

**Guy de Maupassant**

To write a good short story is a rare and delicate art. It requires an observant eye, the most selective skill and the greatest economy of words.

There is no room in the small plot of a ground covered by the writer for the luxuriant growth and elaborate characterisation of a novel.

It must be concise, direct and immediately effective. In the art of the short story, the French writers are supreme and amongst those who are acknowledged masters there is no name that is not Maupassant.

At present we are being given an opportunity of seeing a number of his best stories on television.

The life of the writer stretched from 1859 to 1892, covering almost exactly the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was a Norman, a robust and vital young man fond of boating, swimming and all kinds of outdoor sport.

**UNCLE**

He passed his youth in the lovely old town of Rouen and became deeply interested in Norman life and ways. As he had literary ambitions, it was fortunate for him that his uncle, Gustave Flaubert, was one of the greatest writers of the period and took the young man under his wing.

The romantic movement in literature was becoming a spent force and a new school of naturalistic writers was gaining ground. Flaubert perceived the latent gifts of his nephew and schooled him in the concise and direct style which was to be the hallmark of his writing.

The older man was a hard master, but the pupil was worthy of his efforts, for presently the literary world was startled by a short story by Maupassant called "Boule de suif" (Dumpling) which at once put him at the head of the younger naturalistic writers and remains to this day one of the masterpieces of short story writing.

This was in 1880 and from that date Maupassant never looked back. Short stories and novels flowed from his pen, the former in such abundance that he published them in a series of volumes which occupy 16 volumes and number over 200.

**RICH**

They are extraordinarily rich and varied, slices of life, acutely observed and told with wit and irony.

They range over the whole of human life from the agony of "Monsieur Parent" to the absurdity of "Tome," the fatality of "The Diamond Necklace" to the enchantment of "Moonlight."

Alas, the gifted author worked and loved to excess, becoming more and more restless and haunted by the fear of insanity and death. Both overtook him in the end, but not before he had enriched the world with an abundant harvest reaped by his untiring industry and splendid gifts as a storyteller.

**Pagan kings**

From a small beginning in the Bog of Allen, the Borne, named, it is thought, for a Celtic princess, winds its way north-east to enter the sea at Drogheda. As it was the most important river in the fertile eastern plain, many settlements were built along its banks.

About half-way along its course stood Tara, the capital of ancient Ireland, and at Brough na Boine, on its northern bank, the pagan kings of Ireland were buried.

A ballad by Sir Samuel Ferguson, the Belfast poet, entitled "The Burial of King Cormac" tells of how King Cormac, 200 years before Patrick's coming, put his trust in the true, unseem God. Before he died, cursed



**Those green grassy slopes**

BY MARY IRVINE

To many Ulstermen, the River Boyne is more than just a river; it is a symbol of victory over the army of William of Orange defeated that of James II.

Of the famous battle not a trace remains today. The scene where it took place is about a mile above Drogheda. There an ancient footbridge crosses the river and a notice commemorates the battle.

On Sundays, the townspeople come out from Drogheda and stroll along the pleasant walk by the riverside. A side road leading through a beautiful glen on the northern side of the main road, called King William's Glen.

Long before 1890, however, significant as that date may be, the now placid banks of the Boyne witnessed other stirring scenes, and its waters often were reddened with bloodshed. It has even been stated that the history of the decline of the Borne along the course of the Boyne.

The Druids whose false gods he had decided, he requested that he should be buried at Rosnaree, on the Boyne below Slane, for it was there he first saw the light of truth.

Spread not the beds of rough for me, But when Rosnaree-bed's use is done, And bury me in death, And face me to the rising sun.

But the princes and priests were determined to bury him with his fellow kings in Brugh. The poem tells how the coffin-bearers tried to cross-washed Cormac's coffin from their shoulders and carried it along on its flood to rest at shore at peaceful Rosnaree, where shepherds buried it beside the river. Myth and legend, perhaps, but a fine ballad and an epic tale.

St. Patrick sailed up the Boyne, crossed it at its ford-like places, founded churches, lit the Paschal Fire at the High King at Tara. Gradually monastic settlements grew up along the Boyne, of which the most famous was Clonard, and from these monasteries the light, Christianity was carried to Europe.

But now a new danger arose. The Danes, thirsting for adventure and attracted by the treasures of the monasteries, Saxon robbing, and burning, they left the mark of their violence along the banks of the Boyne.

And so when the Norman and English invaders came they built fortified castles, roughly marked the boundary of the Pale, the English, the energy-outlook of the general strife. At every shallow place along the river a stronghold was built, and generally a high watch tower as well. The course of the river is dotted with the ruins of these.

