The Saturday Review. 17 September, 1893

Who, by the art of knowing and feeling sorrow,
Am pregnant to deign to feel
Then after the duel and Edmund's death when he declares himself.

"My name is Edgar, and my father's son," and turns at once to philosophising:
"The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us."
The last words of the whole tragedy are characteristic:
"The weight of this and that we must obey
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say."

The oldest hath borne most.
Here again we have the gentle-hearted, melancholy philosopher.

(To be continued.)

STEPHANE MALLARME.

In the midst of the violent incidents which have occupied public attention during the past fortnight, the passing of a curious figure in the literary life of France has been almost unobserved. Stephane Mallarme died on the 9th inst. at his cottage, of pleurisy, near Velaine-sur-Seine, after a short illness. He was in the fullness of life, having been born on 18 March, 1842, but he had long seemed fragile. Five or six years ago, and at a quieter time, the death of Mallarme would have been a newspaper "event," for in the early nineties his disciples managed to awaken around his name and his very contemplative person an astonishing amount of curiosity culminated in and was partly assuaged by the publication in 1893 of his "Vers et Pens," with a dreamy portrait, a lithograph of great beauty, by Mr. Whistler. Then Mallarme had to take his place among things seen and known; his works were no longer arcane; people read "Herodias," and their reason but survived the test. In France, where sensations pass so quickly, Mallarme has already been taken for granted; it was part of his resolute oddity to call himself by the sonorous name of Stephane, but I have been assured that his godparents gave him the name of Edmond. He was descended from a series, uninterrupted both on the father's and on the mother's side, of officially connected with the parochial and communal registers, and Mallarme was the quite unexpected flower of this sober vegetation. He was to have been a clerk himself, but he escaped to England about 1869, and returned to Paris only to become what he remained, professionally, for the remainder of his life—a master of the English language. While he was with us he learned to cultivate a passion for boating, and in the very quiet, unambitious life of his latter years he tried to steal away to his "yole d'angu executive and lose himself, in dreaming, on one of the tributaries of the Seine was his favorite, almost his only, escape. In 1874, when he was in London, and then my acquaintance with him began. I have a vision of him now, the little, brown, gentle, personal, talking about in Bloomsbury with an elephant fool under his arm, trying to find Mr. Swinburne by the unsounded depths of the English language, and translated by Mallarme and illustrated in the most intimidating style by Maquet, who was then still an acquired taste. We should to-day admire these illustrations, no doubt, very much; I am afraid that in 1874, in perfidious Albion, they awakened among the few who saw them undying mirth. Mallarme's main design in those days was to translate the poems of Poe, urged to it, I think, by a dictum of Baudelaire's, that such a translation "peut être un rêve curieux, mais ne peut être qu'un rêve." Mallarme reduced it to reality, and to one has ever denied that his version of Poe's poems is as admirably successful as it must have been difficult of performance. In 1873, the "Parnasse Contemporain," rejected Mallarme's first important poem, "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune," and his revolt against the Parnassian theories began. In 1876 he suddenly declared opinion in favor of the "carriers of the Decadence," and then the "Faune," in quarto, the other a reprint of Beckett's "Vathek," with a preface, an octavo in velvet. Fortunately the bibliophile of to-day who possesses these treasures, which were so rare in Paris, is nothing but ridiculous and now sought after like rubies. Extraordinary persistence in an idea, and extra-
THE LANDRAIL

To the September gunner the landrail is, of course, a familiar figure, though his natural habitat is not so readily discovered as that of the partridge. His habitat is not so readily discovered as that of the partridge. His occupation appears to be a collection of essays in prose, called "Divagations." The dictionaries will tell the rest of the story.

It seems quite impossible to conjecture what posterity will think of the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. It is one of the class whose reputations, contemporary sympathy with its sentiments or its objects; the difficulty of Mallarmé consists entirely in his use of language. He was all the more remarkable by the young men who have broken up and tried to remodel the prosody of French, in popular estimation he came to be identified with them, rather than with his own works. He was the most original of French poets, and his poetry is characterized by a exquisite and profound feeling for the beauty of words.

Mallarmé has been employed as a synonym for delicacy, but he did not choose this as a distinction. He was not like Dupin, who, when Edward Herbert had been extremely cradled in an elegy on Prince Henry, wrote one entitled "to match," as Ben Jonson said, Herbert being "in obscurum." In a letter to myself, some years ago, Mallarmé protested against the violent alterations in the spelling of Lycophron's "The Phaethon," maladroitly or gaucherie je ne sais pas obscur.

