SECOND RATE ART

i.e. C. by Maurice Baring. Within its limits, it is not second rate, or there is nothing markedly so, at first go off. The limits are the proof of its non-existence. He can only do one thing: himself to wit; charming, clean, modest sensitive Englishman: outside that radius, & it does not carry far nor illumine much, all is—as it should be; light, sure, proportioned, affecting even; told in so well bred a manner that nothing is exaggerated, all related, proportioned. I could read this for ever, I said. L. said one would soon be sick to death of it.

Wandervögeln

of the sparrow tribe. Two resolute, sunburnt, dusty girls, in jerseys & short skirts, with packs on their backs, city clerks, or secretaries, tramping along the road in the hot sunshine at Ripe.24 My instinct at once throws up a screen, which condemns them: I think them in every way angular, awkward & self assertive. But all this is a great mistake. These screens shut me out. Have no screens, for screens are made out of our own integument; & get at the thing itself, which has nothing whatever in common with a screen. The screen making habit, though, is so universal, that probably it preserves our sanity. If we had not this device for shutting people off from our sympathies, we might, perhaps, dissolve utterly. Separateness would be impossible. But the screens are in the excess; not the sympathy.

RETURNING HEALTH

This is shown by the power to make images: the suggestive power of every sight & word is enormously increased. Shakespeare must have had this to an extent which makes my normal state the state of a person blind, deaf, dumb, stone-stockish & fish-blooded. And I have it compared with poor Mrs Bartholomew almost to the extent that Shre has it compared with me.25

[MONDAY 2 AUGUST]

BANK HOLIDAY

Very fat woman, girl & man spend Bank Holiday—a day of complete sun & satisfaction—looking up family graves in the churchyard. 24

The Married Relation

Arnold Bennett says that the horror of marriage lies in its ‘dailiness’. All acuteness of relationship is rubbed away by this. The truth is more like this. Life—say 4 days out of 7—becomes automatic; but on the yth day a head of sensation (between husband & wife) forms, wh. is all the fuller & more sensitive because of the automatic customary unconscious days on either side. That is to say the year is marked by moments of great intensity. Hardy’s ‘moments of vision’. How can a relationship endure for any length of time except under these conditions?

FRIDAY 3 SEPTEMBER

Women in tea garden at Brander—a sweltering hot day: rose trellises; white washed tables; lower middle classes; motor omnibuses constantly passing; bits of grey stone scattered on a paper strewn green sward all that left of the Castle.

Woman leaning over the table, taking command of the treat, attended by two older women, whom she pays for, to girl waitress (a marmalade coloured fat girl, with a body like the softest lard, destined soon to marry, but as yet only 16 or so)

Woman “What can we have for tea?”

Girl (very bored, arms akimbo) Cake, bread & butter, tea? Jam?

Woman Have the wasps been troublesome? They get into the jam— as if she suspected the jam would not be worth having.

Girl agrees.

Woman: Ah, were wasps have been very prominent this year.

Girl: That’s right.

“Oo she doesn’t have jam,”

She amused me, I suppose.

24 L.W, who did not as a rule record his activities whilst at Rodnall, noted under 11 July: ‘Bicycled Ripe’.
25 Mrs Rose Bartholomew of Style Cottages, Rodnall, cooked for the Woodys at Monkshouse when Nelly was not there, ‘She has been mad, quite, & is singularly pure of soul.’ (L.W Letter, no. 1969.)

1 Hardy’s Moments of Vision, and Miscellaneous Verses had been published in 1907.
2 Brander, once a centre of Norman administration on the river Adur in West Sussex, with an imposing castle and chapel, had declined into romantic overgrown ruin overlooking a village along a busy main road.