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Villa Emily

Sanku

April 23 1887

Dear Mr. Bullen

Many thanks for your quick
reply to my letter & for the stanza you
have sent me from that Latin poem.
It is clear to my mind that

Quid mihi sugis vivum sanguinem
is the first line of a missing stanza,
all the others in the song being
of four lines. And it is a pity that
it should be lost; for some thing is
needed to explain the transition
from *pauc* etc to *cond* etc. I
will send you an "impressionist"
version I have made in English,
which I have audaciously modelled
upon Fletcher's (or Shakespeare's)
"Take o take those lips away"

Somehow or another, I have a dim

feeling that whoever wrote that song
had seen the Latin.

Hide or hide those hills of snow
W: the frozen bottom deep
that rings rather like

*Conde papillas quae me sauciant
Laudat et luxu nide pectus.*

Do you think this is nonsense?

If there is any sense in my
instinct, it is rather a proof
that 'Plutarch' or not Shakespeare
wrote the English - or possibly
Glaucourt who was a fine
scholar.

We have trace in Ely's lit: that
the *Camina* *Byzantia* were
not unknown to our poets of
that time. Thomas Jugleand
translated a great song in the
Men of Last Year; & an
anonymous author made a
very pretty version of *Phyllis*

of the W. Wright has published
at the end of his volume of
Walter Malpas.

A great trouble has fallen on
me here. One of my daughters, who
came with me from David,
caught typhoid fever on the
journey. The hotel-keeper begged
me to remove her from his
house. I had in the course of
a single day to engage a
huge empty villa, furnish
it with necessary furniture,
& get servants. Here I am
installed with my wife,
the invalid, a sick nurse, &
two Italian maids.

I am always *au bout de
mes forces* at the best of times.
So this straits has reduced
me below zero. And we must

knows with typhoid how long the
thing may last.

Please assure Mr. Lee that I am
very far from taking his review
of my book in bad part.
I thought it a decidedly able
& conscientious article & perceived
that it was written by someone
who had full knowledge of the
subject. That it should
be somewhat more than an author
likes upon the shortcomings
of my work, did not surprise
me. The Athenaeum has never
been very favorable to my
literature - perhaps because I
belong prominently (or did belong)
to the opposite shop, the
Academy. And the review
only pointed out what it
was wholesome for me to know,

especially with regard to my too
sleeping remarks on English society
in the 18th Century. Those remarks
need modification. They were
made when I was much younger
& less careful than I hope years
have made me, & they might not
to have been largely reproduced
in a work of my maturity.

I think Mr. Lee is a friend
of my nephew St. Loé Stacey, &
also of another great friend of
mine Mr. R. Brown. Have you
happened to see the latter's
book: "Life on the Lagoon"? It
is not much in your line
perhaps. But it is very good
as a detailed picture of a
remote & characteristic set of
people - the Venetian gondoliers,
& promising as the first work
of a young writer.

I am honored by what you say about
Anini figura, for I hail confidence
in your candour. I did not
want any remarks - I only wanted
you to have the book - but
I am none the less pleased that
you should have told me what
you think about it.

The book is defective. Between
Intellectual Isolation and Self-
Condemnation a whole section is
missing, it describes an unfortunate
love affair of the hero! This
is called Stella Maris, a Venetian
episode. I am going to print it
privately, & I will send you
a copy if I do. Sooner or later
I hope to incorporate it in
Anini figura. Did you
not feel that the transition
from intellectual isolation
to self-condemnation was

un-motivated?

With regard to Sonnets. I have always
felt that their weakness was
that the form (for form being
difficult) is too easily mastered
up to a certain point. And the
form in addition to its facility,
& is so fixed, so obvious as
form, that it lends itself
to feeble utterance. Thus it
tends to that greatest stupidity
in verse: pompous parade &
complicated imagery.

All the same ever since I
translated Michael Angelo's &
Campanella's Sonnets during a
bad illness, I have felt a
partiality for the stanza. I
like the mingling of emotion
& meditation, the possibilities
of discussion also, to which
it offers scope.

My work on the *Carmina Vagantia*
occupies my long sad leisure
here. It is rather funny to spend
my time between watching a
rich daughter, & tuning those
old Pagan medical songs to
English cadences! The audacity
of some of them, their animalistic
crudity, is likely to shock a
virtuous public. The Spectator
will lift its hand in pious
wonder that any one who is
of an age to be "thoughtful,"
should have wasted so much
time & trouble on such things.
The fact is that I have wasted
no trouble. Work of this sort is
the "idlest of pastimes."

Every year
W. Symonds.

