



"Along the corridors, the morrignors Ran itfly, cliftly by"

the pearls or poison that lie within. Yes is the lover's word for peril and for bliss. 'No' the misers' and the word the barren womb has said."

Every tourist who has heard a guide's old hoary story will appreciate "All the tourists showed some appreciation of the joke. Some, simply pleased, honestly chuckled. Some nodded as if to say 'How true.' And others just displayed the sophisticated tooth of social mirth."

Balzac and Mark Twain

I like Honoré de Balzac. I still chuckle when I re-read extracts from his *Droll Stories*, such as "He coughed like an old cow that had found feathers in her hay" or his view of the essential of war—"In great battles he endeavoured to give blows without receiving them, which is, and always will be, the only problem to solve in war." To give without receiving has been of great concern to every soldier I know.

What soldier who has travelled through Italy will not agree with Mark Twain's summing up in *The Innocents Abroad*, written eighty years ago—"As far as I can see, Italy for 1,500 years has turned all her energies, all her finances, and all her industry to the building up of a vast array of wonderful church edifices and starving her citizens to accomplish it. She is to-day one vast museum of magnificence and misery. All the churches in one ordinary American city put together could hardly buy the jewelled frippery in one of her 100 cathedrals. And for every beggar in America, Italy can show 100—and rags and vermin to match. It is the wretchedest, princeliest land on earth."

From authors I like, I have filled many pages, but there are jottings from scores of others. I like the style of André Maurois, probably the most English of the French authors. He describes Marshal Lyautey in his youth as "being consumed by the demons of boredom and ambition" which sums up the restless soldier and statesman to perfection. Writing of convention, in *Call No Man Happy*, he says, "The acceptance of convention gives rise to a reign of order, and under the shelter of these conven-

tions, liberty flourishes." Somerset Maugham is always concise and penetrating as, for example, when speaking of beauty and perfection, "The most beautiful things in the world finished by boring me . . . perfection is a trifle dull. It is not the least of life's ironies that this, which we all aim at, is better not quite achieved." And don't you like Damon Runyan's description of a cat—"A cat blacker than a yard up the chimney."

"The Morrignors"

I had a friend who woke up in the middle of the night with this amazing rhyme running through his brain:

Along the corridors, the morrignors
Ran itfly, cliftly by.

He got out of bed and wrote it down, and in the morning there it was in black and white. He tried, but was never able to complete it. I gave it to a friend, who gave it to a friend on a visiting ship, and I don't think that Lewis Carroll would have been ashamed of the final effort:

Along the corridors, the morrignors
Ran itfly, cliftly by,
And canted as they planted
The borders of the spry.
The dickory ate hickory
And Mulligog cabossed:
What a plonking and a tonking
Of noodles as they crossed.

I'm sorry I cannot tell anyone what it all means.

Just Words

And then I have often copied down just words. Don't you like "the brosy odour of porridge . . . the sonsiest of the milkmaids . . . algid weather . . . the fatality of a coronach . . . bossy corbels . . . a casseltly creature?" Don't you think "a bottle-shouldered man" is descriptive. What of Walter Winchell's new words? . . . a chicatorilla (a tough from Chicago), this-and-that way, infanticipating, or a "debutramp?"

Yes, you will have lots of fun keeping an anthology. You will find that reading has a new interest and is more enjoyable. You will enjoy writing out your extracts and enjoy them even more when you read them months and years later.

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