

Hall Caine

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE SHADOW OF A CRIME

ILLUSTRATED

*“Whom God’s hand rests on, has God
At his right hand”*

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

Hall Caine's first novel, "The Shadow of a Crime," was, after running as a serial in the "Liverpool Mercury," published in 1885, he being then thirty-two years old. It is interesting to take stock of the young writer's equipment for novel writing at the start of this exacting form of literary work. He had in very early manhood, which in its intellectual form began in his physical boyhood, prepared himself for high imaginative and creative work. He had studied much and widely, chiefly in the artistic and philosophic branches of thought. He had written and edited poems; had discussed learnedly on architecture, to whose service he had been indentured; he had lectured on many literary and artistic subjects; he had taken part in newspaper controversy on many matters of local and imperial interest. In addition, he had learned to exercise the faculty of inner thought. To few writers is given the understanding of the mysteries of character; such an understanding is the gift of the story-teller, who is the true poet of character. He must have the seeing eye which can both consciously and unconsciously note those minute differences which distinguish individuals; the sensitive ear which can take help or warning from inflections of voice or idiosyncrasies of diction; memory systematised and easily accessible to record these matters and to reproduce them at demand without the disturbing effort of searching thought. It is not sufficient that the units in the army of constructive fiction can answer to their names at the roll call; they must rise unbidden, and at their own initiative, when the moment for their service has arrived. Hall Caine, having come close to the time of life when all great artistic

gifts as a rule reveal themselves, entered boldly in the race. With consummate understanding of the difficulties before him he began his task, and it was soon clear that his years of study and criticism had done their good work. He limited himself absolutely to things which he understood, well realising that no writer can ever achieve his best success in matters regarding which he has not accurate personal knowledge. The difference of type and class may be apparent to thoughtful persons whose eyes can see and whose ears can hear; but the secret springs of actions must remain unknown without the closest knowledge. And the secret springs are the real forces. Every family, every group, every class, and the units of each and all of them, has its own compelling forces. These forces may be of high and noble quality, such as love, patriotism, self-sacrifice, and all the angel train of beneficent motives that follow their standard; or they may be base, such as lust, greed, jealousy, or other unholy passions of destructive form. Or, again, they may be natural forces compelling good or ill—hunger, fear, shame, or the belief in supernatural powers. All these powers have their own mysteries; and they all contribute to the making of the novelist. Therefore, the young writer who had left journalism lecturing and controversy, and set himself to spin realities of character and type out of the empty air, did well to confine himself to his own knowledge and observation. He knew and had lived the life of the village and the wold. The trackless fells were for him charted by memory and thought. The springs of life and action in the farmhouse and on the glebe were open to him who had lived the life of the cottager, and the fisher, and the farmer. In his daily toil of twenty years he had gleaned much in these fields; and in "*The Shadow of a Crime*," he gave the bread of the grist to the world.

The scheme of it is a daring one, and he does not shrink from grappling with forces and passions and mysteries which might well appal a larger experience. The manner of the work may be crude in parts; here and there may be found

a lack of that singleness of logical force which makes for absolute conviction. But the young author was finding his own strength, learning to pick his footsteps in his chosen way. His mind was full; his sympathy was all-embracing; his understanding of men and women, and their mutual and reacting passions, was great and acute. The limitations of his art were the only clogs to triumph.

Of this novel there were three versions. The first two were destroyed; the third occupied nine months in writing. It was written in a small house close to the beach in Sandown, Isle of Wight. It was to have been called "The City of Wythburn"—the name of the little mountain village near Thirlmere, where the author had set the scene; but this was changed at the suggestion of John Lovell, then Editor of the "Liverpool Mercury," who gave Hall Caine his first opportunity as a novelist. All his life the author had been familiar with Cumbrian dialect and legend and superstition. His mother was Cumbrian, and from her and the lore of her mother and grandmother came much of the quaint thought and speech which are embedded in the work. How well and with what skill and intuition of dramatic effect he has used this special knowledge to force home conviction, the reader can judge for himself.

BRAM STOKER.

