith, for the letter had come from the Pope and had asked that he edit a translation of the principal works of the fathers of the first four centuries and the parcel contained a gold chain from the University of Göttingen. But what indecency there was pungent enough to shock the roués of the Reform Club, what genius there was brilliant enough to impress the shrewd intellect of Mrs. Carlyle, it is impossible to guess. Colors that were fresh as roses eighty years ago have faded to a feeble pink; nothing remains of all those keen scents and savors but a faint perfume of faded violets or stale hair oil, we know not which. What miracles, we exclaim, are within the power of a few years to accomplish! But, even as one exclaims,

one sees, far away, a trace perhaps of what they meant. The passion, in so far as it issues from the lips of live people, is completely spent. The Zoes, the Clothildes, the Everhards moulder on their perches; nevertheless, there is somebody in the room with them; an irresponsible spirit, a daring and agile woman, if one considers that she is cumbered with crinoline and stays; an absurd sentimental creature, languishing, expatiating, but, for all that, her opinions are still strangely alive. We catch a sentence now and then boldly rapped out, a thought subtly conceived. "How much better to do right without religion!" "Oh! if they really believed all they preach, how would any priest or preacher be able to sleep in his bed!" "Insincerity has crept into the heart of the most sacred things." "Weakness is the only state for which there is no hope." "To love rightly is the highest morality of which mankind is capable." How she hated the "compactable plausible theories of men"! Are women merely to cook, merely to sew? And what is life? For what end was it given us? Such questions, such convictions, still hurtle past the heads of the stuffed figures mouldering on their perches. They are dead but Geraldine Jewsbury herself still survives, independent, courageous, absurd, tripping about Manchester, seeing about a place, interviewing a milliner, chattering, writing page after page without stopping to correct and coming out with her views upon love, morality, religion and the relations of the sexes, whoever may be within hearing.

Some time before the publication of *Zoe*, Mrs. Carlyle had forgotten or overcome her irritation towards Geraldine, partly because she had worked so zealously in the cause of the Mudies, partly also because by Geraldine's painstaking she was "almost over-persuaded back into my old illusion that she has some sort of strange, passionate . . . incomprehensible *attraction* towards me". Not only was she drawn back into correspondence but, after all her vows to the contrary, she again stayed under the same roof with Geraldine, at Seaforth House near Liverpool in July, 1844. Not many days had passed before Mrs. Carlyle's "illusion" about the strength of Geraldine's affection for her was con-

firmed. One morning there was some slight tiff between them; Geraldine sulked all day; at night Geraldine came to Mrs. Carlyle's bedroom and made a scene which was "a revelation to me not only of Geraldine but of human nature! Such mad, *lover-like* jealousy on the part of one woman towards another it had never entered into my heart to conceive". Mrs. Carlyle was angry and outraged and contemptuous. She saved up a full account of the scene to entertain her husband with. A few days later she turned upon Geraldine in public and set the whole company into fits of laughter by saying: "I wondered she should expect me to behave decently to her after she had for a whole evening been making love before my very face to *another man!*" The trouncing must have been severe, the humiliation painful. But Geraldine was incorrigible. A year later she was again sulking and raging and declaring that she had a right to rage because "she loves me better than all the rest of the world"; and Mrs. Carlyle was getting up and saying, "Geraldine, until you can behave like a gentlewoman . . .", and leaving the room. Again there were tears and apologies and promises of reform.

Yet, though Mrs. Carlyle scolded and jeered, though they were estranged and though for a time they ceased to write to each other, still they always came together again. "There was no quarrelling with the creature," said Mrs. Carlyle. She sat on the floor and rubbed one's feet. She dried her eyes and smoked "a cigarito". There was not an ounce of vanity in her composition. And Geraldine said, though Jane gave her pain "to a degree you would hardly believe that one woman could inflict upon another", though she was insensitive and had no consideration "for the natural effects of things on others", still it was beyond Jane's power to vex or estrange her permanently—"as long as you are in this world the tie exists". So the letters always begin again—long, long letters written sometimes "with a small kitten running up and down my dress", letters full of gossip and stories such as Jane herself loved—how Mrs. —, whose husband used to put her at the top of the stairs and roll her to the bottom, was trying to keep

