



IN
MEMORIAM

A novel

ALICE WINN

"Magnificent—dazzling and wrenching, witty and wildly romantic."

—Lev Grossman, author of *The Magicians*

IN
MEMORIAM



Alice Winn



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Historical Note

A Note About the Author

142813758

To my parents

THE PRESUTIAN



VOL. XLIX.—No. 739.

JUNE 27TH, 1914.

Price 3d.

Editorial.

O Jove! Save the editor from the editorial! But term has ended, and a marvellous one at that, so conclusions must be drawn for the hungry readers of the humble PRESUTIAN. Another splendid year has passed, and those grand Upper Sixth men now leave us for the glories of Oxford, Cambridge and Sandhurst! We cherish a hope that they will remember us poor schoolboys from time to time, as they bounce from lectures to rev-els. May our futures be as bright as theirs!

—S. CUTHBERT-SMITH

Notes on News.

The Bishop of London preached on Sunday, June 14th.

“Would the person practising Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* six times a day on the piano near the Old Reading Room kindly learn a new piece? Sincerely, *A Musically Frustrated Gentleman.*”

The three audience members at the junior boys’ performance of Aristophanes’ lesser-known plays report the experience was “exactly what Aristophanes would have hoped for.”

The debate next term will be “This House declines to believe in the existence of ghosts.” Contact H. Weeding if willing to argue in favour of the spirit.

Debating Society.

ON Monday, June 22nd, the Society met to discuss the motion that: “In the opinion of the House, war is a necessary evil.”

Mr Ellwood proposed. After a few insolent remarks regarding the opposition’s brass tie pin, he gave a rather colourful if inaccurate history of the Punic Wars. Mr Gaunt, arguing (in a most cowardly fashion) (“*Can I keep that in?*”—*Author.* “*Only if you don’t mind Gaunt’s almost certainly violent revenge. He is a prize boxer, although a beastly pacifist.*”—*Editor.*) against the motion, suggested that war destroys the soul. Those listeners who have fought Mr Gaunt in the ring were inclined to mutter mutinously, “What soul?” This in no way (*cont. pg. 5*)

Poetry.

EVENING AT PRESUTE COLLEGE

The sky grows cold, and in the troubled west,

The sun sinks sleepily towards other worlds.

The dark of night soothes the troubled breast:

From Heaven have the Clouds of Dreams unfurled.

The Chapel’s steeple stabs into the sky—

“*It’s too long again, Ellwood.*”—*Editor.*

“*It’s barely three stanzas!*”—*Author.*

The London Gazette

Of TUESDAY, the 4th of AUGUST, 1914.

Published by Authority.

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST, 1914.

A STATE OF WAR.

His Majesty's Government informed the German Government on August 4th, 1914, that, unless a satisfactory reply to the request of His Majesty's Government for an assurance that Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium was received by midnight of that day, His Majesty's Government would feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold that neutrality and the observance of a treaty to which Germany was as much a party as Great Britain.

The result of this communication having been that His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin had to ask for his passports, His Majesty's Government have accordingly formally notified the German Government that a state of war exists between the two countries, as from 11 p.m. to-day.

Foreign Office,
August 4th, 1914.

THE PRESHTIAN



VOL. XLIX.—No. 74L.

OCTOBER 17TH, 1914.

Price 6d.

KILLED IN ACTION.

Beazley, Sec.-Lieut. L. S. W., Wiltshire Regt., Sept. 20th, aged 22.

Hickman, Lieut. M. E., Worcestershire Regt., aged 20.

Milling, Lieut. L., Gordon Highlanders, aged 23.

Roseveare, Sec.- Lieut. C. C., Royal Munster Fusiliers, Mons, August 27th, aged 22.

Scott-Moncrieff, Capt. M. M., King's (Liverpool) Regiment, Sept. 20th, aged 25.

Straker, Sec.- Lieut. H. A., Royal Munster Fusiliers, Mons, August 27th, aged 18.

DIED OF WOUNDS.

Conlon, Lieut. G. T., West Yorkshire Regt., aged 21.

Cuthbert-Smith, Lieut. S., Northumberland Fusiliers, Mons, August 24th, aged 18.

Hill, Lieut. A., 19th Lancers, Indian Army, aged 19.

WOUNDED.

Day, Lieut. H. J., Middlesex Regt.

Hattersley, Major F. K., Royal Field Artillery.

Le Hunte, Lieut. R. Royal Scots.