July 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAIN



A SON OF HAGAR

ILLUSTRATED

"God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is"

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

In the writing of his second novel, "A Son of Hagar," a student of his work may notice an immense advance in Hall Caine's constructive ability. It is true that the scope of the work is hardly enlarged from that of his first effort, "The Shadow of a Crime"; but the method of treatment is different. In the difference between the final value of the two works, the wisdom of Pope's dictum—"True ease in writing comes by Art, not chance"—is well exemplified. Throughout there is a firmer grip of the whole subject; a more consistent purpose more firmly adhered to; the effect of a larger vision; an expansion in the possibilities of literary effort. It is in the latter that the writer's limitation of experience is perhaps most fully shown. He had found new ways of expressing his intent, but as yet he hardly quite knew how to use them. In a relentless criticism one might say that the writer did not realise that freedom of effort has its own obligations; that indefinable quality which in literary supremacy is known as "reticence" is in places barely manifest. The result is a certain wildness or fluttering between incident and incident, with a consequent strain on the reader's credulity. Even to myself, a lover of Hall Caine's work from the first, when I knew him in 1878, this defect of inexperience is manifest in re-reading the novel. But with the idea comes of necessity another which altogether redounds to the author's credit: his stature as a novelist is growing—has grown almost to its full height. Unconsciously one is applying to his work the most exact and unflinching canons of criticism. His work now challenges comment. It is indeed much that we

realise that in this second novel of the young writer, now only thirty-three years old, the persons are real persons, whom in our inner minds we receive and treat as such; that the story is a real story, and that all its incidents are individually possible, even if their grouping in so limited a space is peculiar. But of one conviction we can have no doubt whatever—Hall Caine as a novelist is in this work "coming to his own."

"A Son of Hagar" was written in 1885-86 and published in 1887. This was the Sturm und Drang period of the author's life. He had taken on himself new responsibilities, and with a wife and child to fend for found it necessary to seek new work in different directions. His time could not be given entirely to creative fiction. The confidence of the public had not yet been so entirely won that the strenuous side of literary life, in which it is necessary to seek work as well as to do it, could give place to the calm which is almost necessary for such work.

It will be interesting to note that in this novel Hall Caine's independence is in certain ways made manifest. The book was begun in collaboration with the late Robert Buchanan; but very early the two men found that their moods of mind did not agree. As the author wrote to me regarding the book: "The mark of Buchanan's hand is on the opening chapters." It is manifest to a critical reader that some one's hand is added to that of Hall Caine, and the smear is hardly a beneficent addition. Doubtless many a reader has been struck by the change which comes over the book even in the very first chapter, that which immediately follows the Prologue. A mind like Hall Caine's cannot mix in creative work with that of any man without the joinings becoming apparent.

BRAM STOKER.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE DEEMSTER

ILLUSTRATED

“Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.”

*“Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the
body of this death?”*

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

In "The Deemster" Hall Caine arrived as a novelist at his full intellectual stature, and the recognition of the public was prompt and marked. Whether he was yet able to use his powers to the fulness of their strength, can only be learned by a comparison of this with his later works. The scheme of the book is a daring one, and the handling of the subject is more daring still. In it, whilst preserving a historical milieu which is distinctly Manx, he places the occasions of history in just the position to suit his own purpose; and he does not fear to introduce into a world palpitating with high passions all the forces of second-sight and less formulated occultism. The history of the inception and creation of the book affords a striking lesson of the author's intellectual independence, together with that willingness to accept the suggestions of sympathetic friends, which in the world of Art is the birthmark of genius.

When Hall Caine was living with Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1881 he helped the dying painter-poet to pass the long dreary days and nights by telling him stories of the Isle of Man, wherein he had passed so many of his boyish years. He recalled wise sayings and shrewd speeches, and gave in the quaint semi-Irish dialect of the island some of the weird tales and strange bits of local history gathered in the ingle-nook, during the long hours of nightly watches by the drifting nets, or under the shelter of the trees in the rest-time of hay and harvest. Rossetti was much impressed by what he heard, and saw the opportunity opened by this new and unknown field for romance.