herself from starvation by painting miniatures at two guineas apiece; how poor Mrs. — had been "salivated in a mistake !!! the surgery boy had made up the wrong prescription and given calomel instead of ipecacuanha! Did you ever? . . ." The vacillations of Geraldine's susceptible heart are traced. The Egyptian had written to her. Q. had hinted but perhaps not altogether made a proposal. Mr. — had called again. She had bought a shawl. Through it all it is abundantly clear that Geraldine felt that Jane was in every way wiser, better, stronger than she was. She depended on her. She needed Jane to keep her out of scrapes; for Jane never got into scrapes herself. But though Jane was so much wiser and cleverer than anybody else, there were times when the foolish and irresponsible one of the two became the counsellor. Why, she asked, waste your time in mending old clothes? Why not work at something that will really employ your energies? Write, she advised her. Geraldine was convinced that Jane who was so profound, so far-seeing, could write something that would help women in "their very complicated duties and difficulties". She owed a duty to her sex. But, the bold woman proceeded, "Do not go to Mr. Carlyle for sympathy, do not let him dash you with cold water. You must respect your own work and your own motives"—a piece of advice that Jane would have done well to follow, but she was, as a matter of fact, afraid to accept the dedication of Geraldine's new novel, *The Half Sisters*, lest Mr. Carlyle might object. The little creature was in some ways the bolder and the more independent of the two.

She had, moreover, a quality that Jane with all her brilliancy lacked—an element of poetry, a trace of the speculative imagination. She browsed upon old books and copied out romantic passages about the palm trees and cinnamon of Arabia and sent them to lie, incongruously enough, upon the breakfast table in Cheyne Row. Jane's genius, of course, was the very opposite; it was positive, direct and practical. Her imagination concentrated itself upon people. Her letters owe their brilliancy to the hawk-like swoop and descent of her mind upon facts. Nothing

escapes her. She sees through clear water down to the rocks at the bottom. But the intangible eluded her; she dismissed the poetry of Keats with a sneer; something of the narrowness and something of the prudery of a Scottish country doctor's daughter clung to her. Though infinitely the less masterly, Geraldine was sometimes the broader-minded.

Such sympathies and antipathies bound the two women together with an elasticity that made for permanence. The tie between them could stretch and stretch without breaking. Jane knew the extent of Geraldine's folly; Geraldine had felt the full lash of Jane's tongue. They had learned to tolerate each other. Then, if the "cant of sensibility" raised Jane's fury, nobody rated the truth of feeling more highly than she did. Once, when she was ill and unhappy, she went to stay with Geraldine—Geraldine, the flighty, the gushing, the unpractical. To her surprise she found her house noiseless; she found her arrangements well ordered; she found Geraldine herself quiet and sensible. With her usual generosity she took back all she had ever said against Geraldine. "People who are at ease in Zion—I myself when I have been so to a certain extent—may have found Geraldine very teasing and absurd—but let one be ill—suffering—especially *morbidly* suffering—and then one knows what Geraldine is! All the intelligent sympathy and real practical good that lies in her!" She would be grateful to Geraldine as long as she lived, she said. Naturally they quarrelled again; but their quarrels were different now, as quarrels are that are bound to be made up. When, after her brother's marriage in 1854, Geraldine moved to London, it was to be near Mrs. Carlyle at Mrs. Carlyle's own wish. The woman who in 1843 would never be a friend of hers again was now the most intimate friend she had in the world. She was to lodge two streets off; and perhaps two streets was the right space to put between them. The emotional friendship was full of misunderstandings at a distance; it was intolerably exacting under the same roof. When they lived round the corner, however, their relationship broadened and simplified; and it became a natural intercourse whose ruffles and whose calms were

based upon the depths of intimacy. They went about together. They went to hear the *Messiah*. Characteristically, Geraldine wept at the beauty of the music and Jane had much ado to prevent herself from shaking Geraldine and from crying herself at the ugliness of the chorus women. They went to Norway for a jaunt and Geraldine left a silk handkerchief and an aluminium brooch ("a love token from Mr. Barlow") in the hotel and a new silk parasol in the waiting-room. Also Jane noted with sardonic satisfaction that Geraldine, in an attempt at economy, bought two second class tickets, while the cost of a return ticket, first class, was precisely the same. They traipsed off to Dalston with the dog Nero to celebrate Geraldine's birthday by seeing "a happy woman", Mrs. Carlyle's old servant Eliza. They came home by omnibus and Jane gave Geraldine a "pretty lace collar and a Bohemian glass vase, which is still unbroken". Mrs. Carlyle would tell Geraldine story after story about her childhood—how the turkey-cock had frightened her; how she had made her father teach her Latin; how many men had loved her; how she had revered her father. At the mention of his name she would always fall silent. Then she would begin again about Craigenputtock and Carlyle and tell story after story about servant after servant. Nobody told stories as Mrs. Carlyle did. Nobody was so witty, so dramatic or, when the mood took her, showed such penetration, such understanding.