Matterson, Sec.-Lieut. A. R., Bedfordshire Regt.

Parsonage, Sec.-Lieut. D. K., Somerset Light Infantry.

In Memoriam.

LIEUTENANT S. CUTHBERT-SMITH

(Killed at Mons, August 24th, aged 18.)

Anyone reading THE PRESUTIAN in the past two years will remember Cuthbert-Smith as the facetious editor of that publication. He had won a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, where he would have studied Classics. But Cuthbert-Smith could never have been a scholar. There was too much of the soldier in him. The following description of his death was written by his commanding officer:—"In a wild push to capture a German machine gun, Cuthbert-Smith was shot in the stomach. Due to enemy fire, we were unable to remove him to a local cave that was in use as a hospital until 5 a.m. the next morning. Brave chap only asked for a bit of morphia so that he wouldn't disturb the others. He died quite painlessly and weren't we sad to lose such a gallant fellow! It was a true soldier's death." We at Preshute can only regret his loss and envy his noble death, which any one of us would gladly suffer for our country.

S. A. WARD

SECOND LIEUTENANT C. C. ROSEVEARE

(Killed at Mons, August 27th, aged 22.)

Preshute has suffered many blows since the outbreak of war, but none hit us harder than the death of Clarence Roseveare. He leaves behind two brothers in the Sixth Form, including our illustrious Head Boy. Clarence himself was Head Boy. But his death, like his life, was honourable and manly, coming close to touching perfection in its English gallantry.

Extract from a letter from his Commanding Officer:—"He came past me with a very cheerful face, and laughing, under a very hearty cross-fire from machine guns, and sang out to me, 'Shall I push on?' and I answered, 'Go on, laddie, as hard as you can.' Poor lad, he was shot through the heart shortly after. I placed him in a trench, hoping that the wound would not be fatal. The only words to me were, 'Don't mind me.' When I *(cont. pg. 3)*

I

ONE

ELLWOOD WAS A PREFECT, so his room that year was a splendid one, with a window that opened onto a strange outcrop of roof. He was always scrambling around places he shouldn't. It was Gaunt, however, who truly loved the roof perch. He liked watching boys dipping in and out of Fletcher Hall to pilfer biscuits, prefects swanning across the grass in Court, the organ master coming out of Chapel. It soothed him to see the school functioning without him, and to know that he was above it.

Ellwood also liked to sit on the roof. He fashioned his hands into guns and shot at the passers-by.

"Bloody Fritz! Got him in the eye! Take *that* home to the Kaiser!"

Gaunt, who had grown up summering in Munich, did not tend to join in these soldier games.

Balancing *The Preshutian* on his knee as he turned the page, Gaunt finished reading the last "In Memoriam." He had known seven of the nine boys killed. The longest "In Memoriam" was for Clarence Roseveare, the older brother of one of Ellwood's friends. As to Gaunt's own friend—and enemy—Cuthbert-Smith, a measly paragraph had sufficed to sum him up. Both boys, *The Preshutian* assured him, had died gallant deaths. Just like every other Preshute student who had been killed so far in the War.

"Pow!" muttered Ellwood beside him. "*Auf Wiedersehen!*"

Gaunt took a long drag of his cigarette and folded up the paper.

"They've got rather more to say about Roseveare than about Cuthbert-Smith, haven't they?"

Ellwood's guns turned back to hands. Nimble, long-fingered, ink-stained.

"Yes," he said, patting his hair absentmindedly. It was dark and unruly. He kept it slicked back with wax, but lived in fear of a stray curl coming

unfixed and drawing the wrong kind of attention to himself. “Yes, I thought that was a shame.”

“Shot in the stomach!” Gaunt’s hand went automatically to his own. He imagined it opened up by a streaking piece of metal. *Messy.*

“Roseveare’s cut up about his brother,” said Ellwood. “They were awfully close, the three Roseveare boys.”

“He seemed all right in the dining hall.”

“He’s not one to make a fuss,” said Ellwood, frowning. He took Gaunt’s cigarette, scrupulously avoiding touching Gaunt’s hand as he did so. Despite Ellwood’s tactile relationship with his other friends, he rarely laid a finger on Gaunt unless they were play-fighting. Gaunt would have died rather than let Ellwood know how it bothered him.

Ellwood took a drag and handed the cigarette back to Gaunt.

“I wonder what my ‘In Memoriam’ would say,” he mused.