He earnestly enjoined his young friend to write a Manx novel. The latter took the advice, and turned over in his mind the possibility of place and history. In due course, when the time came for the writing of his third novel, he found himself equal to grappling with the task, and began to formulate his ideas. Here, strange to say, discouragement came locally. His warmest Manx friends, the Rev. T. G. Brown (author of "Fod'stle Yarns," &c.) and his brother, the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, both excellent Manxmen and well posted in the history and traditions of the place and familiar with its dialect and characteristics, did their best to dissuade him from his choice of the Isle of Man as the place of his story. They gave as the grounds of their opinion that the public did not care anything about the island in fiction, and that his scheme of the story hovered too far above the surface of the little insular existence. In fact the former of the brothers advised him rather to fix the scene of his striking story among the Alleghanies, though in the same period as that already chosen—the early part of the eighteenth century.

With "The Deemster" Hall Caine's success as a novelist became assured. From the moment of its publication all the anxieties which usually wait with such grim persistency on a struggling man of letters disappeared. The book was written in Douglas, Isle of Man, and took seven months to complete.

BRAM STOKER.

11th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE BONDMAN

ILLUSTRATED

"Vengeance is Mine—I will repay"

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1907

INTRODUCTION

"The Bondman" was a natural growth of Hall Caine's pursuit of Manx incidents and ideals. Iceland and the Isle of Man are so closely linked by far-back associations, that one cannot deeply study the history of one without being somewhat fascinated by the other. It was but reasonable, therefore, that the grouping of the two islands, so alike in root of population and in mythical beliefs, and so unlike in physical conditions, would form the setting of a strong story of racial and hereditary passion. The changes throughout the story, from the soft peaceful island in the midst of an arm of the Gulf Stream away north to that other island so typical of Nature's ruder forces, set in the very gate of the Arctic, must have consciously or unconsciously guided the pen of the novelist by their own conditions, just as the climatic conditions of either island sway the passionate destinies of its people. The author realised from his own spiritual insight the force of such influences. He was already from his childhood familiar with the Isle of Man, and his early knowledge had been enlarged and systematised by his writing of "The Deemster" and the special study antecedent to it. Now, he went to Iceland to study its conditions on the spot, and to take for the benefit of his projected work what his own eyes and ears might tell him. How he used his opportunity is well shown in the early chapters of that section of the Saga which he called "The Book of Red Jason." There is in fictional literature nothing more desolate and appalling than the description of the sulphur mines of Krisuvik,

or of the journey over the desolate lava fields to Thingvellir. If his saying of Manxland leaves at times the impression of the beneficence of Ormuszd, so surely does his showing of Iceland bring to our eyes the fell work of Ahrimanes. There must have been to the author some special significance in this land of elemental forces, something to brace and invigorate; for in one day he rode from Reykavík to Krisuvík and back, a distance of some seventy miles across a country of desperate crudeness.

"The Bondman" was written chiefly at Bexley Heath, in Kent, and partly at Keswick. It occupied the labour of a full year.

BRAM STOKER.

July 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE SCAPEGOAT

ILLUSTRATED

"Thy will be done on Earth"

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1905

INTRODUCTION

The entourage of "The Scapegoat" was what is called in journalese a "new departure" on the part of the author. The scheme of the story was unsuitable to the softness of the West or the rigour of the North. The scene must be Eastern, if anything. At first he thought of working on Biblical lines at the time of Christ. The Palestine version was completed, but not elaborated, when he made up his mind to place it in Morocco, and to this end paid a visit to Tetuan. He had been in a measure prepared for Eastern work by many books, amongst which was Burton's "Arabian Nights," which goes so deeply into the intricacies of Eastern life and character; and by a play, as yet unused, on the subject of Mahomet, which had been done for Henry Irving. Throughout the book are endless traits of Eastern character and a fine perfection of knowledge of the faith and ritual of Islam, as well as of the Hebrews of the East. Indeed, so complete was his Jewish knowledge, that on the publication of the book a strange request was made to the author by the Jewish community—that he should go to Russia and himself examine the cause and method of the Jewish exodus then in hand. The Chief Rabbi, who was the mouthpiece of the petitioners, said that he alone among living writers had power by his work to arouse the conscience of Europe against the horrors which were taking place. Hall Caine undertook what he felt to be a solemn duty. But he could not get beyond the frontier, for by that time the wave of cholera which had first manifested itself

at Hamburg had swept the western bounds of Russia, and entry was absolutely forbidden.