Meanwhile Geraldine lay on the floor and generalized and speculated and tried to formulate some theory of life from her own experience. (Her language was always likely to be strong; she knew that she "sinned against Jane's notions of good taste very often".) How loathsome the position of women was in many ways! How she herself had been crippled and stunted! How her blood boiled in her at the power that men had over women! She would like to kick certain gentlemen—"the lying hypocritical beggars! Well, it's no good swearing—only, I am angry and it eases my mind". She had her own views about women. She did not agree with the ugly clever women who came to Manchester preaching the doctrines of women's

rights. She did not hold with the professors and the essayists on female education. She thought that their theories and aims were wrong. She thought she could see far off another type of woman arising, a woman something like Jane and herself. "I believe we are touching on better days," she wrote, "when women will have a genuine, normal life of their own to lead. There, perhaps, will not be so many marriages, and women will be taught not to feel their destiny *manqué* if they remain single. They will be able to be friends and companions in a way they cannot be now. . . . Instead of having appearances to attend to, they will be allowed to have their virtues, in any measure which it may please God to send, without being diluted down to the tepid 'rectified spirit' of 'feminine grace' and 'womanly timidity'—in short they will be allowed to make themselves women as men are allowed to make themselves men."

And then her thoughts turned to Jane and herself and to the brilliant gifts—at any rate Jane had brilliant gifts—which had borne so little visible result. Nevertheless, except when she was ill, "I do not think that either you or I are to be called failures. We are indications of a development of womanhood which as yet is not recognised. It has, so far, no ready-made channels to run in, but still we have looked and tried, and found that the present rules for women will not hold us—that something better and stronger is needed. . . . There are women to come after us, who will approach nearer the fullness of the measure of the stature of a woman's nature. I regard myself as a mere faint indication, a rudiment of the idea, of certain higher qualities and possibilities that lie in women, and all the eccentricities and mistakes and miseries and absurdities I have made are only the consequences of an imperfect formation, an immature growth". So she theorized, so she speculated and Mrs. Carlyle listened and laughed and no doubt contradicted. She could have wished that Geraldine were more precise; she could have wished her to moderate her language. Carlyle might come in at any moment and, if there was one creature that Carlyle hated, it was a strong-minded woman of the George Sand species. Yet she could not deny that

there was truth in what Geraldine said; she had always thought that Geraldine "was born to spoil a horn or make a spoon". Geraldine was no fool in spite of appearances.