“‘Vain boy dies in freak umbrella mishap. Investigations pending.’”

“No,” said Ellwood. “No, I think something more like ‘English literature today has lost its brightest star...!’” He grinned at Gaunt, but Gaunt did not smile back. He still had his hand on his stomach, as if his guts would spill out like Cuthbert-Smith’s if he moved it. He saw Ellwood take this in.

“I’d write yours, you know,” said Ellwood, quietly.

“All in verse, I suppose.”

“Of course. As Tennyson did, for Arthur Hallam.”

Ellwood frequently compared himself to Tennyson and Gaunt to Tennyson’s closest friend. Mostly, Gaunt found it charming, except when he remembered that Arthur Hallam had died at the age of twenty-two and Tennyson had spent the next seventeen years writing grief poetry. Then Gaunt found it all a bit morbid, as if Ellwood *wanted* him to die, so that he would have something to write about.

Gaunt had kned Cuthbert-Smith in the stomach, once. How different did a bullet feel from a blow?

“Your sister thought Cuthbert-Smith was rather good-looking,” said Ellwood. “She told me at Lady Asquith’s, last summer.”

“Did she?” asked Gaunt, unenthusiastically. “Awfully nice of her to confide in you like that.”

“Maud’s A1,” said Ellwood, standing abruptly. “Capital sort of girl.” A bit of slate crumbled under his feet and fell to the ground, three stories below.

“Christ, Elly, don’t do that!” said Gaunt, clutching the window ledge. Ellwood grinned and clambered back into the bedroom.

“Come on in, it’s wet out there,” he said.

Gaunt hurriedly took another breath of smoke and dropped his cigarette down a drainpipe. Ellwood was splayed out on the sofa, but when Gaunt sat on his legs, he curled them hastily out of the way.

“You loathed Cuthbert-Smith,” said Ellwood.

“Yes. Well. I shall miss loathing him.”

Ellwood laughed.

“You’ll find someone new to hate. You always do.”

“Undoubtedly,” said Gaunt. But that wasn’t the point. He had written nasty poems about Cuthbert-Smith, and Cuthbert-Smith (Gaunt was almost certain it was him) had scrawled, “Henry Gaunt is a German SPY” on the wall of the library cloakroom. Gaunt had punched him for that, but he would never have shot him in the stomach.

“I think I believe he’ll be back next term, smug and full of tall tales from the front,” said Ellwood, slowly.

“Maybe none of them will come back.”

“That sort of defeatist attitude will lose us the War.” Ellwood cocked his head. “Henry. Old Cuthbert-Smith was an idiot. He probably walked straight into a bullet for a lark. That’s not what it will be like when we go.”

“I’m not signing up.”

Ellwood wrapped his arms around his knees, staring at Gaunt.

“Rot,” he said.

“I’m not against all war,” said Gaunt. “I’m just against *this* war. ‘German militarism’—as if we didn’t hold our empire through military might! Why should I get shot at because some Austrian archduke was killed by an angry Serb?”

“But Belgium—”

“Yes, yes, Belgian atrocities,” said Gaunt. They had discussed all this before. They had even debated it, and Ellwood had beaten him, 596 votes to 4. Ellwood would have won any debate: the school loved him.

“But you have to enlist,” said Ellwood. “If the War is even still on when we finish school.”

“Why? Because you will?”

Ellwood clenched his jaw and looked away.

“You will fight, Gaunt,” he said.

“Oh, yes?”

“You always fight. Everyone.” Ellwood rubbed a small flat spot on his nose with one finger. He often did that. Gaunt wondered if Ellwood resented that he had punched it there. They had only fought once. It hadn’t been Gaunt who started it.

“I don’t fight you,” he said.

“Ἦνῶθι σεαυτόν,” said Ellwood.

“I *do* know myself!” said Gaunt, lunging at Ellwood to smother him with a pillow, and for a moment neither of them could talk, because Ellwood was squirming and shrieking with laughter while Gaunt tried to wrestle him off the sofa. Gaunt was strong, but Ellwood was quicker, and he slipped through Gaunt’s arms and fell to the floor, helpless with laughter. Gaunt hung his head over the side, and they pressed their foreheads together.

“Fighting like this, you mean?” said Gaunt, when they had got their breath back. “*Wrestle* the Germans to death?”

Ellwood stopped laughing, but he didn’t move his forehead. They were still for a moment, hard skull against hard skull, until Ellwood pulled away and leant his face into Gaunt’s arm.