The original writing of this book took six months, but after the serial publication he re-wrote almost the whole story. Mr. Heinemann told me at the time that he had had the whole book set up in type thrice, as it was cheaper to reprint the whole work than to make the alterations. This will give the reader some idea of the immense and untiring labour which Hall Caine gives to his books. Both the writing and the re-writing were done at the house in Keswick, Hawthorns, which he had purchased, and in which he resided some four years before he purchased Greeba Castle and his Manx estate.

The play of "Mahomet" was never acted. It was abandoned by the actor at the request of the Court, made through the Lord Chamberlain. Mohammedan law does not allow any physical representation of the Prophet, and it was considered that to represent him in the flesh would be looked on as a desecration by the teeming millions of Mohammedan subjects of the Queen. But the studious preparation of the author was not thrown away.

BRAM STOKER.

12th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



CAPT'N DAVY'S HONEYMOON, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

The first note struck in this volume is one of joyousness. It matters not that Capt'n Davy is in sore distress, and his young wife in similar condition. We who read, and who have read other human documents, know well that two such really noble natures cannot keep apart even if they would. The dénouement, which is the reconciliation, must not come in the high-comedy shape formulated by the god and goddess in the machine—their friends Lovibond and Jenny; but it will come, and come in the right way. "After all," says Sam Slick, "there is a great deal of human nature in man!" And this man is human—very human; and the woman is very human too. Nature knows her work, and when she creates a large-hearted, whole-souled, impetuous, tempestuous beneficence such as Capt'n Davy, she does not leave permanent rifts for sentimental leakage. The story is simply delightful, and shows in the author a vein of fun hardly to be expected amongst the overwhelming rush of his tragic forces.

The other two stories are so grimly tragic as to reduce the hilarious effect of the book as a whole to a normal level.

It may be interesting to the reader to know the first exposition of the tragedy, "The Last Confession." In the autumn of 1891 I was in Edinburgh, where Henry Irving was playing, and Hall Caine came to stop with me in my lodgings in Princes Street. On November 18th we went to a breakfast given Mr. and Mrs. Carlaw Martin, he being then Editor of the "Scottish Leader." A day or two before Hall Caine had been telling me an idea for a short story founded on

an episode told by Sir Richard Burton, and in which was involved the ethical point of a murder necessary for self-preservation. At breakfast was a large and delightful company, all of whom were deeply interested in, if not concerned in, literary matters. During breakfast we, at our end of the table, noticed that all eyes and ears were being concerned with Hall Caine, who was at the other end. He was telling of a case lately come to his notice of a man who had murdered a "Saint" in a shrine in Morocco. We all listened enthralled, for Hall Caine is a wonderful story-teller. I myself was not the least interested of the party; for though familiar with the bones of the story, I saw now the palpitating flesh put on them. When the story was done we discussed freely the ethics of the question with varying result.

It was during this visit to Edinburgh that the novel which became "The Manxman" took its first definite shape.

BRAM STOKER.

13th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE MANXMAN

ILLUSTRATED

*“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world
and lose his own soul?”*

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1905

INTRODUCTION

"The Manxman" is a complete illustration of the best form of the novel, and in it Hall Caine arrived at the full height of his art. The story follows perfectly natural lines. Incident is derived from character, and from character alone. There is no "fortuitous concurrence of atoms" to mould destiny or swerve the oncoming of logical effect; no cataclysm to shake events from their appointed course; no intrusion of disturbing ideals into the field of cosmic effort. The whole story is a purely natural development. Given the set of characters and the initial situation, the conclusion is a logical consequence. In the choice of characters and in their earlier development lies that which Taine calls "selective" art. Hall Caine in this novel has brought to bear all the resources of his early experience, his intuitive knowledge of character, and all his imaginative faculty. The knowledge of character which he displays is supreme. On the publication of the book I heard a lady, a clever sympathetic woman of the world, well known to Hall Caine and myself, say to the author: "Where did you learn so much about women? No man has any right to know about a woman's nature all that you seem to know!" She alluded to that wonderful twenty-third chapter of the second part of the book, perhaps the most wonderful exposition of natural love ever written.