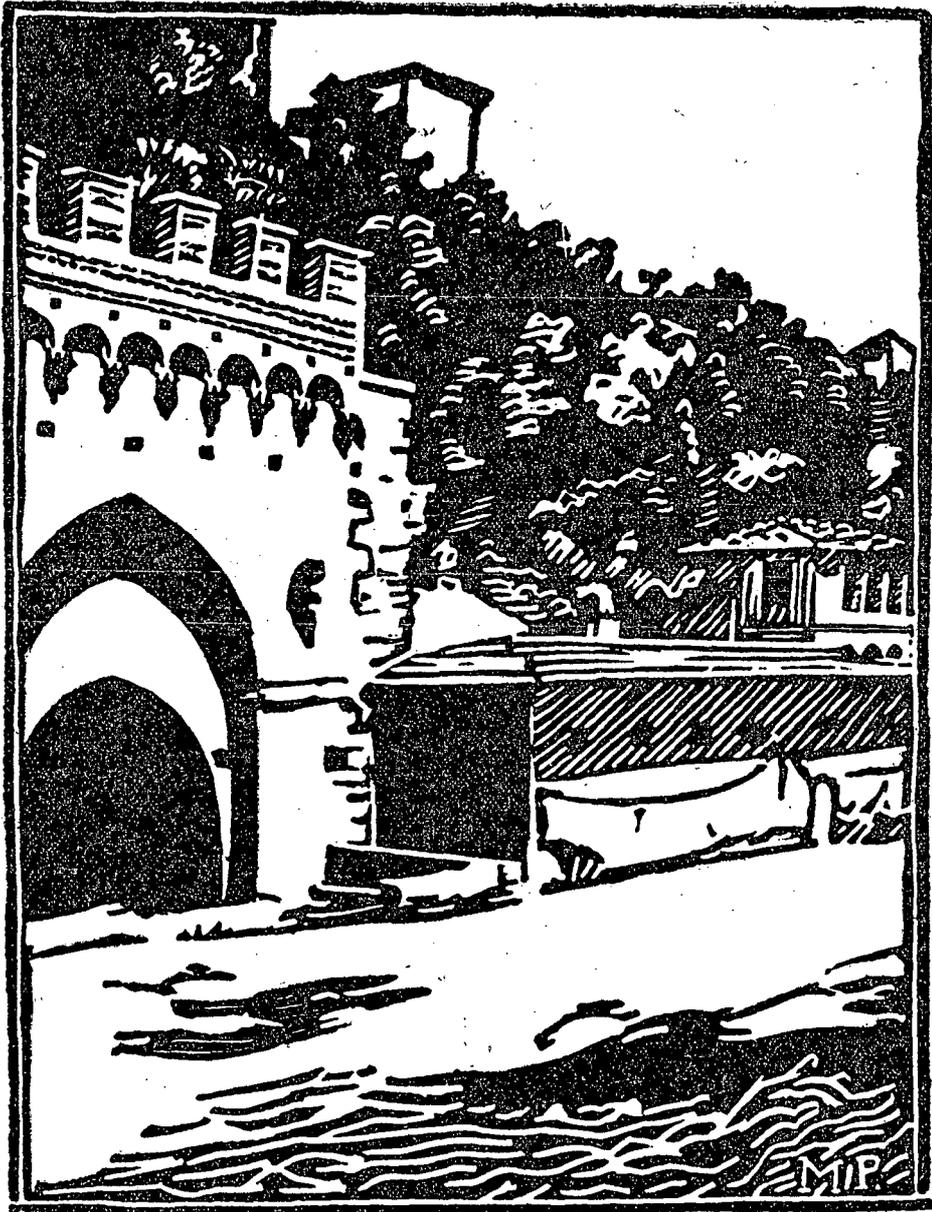
But what Geraldine thought and said, how she spent her mornings, what she did in the long evenings of the London winter—all, in fact, that constituted her life at Markham Square is completely unknown to us. Now, fittingly enough, the bright light of Jane extinguished the paler and more flickering fire of Geraldine. She had no need to write to Jane any more. She was in and out of the house—now writing a letter for Jane because Jane's fingers were swollen, now taking a letter to the post and forgetting, of course, to post it. We hear a crooning domestic sound now and again like the purring of a kitten or the humming of a tea kettle. So the years passed quickly away. On Saturday, the twenty-first of April, 1866, Geraldine was to help Jane with a tea-party. She was dressing for the occasion when Mr. Froude suddenly appeared at her house. He had had a message to say that "something had happened to Mrs. Carlyle". Geraldine flung on her cloak. They hastened together to St. George's Hospital. They were taken to a little room. There they saw Mrs. Carlyle beautifully dressed "as if she had sate upon the bed after leaving the brougham, and had fallen back upon it asleep. . . . The brilliant mockery, the sad softness with which the mockery alternated, both were alike gone. The features lay composed in a stern majestic calm . . . (Geraldine) could not speak".

Nor, indeed, can we break that silence. Soon after Jane's death she went to live at Sevenoaks. She lived there alone for twenty-two years. It is said that she lost her vivacity. She wrote no more books. Cancer attacked her and she suffered much. On her death-bed she began tearing up Jane's letters, as Jane had wished, and she had destroyed all but one before she died. Thus, just as her life began in obscurity, so it ends in obscurity. We know her only for a few years in the middle. When we consider how little we know even of those we live with, how much we must guess of the feelings of those we see constantly, it is difficult to persuade ourselves that we can judge Geraldine Jews-

bury and the true nature of her feeling for Jane Carlyle. Or, if we cherish such an illusion, it is soon destroyed by Geraldine herself. "Oh, my dear," she wrote, "if you and I are drowned, or die, what would become of us if any superior person were to go and write our 'life and errors'? What a precious

mess a 'truthful person' would go and make of us, and how very different to what we really are or were!"

The echo of her mockery, ungrammatical, colloquial, reaches us from where she lies in Lady Morgan's vault in the Brompton Cemetery.



Fonte Branda-Siena

MABEL PUGH

THOMAS HARDY

By John Gould Fletcher

The will that none can fathom, beyond awe
Or fear, draws forth swift human hosts, like flame
Petty or vast, perfect or warped with flaw;
And most of them gain little but a name.

Rounded on smooth stone for the rain to wear
And wind to batter down; but some there be,
Who, set aloof, are given power to bear
Testimony to mankind of man's dark mystery.

In words that fret through clay, they have the right
To set the past and present side by side
Identifying all; but not the right
To alter what is ill. Their words abide

As watchers on the path of strife and wrong,
Mute contemplators of our graven hours.
Here one walked slowly, pouring forth stern song
Into our deafened ears. And now that song reflowers.