Then Cromwell turned his attention to Ireland, in 1649, the ancient town of Drogheda, on the mouth of the Boyne, resisted his siege

**A. W. BOWYER**

The current exhibition at the Arts Council Gallery, continuing until July 13, is of the work of Barrie Cooke, a young artist from Co. Clare, of English birth, Mr. Cooke moved with his family across the Atlantic, took a degree at Harvard, then took up the study of painting, his first one-man show being held at Cambridge, Mass., in 1958.

His favourite subjects are large, more arresting studies in water and rocks, and later, in tones of near white or white.

There are some deft drawings of a hare and a badger, and some sketches of the Dargie River, contrasting the thrust of water with the casual pebbles and vegetation—basis of several of his paintings.

Largest and most arresting (some 60 inches by 40)

**ART COLUMN**

**Painter of promise**

of the paintings is a suspended carcass rather like some inverted macabre cornucopia offering its riches of dark blue, or the very occasional pure white of sunlit snow.

The nude varies from a small impressionistic sketch in warm hues to "Big White Nude" in tones of near white or white.

More fascinating than these is Mr. Cooke's rendering of some sketches of the white of the maiden, in which the Jovian bird descends upon the kindred whiteness of the maiden.

In these paintings and in several. Co. Kerry snow across the artist has evolved a technique of "whiteness" capable of holding an infinitude of tints, either graduating into haloes or contrasting with nooks of dark blue, or the very occasional pure white of sunlit snow.

White Trout and "Deep Current," both on loan, slice through blue-green depths of water, through haloes of white, in one fish in the other rocks.

"Stones and Water," loan too—is a lovely poetic study of blue and white, coloured stones amid a froth of opalescent water with one shallow fall of pure emerald, watched a lot more than just a fiddle, but a guitar.

He told me that country musicians never got together like this in his young days. "You play your own fiddle all your own heart or you were invited to play it with your neighbour's."

He was a young fellow and he essayed to sing an old Calabar. Not badly either, but then the tale of that epic voyage needs a lot more than singing.

To those of us who were not there, he said, "I never heard of a gathering like this in my own time. If there was a big crowd at the dance then they would have two fiddlers, one to rest the other."

Before we parted in the



**Gerald Walby**

On the other side of the City Hall the Mages Gallery has on view until July 6 a selection of the work of Gerald Walby, a Belfast-born marine engineer, who brings his first one-man show from Ardara.

The quality varies; there is much that seems purely derivative, but some of these paintings have an originality of outlook and a competence in the handling of paint, with a good deal of impasto for the most part.

"Cave Drawings" in relief, primitive paintings of animals. Stained Glass" shows little illuminated windows throwing broad patch shades on to an adjacent wall.

Very pleasing is the view from above of the walls of a tower, and the delicate water-colour "shadowy trees" "Morning Mist."

**HISTORY IN STONE SATURDAY MISCELLANY**

**VICTORIAN ELEGANCE IN ELIZA STREET**

IN what is known to many people as the Low Markets, there are streets named after four young women.

The story is that James Hamilton, a wealthy wine importer, acquired during the mid-nineteenth century in what was then the Cromac Woods.

The town house of the Hamilton family, a relic of the Victorian era, stands still near the corner of Hamilton Street. Its 50 windows are now boarded up but even in decay it has charm.

After he had built his family home there, James Hamilton continued to develop the ground he owned.

Four of the streets which he built were called after his four daughters, Grace, Henrietta, Catherine and Eliza. Eliza Street is still the hub and the main thoroughfare of the Low Markets. At one time, its occupants were 24 dealers, four jarveys and one member of the R.I.C. That was 50 years ago and Eliza Street has not changed so much.

But the most interesting houses that James Hamilton built were three in Eliza Place. When Hamilton House was the family home of the wealthy wine importer, Eliza Place had as tenants a doctor, a scrivener and a music teacher.

As Belfast expanded, there was a tendency for professional people to move towards Queen's University.

In 1912, Eliza Place was occupied by a "private dressmaker," a Miss Jane Doran, and by the caretaker for a horse repository.

In spite of considerable wear and tear, this little byway of old Belfast retains something of its former elegance.

For a time, On being promulgated by the battalions of the repressed garrison surrendered, but no quarter was given to the eyes of the slaughter that followed.

The cruelty exercised there for five days after the town took down would make many of general pictures of inhumanity as are to be found in the "Book of the Dead."

The river Boyne to-day winds tranquilly through green pastures to the sea. In winter it often overflows its banks and covers great areas of the surrounding land, but in summer its "green, grassy slopes" and riverside villages are serene and peaceful, and its water and islands provide a home for swans and wildfowl.

Then, too, it becomes a paradise for fishermen, and on a summer's evening you see the battalions of the repressed garrison dotted along its banks, as quiet and unmoving as the landscape itself.

I have often watched children bathing there in summer, and paddling back and forth under the natural banks which formed the main meeting places in olden times. While I listened to their happy shouts I thought of an occasion of events that they never have seen and of that very spot, warriors, monks and kings, and ordinary people had crossed and re-crossed through the ages.