Through all the novel the predominant note is one of nature. The author became obsessed by the claims of nature. This is shown by the way in which the original intention changed in the course of the work. When it was planned out in 1891 the intention was to have the main idea that of a guilty wife being

brought back to duty by her child. It was to have been called "*St. Bridget's Eve*," and the note of pathos was struck when the hero Pete determined to write to himself the letters which were to protect Kirry and sustain her good name. But as the material began to ferment in the author's brain, there came a new growth which swept Pete with all his faithful love into the background. Passion came to sway and dominate, and all else became secondary and collateral rather than mainly structural. Philip, and Philip's love and passion, made a new Kirry out of the old material which had won Pete's love and been content with it. Passion acted and reacted after its natural wont. The man and the woman helped each other astray; and grim tragedy rose to bar the road to possible happiness for all or any. Had either Philip or Kirry been bad at heart things might have gone more smoothly. But the verities of character are eternal. Grapes do not grow on thorns nor figs on thistles; his great novel is a living truth.

"*The Manxman*" was begun in Cumberland, but was mainly written in Greeba, which Hall Caine rented before he had purchased it. It is interesting to note that the author purchased the estate with part of the earnings of the book. Mr. Gladstone, always a warm admirer of Hall Caine's work, wrote to him that though he was an opponent of divorce, he thought the motive of the book was a noble one. The novel, notwithstanding the difficulties of translating the patois, is now in many languages.

It was the publication of this work in one volume which broke down the old-fashioned system of three-volume novels.

BRAM STOKER.

15th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE CHRISTIAN

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

Of all Hall Caine's works, "The Christian" was the novel which evoked the most hostile criticism. On its publication a perfect storm of comments burst ; every possible form of hostility was manifested, and was met by equally ardent defence. It is seldom that any artistic effort given to the world can create such interest. All was, however, ultimately to the author's gain. When a fight of such dimensions is on, every one wants to take a part in it, or at least to be a spectator from some coign of vantage. On both sides of the Atlantic the war of opinions existed, and with almost equal virulence. The novel itself does not deal with problems so much as with institutions. It is somewhat in the nature of a gigantic parable ; so many and so strongly marked types are presented that writer and reader tread almost level with Swift's "Tale of a Tub." There is no plagiarism of any sort or kind, but the situations of life are perpetually recurrent. It is less from the worth of the subject than from the deftness of the painter's hand that great pictures take their place in the history of Art. Here is a story of love and devotion and passion, of the successive developments of character as new circumstances mould them, and new opportunities wake hitherto dormant faculties. It is set in the heart of modern London—London of to-day with all its terrific indifference, its callous unconcern as to life or loftiness ; London, that bottomless quagmire which can hold and swallow up anything, either good or bad, which touches its rank, viscid places. The people are of all types, the same people whom we see as we walk the streets ; and yet how different it all is from what we see around us. The

surface of things seems to pass away, the glamour to fade and the apparent weakness and evil to show their real powers and forces. Motive sheds its illuming light on all, and we understand how each and all the items of the endless and whirling panorama of life act and react one on the other. The book is really a marvellous one. At the first reading one can hardly grasp its purpose, its immensity, the multitudinous lessons of correlating forces. We want time to think; to breathe, between scene and scene, between moment and moment. And the end, the natural and logical end, comes so quickly and so surely that the dull, misty conviction of guiding force, with the unalterable consequences of our own acts, be they due to good or evil purpose, is irresistibly borne in upon us. This is indeed tragedy. True and lofty tragedy; the greatest lesson that humanity can learn from humanity. We bow to the master brain and the master hand which can evoke such emotions.

"The Christian" took more than a year to write. The play founded upon it by the author has proved perhaps the most successful play ever produced in America, though it did not have the same good fortune at home. The number of copies of the work in English runs into hundreds of thousands, and it has been translated into nearly every European language.

BRAM STOKER.