All of Gaunt’s muscles tensed at the movement. Ellwood’s breath was hot. It reminded Gaunt of his dog back home, Trooper. Perhaps that was why he ruffled Ellwood’s hair, his fingers searching for strands the wax had missed. He hadn’t stroked Ellwood’s hair in years, not since they were thirteen-year-olds in their first year at Preshute and he would find Ellwood huddled in a heap of tears under his desk.

But they were in Upper Sixth now, their final year, and almost never touched each other.

Ellwood was very still.

“You’re like my dog,” said Gaunt, because the silence was heavy with something.

Ellwood tugged away.

“Thanks.”

“It’s a good thing. I’m very fond of dogs.”

“Right. Anything you’d like me to fetch? I’m starting to get the hang of newspapers, although my teeth still leave marks.”

“Don’t be daft.”

Ellwood laughed a little unhappily.

“I’m sad about Roseveare and Cuthbert-Smith too, you know,” he said.

“Oh, yes,” said Gaunt. “And Straker. Remember how you two used to tie the younger boys to chairs and beat them all night?”

It had been years since Ellwood bullied anyone, but Gaunt knew he was still ashamed of the vein of ungovernable violence that burnt through him. Just last term, Gaunt had seen him cry tears of rage when he lost a cricket match. Gaunt hadn’t cried since he was nine.

“Straker and I were much less rotten than the boys in the year above were to *us*,” said Ellwood, his face red. “Charlie Pritchard shot us with *rifle blanks*.”

Gaunt smirked, conscious that he was taunting Ellwood because he felt he had embarrassed himself by touching his hair. It was the sort of thing Ellwood did to other boys all the time, he reasoned with himself. Yes, a voice answered. *But never to him*.

“I wasn’t close with Straker, anyway,” said Ellwood. “He was a brute.”

“All your friends are brutes, Ellwood.”

“I’m tired of all this.” Ellwood stood. “Let’s go for a walk.”

They were forbidden to leave their rooms during prep, so they had to slip quietly out of Cemetery House. They crept down the back stairs, past the study where their housemaster, Mr. Hammick, was berating a Shell boy for sneaking. (Preshute was a younger public school, and eagerly used the terminology of older, more prestigious institutions: Shell for first year, Remove for second, Hundreds for third, followed by Lower and Upper Sixth.)

“It is a low and dishonourable thing, Gosset. Do you wish to be low and dishonourable?”

“No, sir,” whimpered the unfortunate Gosset.

“Poor chap,” said Ellwood when they had shut the back door behind them. They walked down the gravel path into the graveyard that gave Cemetery House its name. “The Shell have been perfectly beastly to him, just because he told them all on his first day that he was a duke.”

“Is he?” asked Gaunt, skimming the tops of tombstones with his fingertips as he walked.

“Yes, he is, but that’s the sort of thing one ought to let people *discover*. It’s rather like me introducing myself by saying, ‘Hello, I’m Sidney Ellwood, I’m devastatingly attractive.’ It’s not for *me* to say.”

“If you’re waiting for me to confirm your vanity—”

“I wouldn’t dream of it,” said Ellwood with a cheery little skip. “I haven’t had a compliment from you in about three months. I know, because I always write them down and put them in a drawer.”

“Peacock.”

“Well, the point is, Gosset has been thoroughly sat on by the rest of his form, and I feel awfully sorry for him.”

They were coming to the crumbling Old Priory at the bottom of the graveyard. It was getting colder and wetter as night fell. The sky darkened to navy blue, and in the wind their tailcoats billowed. Gaunt hugged his arms around himself. There was something expectant about winter evenings at Preshute. It was the contrast, perhaps, between the hulking hills behind the school, the black forest, the windswept meadows, all so silent—and the crackling loudness of the boys when you returned to House. Walking through the empty fields, they might have been the only people left alive. Ellwood lived in a grand country estate in East Sussex, but Gaunt had grown up in London. Silence was distinctly magical.

“Listen,” said Ellwood, closing his eyes and tilting up his face. “Can’t you just imagine the Romans thrashing the Celts if you’re quiet?”

They stopped.

Gaunt couldn’t imagine anything through the silence.

“Do you believe in magic?” he asked. Ellwood paused for a while, so long that if he had been anyone else, Gaunt might have repeated the question.

“I believe in beauty,” said Ellwood, finally.