Yet where is obscurity to be found if not in "Don du Poème?" What does the right thing freely through "Pour Des Exécutifs?" Some of his alterations of his own text betray the fact that he treated words as he had written, that he was far more intimately affected by his euphonic interrelation than by their meaning in logical sequence. In my own copy of "Les Fenêtres" he has altered in MS. the line "Quo dura l'ancien chancre de l'infirme?" to "Quo dole la main chancre de l'infirme?"

Whether the infinite had a Hand or a Morning was purely a question of empancy. So, what had long appeared as "mon exotique seul" become "mon unique seul." In short, 1887 appeared a collection of essays in prose, called "Divagations." The dictionaries will tell the rest of the story.

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Edmund Gosse

ordinary patience under external discouragement, these
were eminent characteristics of Mallarmé. He was not
understood. Well, he would wait a little longer. He
waited, in fact, some seventeen years before he
submitted an ungrateful public again to an examination
of his specimens. Meanwhile, in several highly eccentric
forms, the initiated had been allowed to buy "Poesies" from his works in prose and verse, at high prices, in
most limited issues. Then, in 1891, there was a burst of
celebrity and perhaps of disenchantment. When the
terms-ended and the roses are silent, and the Yeats
Prophet is revealed at last, there is always some
frivolous person who is dissipated at the revelation.
Perhaps Mallarmé was not quite so thrilling when his
poems could be read by everybody as when they could
only be gazed at through that glass beakless doors
of wealthy avarice. But still, if everybody could now
read them, everybody could understand them. In
1894, the amiable poet came out here, and delivered
at Oxford and at Cambridge, "Savoir Savoir, a
address of the donnist Cimmerian darkness on Music
and Art," a collection of essays in prose, called "Divagations." The dictionaries will tell the rest of the story.

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THE LANDRAIL

To the September gunner the landrail is, of course, a familiar figure. During the first three weeks of partridge shooting, few bugs, in almost any part of Great Britain, fail to include a specimen or two of this shy and secretive little bird. Partridge days would be complete without the sight of the curious bird which, colour, slowly and elegantly, from before the march of the gunners, with drooping wings, heavy flight, apparently scarcely able to do much more than keep the level of the corner stakes, or the piece of standing barley or beans from which it has been driven. The landrail, of course, easily shot; but, unless killed dead, it is in most troublesome to pick up, giving even the experienced and sagacious retriever, who knows its tricks and its dodging manner ways, an infinity of trouble. Its great powers of concealing, and when pursued by dogs is capable of jumping three or four yards. This is done with closed wings and compressed feathers, and, no doubt, many a landrail escapes the dog and makes good his escape from this manner by this means.

Upon its first arrival in this country in April, the landrail is lean and in wretched condition. During the last few weeks of its sojourn, however, the bug is usually well fed and securely by the September sportsman, will be found to be in excellent condition, plump and well nourished. And, as every partridge shooter knows, and especially, among the seeds of different weeks are at times found among the c intents of its stomach. Small shell-snails, slugs, black snails, flies, fresh-water mollusks, worms, beetles, and even leeches, seem to form its principal food supply. The landrail is thick and muscular, and, not only the fragments of small shell, but also, little pieces of shells, stones, and gravel, are found in the intestines. These latter, and possibly even the crushed small shells, do not, are unable to digest. Therefore, it seems, not only the seeds of different weeks are at times found among the contents of its stomach. Small shell-snails, slugs, black snails, flies, fresh-water mollusks, worms, beetles, and even leeches, seem to form its principal food supply. The landrail is thick and muscular, and, not only the fragments of small shell, but also, little pieces of shells, stones, and gravel, are found in the intestines. These latter, and possibly even the crushed small shells, do not, are unable to digest.

Although familiar to the partridge shooter, the landrail is a most retiring creature and exposes itself with the greatest unwillingness to the gaze of mankind. If we except the gunner, by whom or by whose dog the bird is absolutely forced to fly, few people can say they have ever seen a landrail in the field. The farmer and his men, during the spring and early summer months, and especially during the long days of May and June, are seldom, when they are afield, without the harsh and monstrous refrain from which this rail takes its other familiar name, the corncrake. Yet how many, even among the more observant of country people, can say that they have let eyes on a corncrake during May, June, July or August? Towards July the landrail begins to cease from its incessant call, and its presence, although of course, the farmer will keep the bird and its family to be about his fields, would, by the unaided, be absolutely undetectable.

In addition to its familiar British names, landrail and corncrake, this bird is also known locally as the dacker and land-tor. An old name for it is some corncrake, this bird was king of the quails; whether that name yet lingers there, now that the quail itself has become so scarce, I do not know. The name, king of the quails, was obviously bestowed upon the landrail for the reason that the period of its arrival in this country coincided almost exactly with that of the quails, both