14th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAINE



THE ETERNAL CITY

ILLUSTRATED

*“He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder
and maker is God.”*

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

"The Eternal City" is a great book. It is monumental in many ways: of well thought out purpose, of learning, of history, of time and place and opportunity, all acting and re-acting on each other as they have done at any time in the old-world centre for the last two thousand years. I know of no book whose name so aptly expresses a certain inwardness of controlling force. The characters of the story might have, would have, wrought out their own destinies in any other setting; but not in the same way, or to the same end. The complicated life in Rome—its traditions and histories and rituals and ever-varying intentions and intrigues, all purposed to one end—makes a background for human passions which is as kaleidoscopic as it is at once ancient and modern; living and palpitating with the joy and sorrow and stress of life. In the whirl and sway of this truly "eternal" city the individual is lost. The whole machine is so vast, its intricacies and intrigues are so profound, its motives and springs of action so varying in manner yet so consistent in purpose, that the history of any one person or group must be that of a floating atom swept into a water-way of many opposing currents. Here is shown the Author's wisdom, instinctive as to utility and patient as to effort. With infinite care and labour, and with an eye for detail which is simply marvellous, he builds up in the mind of the reader as he proceeds an idea of the compelling forces which crush individuality in this seething struggling-place of religion and local purposes and high policies of the nations of the world. One gets some idea of the vastness and controlling influence of even the ritual of

daily life in and around the Vatican, as well in the social as in the religious aspect. The habits and customs and manners and precedents, made real in the course of a thousand years, have become all-compelling. Even the Pope himself, Vicegerent of God though he may be, is not free from convention in the doing of his high work. He, too, is held in the grasp of the rituals of centuries. In this wonderful book seems to be poured out to the reader's benefit, for his enlightenment and his understanding but not to his weariness, all the trivialities which go to make up the vast tide of international life. Each and all of the things for which life gives opportunity has its own place. Here are given the struggle of Pope and King—that unended strife which in theory keeps the Pope a prisoner in Rome and the Italian King a prisoner in the wide circle outside the Church. The struggle for moral supremacy of the Church throughout the world whilst its head is bound hand and foot by the limitations of a dethroned Prince of temporalities. The strife of the hungry and despairing many against the powerful and opulent few. The angry passions of the proletariat used as an engine of war in the struggle for constitutional freedom. The mighty duty of one whose official place is to represent the Deity arrayed against the paramount duty of an erring father to an injured son; and these two duties united in one sweet and noble personality which is swept to and fro in clamant moments of opposing forces. A high-souled woman won by love from destroying pride and the purpose of revenge; a noble man strung by high purpose to the accomplishment of great deeds, at once encouraged and thwarted by love and the woman he loves; the conflict of burning passion and cold ambition in the masterful breast of an opportunist statesman. Each and all of these held in one mighty dramatic tangle which begins with separate and distinguishable threads, and is resolved again into plain issues by a patient and master hand. Such is the work which Hall Caine gave to the world. The conception and labour of the book took four years—1898-1901,—involving residence in Rome

for three winters, during which he became familiar with the ways of the Vatican, and with the purposes and swaying intrigues of the Papal and Royal Courts. The intrigue of the book itself, that complication of circumstances which involves each and all of the persons of the story, is absolutely masterful and is full of such dramatic force that on putting down the book the reader is unable to realise that the whole story is not one which has really existed. It is full of great situations and the expressions of high passions. The scene of the meeting of the Pope and the King, together with all the revealing motives which precede it and the effects of anguish which follow, is one of the strongest things in fiction. Roma and David the Pope and Bonelli form a wonderful quartet; each of them standing out of the huddle of the myriad characters of the book, typical, real, recognisable, immortal.

I well remember a glowing afternoon in the Isle of Man when Hall Caine told me the story, then rudimentary in his mind. I was staying with him at Greeba, and in the late afternoon we walked up the hill at the opposite side of the valley. Blossoming heather and dry bracken made the bare spaces between wood and farm like a sea of leaping flame, all the more conspicuous amid the almost Irish green of Manxland. The man, himself like flame as he grew on fire with his subject, gave me a glimpse of the mind of the Pope as he held him in his imagination: God's Vicegerent was realising all at once his position, when his own life and his feelings as a man and father stood in stark opposition to what seemed his duty to God. "Noli Episcopari" had been with him a reality, and duty done had nerved his shrinking heart at the acceptance of the high office. Now after years of well-doing and unceasing self-abnegation his bare humanity stood in the presence of God, at last understanding what awful duty he had undertaken in consenting to be the mouthpiece and representative of the Almighty.