"But," as H. V. Morton wrote, "the calm, weedy river runs on to the sea, beneath a summer sky, gentle, remote from all passion, unconscious of the things that men have done upon the banks."

**Blind girl's fairy tale world**

THE NURSERY FAVOURITE, "Granny's Wonderful Chair," by Frances Brown, first published in 1857, is included in this season's list of books for children.

This writer of some of the loveliest of fairy stories, though she preferred to be remembered among the poets, was born in Stranorlar, Co. Donegal, on January 16, 1816, and was blind from infancy.

Frances was the seventh in a family of 12 and was handicapped from birth, but nothing daunted that resolute spirit she was interesting to read of how she began to write. When her brothers and sisters were preparing their school lessons, Frances listened in and learnt by heart all she heard.

She used to bribe one of her sisters to read the school primers to her each evening. Her first poem was written at the age of seven, and, though much of her work in verse is mediocre in quality by modern standards, some of her poems have found their way into Irish anthologies. Her oft-quoted "The Songs of the River" is included in Duff's "Ballad Poetry of Ireland."

She contributed literary items in prose and verse to journals of the standard of "The Athenaeum" and managed to earn a modest living by her pen. As a daughter of the government official and because of her literary achievements, she was awarded an annuity of £20 from the Royal Bounty Fund.

She employed one of her sisters to be her reader and amanuensis, and soon after this she had her sister Jane Doran, and by the caretaker for a horse repository.

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What a rich world of fairy and fancy this blind girl of Stranorlar created within her own darkness!

The name of Frances Brown should not be forgotten in the country of her birth. Children especially owe an inestimable debt to her for the joy and lovable personality. Writing of her after her death, Browning said this tribute: "So long as the world shall last, circumference shall not countenance such a strong and beautiful spirit as that of the iron of calamity was transmuted to gold."

**Bridge quiz**

K 7 5      Q 10  
A 4      3 2  
Q 3      K 9 7 5  
K 4      8 4 3  
A Q 7

North leads the seven of clubs, and the contract of three no-trumps. South plays the nine and West leads the ace of diamonds and both opponents have to open their diamonds, the two and three. How should West have been advised at that very spot, warriors, monks and kings, and ordinary people had crossed and re-crossed through the ages.

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**Fiddlers' Night**

WHEN IT WAS A market square, filled with carts and stalls, the space between the Memorial Hall and the Bank was probably no more than adequate. As a car park, carefully tessellated in white rectangles, it seemed absurdly big for the size of the village.

But not this evening, when the traditional fiddlers' night, Down and Antrim, and the informed and uninitiated of Tyrone and Fermanagh—and even a carload or two from Carrickmacross—were gathered in the hall for a night of music.

The rectangles filled rapidly, car doors swung open, shelling out passengers and their belongings. The occupants of the cars, drawn up in numbers were separated by three cordons halied each by a constable, and then, in a line, they were ushered into the hall.

Admittance to the hall was by ticket, and the usual blarney of the fiddlers' night was in vogue. A girl who drifted up in two or three, drawn no doubt by curiosity, could win a prize of £100.

His zest of the fiddlers' night was in vogue. A girl who drifted up in two or three, drawn no doubt by curiosity, could win a prize of £100.

When you're a small boy and the day ends at twilight with setting the geese safely housed for the night, it's no wonder if there is a happy hour over the hill of which you know nothing.

Yet here they were, middle-aged men and women, linking and swinging the fiddle, and the music was more plaintive than those of our neighbours.

When you're a small boy and the day ends at twilight with setting the geese safely housed for the night, it's no wonder if there is a happy hour over the hill of which you know nothing.

**Some people will swallow anything**

WHEN Mr. Whiting got a haddock bone stuck in his throat, I thought it a rare coincidence.

Since then, I have seen the bone of an unknown fish inside Miss Fish, and a half-penny in Master Turner's gullet.

Removing a fishbone can be awkward—it is easy to tear or puncture surrounding tissues in doing so. False teeth, pins and coins head the accidental list after fishbones, but the sharpness of the stomach has been tested by practically everything from spanners to contact lenses.

Choking is a real emergency—survival depends on clearing the airway at once. If you cannot reach and remove an object, a small child has swallowed with your fingers, you have to hold him upside down and hope to dislodge the object by this way. With a bigger child, bend him over a chair and slap him on the back between the shoulder blades.

**Choking**

Choking is a real emergency—survival depends on clearing the airway at once. If you cannot reach and remove an object, a small child has swallowed with your fingers, you have to hold him upside down and hope to dislodge the object by this way. With a bigger child, bend him over a chair and slap him on the back between the shoulder blades.

Even a small object may become lodged in any part of the digestive tract and need removal.

X-rays will show where it lies, and its progress—particularly important when sharp objects have been swallowed.

It is best to let your doctor or hospital remove foreign bodies.

**Doctor**