Villa Emily
San Remo
April 23, 1884

Dear Mr. Bullen

Many thanks for your quick reply to my letter
& for the stanza you have sent me from that
Latin poem. It is clear to my mind that

Quid miki sugis vivum sanguinem
is the first line of a missing stanza, all the
others in the song being of four lines. And it is
pity that it should be lost; for something is
needed to explain the transition from pande
etc to cede etc. I will send you an "impressional"
version I have made in English, wh. I have
audaciously modelled upon Fletcher's (or
Shakespeare's) "Take a take those lips away."
Somehow or another, I have a dim feeling
that whoever wrote that song had seen the
Latin.

Hide o hide those hills of snow
Wh Thy frozen bosom heap
That rings rather like
Cede papillas quae me sauciant
Ca[] et lux [] miki pectoris.

Do you think this is nonsense? If there is any
sense in my instinct, it is rather a proof that
Fletcher and not Shakespeare - wrote the English-
or possibly Beaumont who was a fine scholar.

We had traces in Elizⁿ. lit. that the Caruima
[] ana were not unknown to our poets of that
time. Thomas Ingeland translated a grave song
on the Men of Past Years; & an anonymous author
made a very pretty version of Phyllis & Flora,
wh. Wright has published at the end of his Poems
of Walter Mapes.

A great trouble has fallen on me here. One of my daughters, who came with me from Davos, caught Typhoid fever on the journey. The hotel-keeper begged me to remove her from his house. I had in the course of a single day to engage a huge empty villa, furnish it with necessary furniture, & get servants. Here I am installed with my wife, The invalid, a sick nurse, & two Italian maids.

I am always an bout de mes forces at the best of times. So this scrimmage has reduced me below zero. And one never knows with typhoid how long the thing may last.

Please assure Mr. Lee that I am very far from taking his review of my book in bad part. I thought it a decidedly able & conscientious article, & perceived that it was written by someone who had full knowledge of the subject. That it dwelt somewhat more than an author likes upon the shortcomings of my work, did not surprise me. The Athenaeum has never been very favourable to my literature - perhaps because I belong prominently (did belong) to the opposite shop, The Academy! And the review only pointed out what it was wholesome for me to know, especially with regard to my too sweeping remarks on English society in the 16th Century. Those remarks need modification. They were made when I was much younger & less careful than I hope years have made me - & they ought not to have been []ly reproduced in a work of my maturity.

I think Mr. Lee is a friend of my nephew St. Loe Strachey, & also of another great friend of mine H.R. Brown. Have you happened to see the latter's book: "Life on the Lagoons"? It is not much in your line perhaps. But it is very good as a detailed picture of a remote & characteristic set of people the Venetian gondoliers, & promising as the first work of a young writer.

I am honoured by what you say about Animi Figura,

for I had confidence in your candour. I did not want any remarks - I only wanted you to have the book - but I am none the less pleased that you should have told me what you think about it.

The book is defective. Between Intellectual Isolation and Self Condemnation a whole section is missing, wh. describes an unfortunate love - affair of the hero ! This is called Stella Maris, a Venetian episode. I am going to print it privately, & I will send you a copy if I do. Sooner or later, I hope to incorporate it in Animi Figura. Did you not feel that the transition from Intellectual Isolation to Self-Condemnation was un-motivist?

With regard to Sonnets. I have always felt that their weakness was that the form (far from being difficult) is too easily mastered up to a certain point. And the form in addition to its facility, is so fixed, so obvious as form, that it lends itself to feeble utterance. Thus it tends to that greatest stupidity in verse: pompous parade & complicated verbage.

All the same, ever since I translated Michael Angelo's & Campanella's sonnets during a bad illness, I hve felt a partiality for the stanza. I like the mingling of emotion & meditation, the possibilities of discussion also, to wh. it offers scope.

My work on The Carnima Vagarum occupies my long sad leisure here. It is rather funny to spend one's time between watching a sick daughter, & tuning those free Pagan medieval songs to English cadences ! The audacity of some of the, their animalistic nudity, is likely to shock a virtuous public. The Spectator will lift its hands in pious wonder that anyone who is of an age to be "thoughtful", should have wasted so much time & trouble on such things. The fact is that I have wasted no trouble. Work of this sort is the idlest of pastimes.

Ever yours
J.A. Symonds

● SYMONDS, John Addington (1840-1893).
Author and critic. San Remo

A.L.S. to Arthur Henry Bullen, 1857-1920)
23 Apr. 1884. 8 p. (two double sheets,
octavo.)

A long letter telling of his daughter's
illness & of his current work. He mentions
his book of sonnets, *Animi Figura* (1882),
and his translation of Goliardic songs,
Wine, Women and Song (1884)