It was indeed a thrilling time to us both. When my friend stopped speaking, almost choked with emotion and awed with the

magnitude of his own ideas and theme, we walked on ankle deep in the yielding heather, silent. Later, when the story began to unfold, that particular moment did not have opportunity for exact expression ; but its influence is in every page of this wonderful book.

"The Eternal City" was written chiefly at Rome, where the author spent three winters at the Trinita dei Monti, 18. Four well-spent years ; full of ardent study and strenuous work, and crowned with great result.

BRAM STOKER.

20th June 1905.

THE WORKS
OF
HALL CAIN E



THE PRODIGAL SON

ILLUSTRATED

*"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it"*

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905

INTRODUCTION

For the scene of his latest novel, "The Prodigal Son," Hall Caine wisely chose Iceland. Such a story as is here unfolded requires a volcanic setting. Though the influences which mould events may be common to all families, their unrestrained expression demands external conditions and a freer atmosphere than can be found in our teeming and ordered communities. Something is wanting, too, of conditions of picturesqueness both of scene and person; and Iceland is far enough away and sufficiently graced with colour to make a fitting scene for a drama of such elemental passions. A fresh visit to Iceland and the places of the story renewed the forcible impressions of "The Bondman." In Hall Caine there is some divine instinct of place which enables him to increase and even multiply the effect wrought through their surroundings by his characters. We all know that Nature has her many moods, just as have individual persons. But it is of the artistic gift to seize and represent the mood most suitable to the purpose in hand. Man is, after all, something of a creature of circumstance; and when, with an insistent purpose, an author of power and parts gives us a chosen setting for the expression of human feelings and passions, we yield unconsciously to his intent. Our own hearts and minds, the throbbings of heart and pulse, follow the guiding word of his imagination, as the units of an orchestra follow the bâton of their chief. Thus in the opening of the book, Thingvellir in the grey dawn is, though undoubtedly a real place full of real life, a place apart from our own lives. The very names of the offices of public importance are strange, and give that note of

wonder which is such a help to an imaginative understanding. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico.* Again, when different passions have to be exercised, when weakness not strength is the tragic motive, the scene changes to the enervating beauty of the Riviera.

"*The Prodigal Son*" is really a work of wonderful simplicity. Though the characters are complex, as all true characters must be, the dominant motive is always simple. The complexity is found in the dexterity of the author who makes complications of things in themselves simple. From first to last throughout the whole book there is no moment of doubt or misunderstanding. The effect is almost biblical. Simplicity carries conviction; at once and without questioning the reader understands and accepts. This direct method is one of the best and most difficult expressions of great art, and helps in the formation and acceptance of a great book.

"*The Prodigal Son*" was written almost entirely in Switzerland, chiefly at St. Moritz, and occupied an active working time of some eight months.

Respecting this book, may I strike a personal note? In my early copy—the work was published on November 4, 1904—is written—

"MY DEAR BRAM,

"This simple story comes from my heart; I trust it may go to yours.

HALL CAINE.

"21st October 1904."

It did!

In a rapid re-reading of the ten novels which represent the most part of Hall Caine's work in twenty years, the conviction of his greatness as a novelist, which came as a knowledge with

his first work, has since gone on expanding as his art grew. Whatever he may do in the future, and we expect great work from him both as a novelist and dramatist, he has already won a permanent place in the literature of his country—of the world. It is hard to judge of the real worth of literary work from the plane of the present; this requires the perspective of years. As each new work comes out we read it hurriedly, and then the mists of work and many duties and new sympathies close down upon us, until the light of a new work makes a rift. I own myself grateful for the opportunity afforded me by the honouring request to write the prefaces to the volumes of this new edition of Hall Caine's work. I have essayed the true perspective of the man's intellectual excellence; and it stands the test. It may well be said to him as an imaginative writer—and imagination must be based on sympathy—as was said by his friend Rossetti apostrophising Dante—

“ . . . in our hearts thou still remainst,
A window often wept against.”

BRAM STOKER.

24th June 1905.

